



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

May 24, 2021

Case No. FL-2021-00033

Gary Ruskin
4096 Piedmont Ave. #963
Oakland, CA 94611

Dear Mr. Ruskin:

As we noted in our letter dated April 26, 2021, we are processing your request for material under the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”), 5 U.S.C. § 552. The Department of State has identified an additional 13 responsive records subject to the FOIA. We have determined 2 records may be released in full, 9 records may be released in part, and 2 records must be withheld in their entirety. The processing of your request is ongoing.

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 document. The records withheld in full are exempt from release pursuant to FOIA Exemption 5, 5 U.S.C. § 552 (b)(5). 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 Laurel Lum, Trial Attorney, at laurel.h.lum@usdoj.gov or (202) 305-8177. Please refer to the case number, F-2020-06715/FL-2021-00033, and the civil action number, 20-cv-08415, in all correspondence about this case.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeanne Miller". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped "J" and "M".

Jeanne Miller
Chief, Programs and Policies Division
Office of Information Programs 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

From: SMART Archive
Sent: Fri, 28 Feb 2020 10:13:06 GMT
To: SMART Core
Subject: Mission China COVID-19 Update February 28

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~~SBU~~



MRN: 20 BEIJING 410
Date/DTG: Feb 28, 2020 / 281009Z FEB 20
From: AMEMBASSY BEIJING
Action: WASHDC, SECSTATE *ROUTINE*
E.O.: 13526
TAGS: SHLH, CDC, HHS, NIH, PGOV, CN, SENV, PREL, CASC, AMGT, AMED, KPAO, KMDR, ASEC, AID, KHIV, KFLU, KFLO, KFPC, KGHI, KHLS, KSCA, KTBT
Captions: SENSITIVE
Reference: A) 20 BEIJING 398
B) 20 BEIJING 390, 380,366, 340, 308, 296, 292, 282, 276, 264, 260, 256, 254, 250, 248, 234, 226, 222, 218, 216, 214, 206, 204, 202, 200, 198, 188, 186, 174, 172, 166, 164, 142, 122, 108, 74
C) 19 WUHAN 112
Subject: Mission China COVID-19 Update February 28

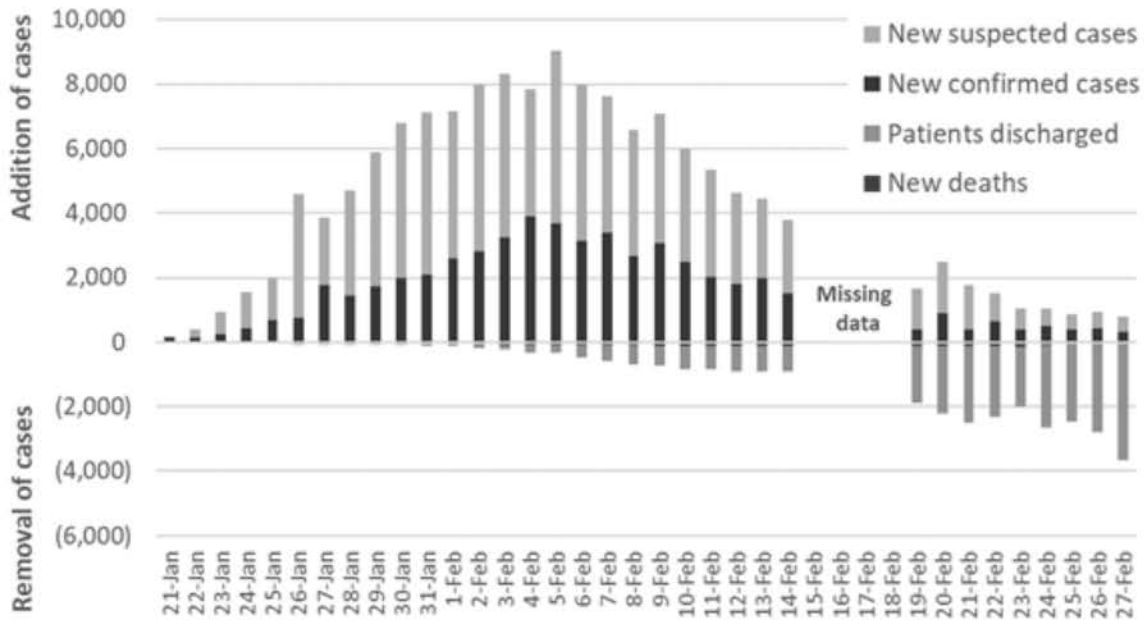
1. ~~(SBU)~~ **Summary and Comment:** China’s National Health Commission (NHC) reported 327 new confirmed cases in Mainland China on February 27, with nine new confirmed cases outside Hubei. This marks the second day in a row that there were fewer new cases in Mainland China than in the rest of the world. In addition, February 27 marked the 10th day in a row that the number of patients discharged from the hospital has exceeded the number of new reported cases. The MFA issued a DipNote on February 27 outlining procedures for how PRC authorities will handle any COVID-19 cases among diplomatic personnel in Beijing. The notice stated that infected personnel would be sent to one of Beijing City’s 20 designated treatment hospitals “where they are entitled to the same diagnosis and treatment procedures as the Chinese citizens...” The National Forest and Grassland Administration (NFGA) announced on February 26 that it would cancel the licenses for all facilities raising wild animals for food and strengthen the permitting, review, and supervision of non-food utilization of wildlife. Local governments continued to impose quarantine requirements on travelers from Japan and South Korea and urged vigilance around overseas visitors. The MFA announced that the PRC Embassy in Seoul had donated 25,000 surgical masks for use in Daegu, South Korea. Ports began to return to normal operations, but businesses continued to be challenged by labor shortages, cash-flow issues, and travel restrictions. Closed management restrictions remained in place across much of the country,

but there were signs of further loosening as more roadblocks were removed and roads reopened.
End Summary and Comment.

(U) LATEST UPDATES

2. (U) **Nationwide Cases:** China’s National Health Commission (NHC) reported 327 new confirmed cases in Mainland China on February 27 as of 24:00, with nine new confirmed cases outside Hubei ([link](#)). The total number of confirmed cases to date rose to 78,824. Another 44 deaths in Mainland China were reported on February 27, bringing total reported deaths to 2,788. With an additional 3,622 patients discharged from the hospital, a total of 46 percent of reported cases have now recovered and been released. February 27 marked the 10th day in a row that the number of patients discharged from the hospital has exceeded the number of new reported cases. The number of current suspected cases dropped to 2,308, with 452 new suspected cases reported on February 27. The number of close contacts under medical observation fell to 65,225.

Figure 1: Daily Change in Number of Current Cases in Mainland China



Note: Due to the change in case definitions for “confirmed cases” and the lack of disaggregated data for clinically diagnosed and lab-confirmed cases from February 15 to 18 in Hubei, data are marked as missing for these dates. The NHC reverted the case definitions to remove the distinction between Hubei and the other provinces for data starting on February 19. Source: NHC and provincial health commissions.

Table: Cases Reported in Mainland China as of End of February 27

Province/City/Region	Active Cases	Total Cases	New Cases	Total Deaths	New Deaths	Total Discharged	Newly Discharged
Anhui	170	990	1	6	--	814	50
Beijing	146	410	--	7	2	257	9

<i>Chongqing</i>	169	576	--	6	--	401	17
<i>Fujian</i>	63	296	--	1	--	232	7
<i>Gansu</i>	7	91	--	2	--	82	1
<i>Guangdong</i>	422	1,348	1	7	--	919	46
<i>Guangxi</i>	84	252	--	2	--	166	7
<i>Guizhou</i>	32	146	--	2	--	112	--
<i>Hainan</i>	31	168	--	5	--	132	3
<i>Hebei</i>	38	318	1	6	--	274	13
<i>Heilongjiang</i>	187	480	--	13	--	280	19
<i>Henan</i>	149	1,272	--	20	--	1,103	41
<i>Hubei</i>	36,829	65,914	318	2,682	41	26,403	3,203
<i>Hunan</i>	193	1,017	--	4	--	820	27
<i>Inner Mongolia</i>	32	75	--	--	--	43	5
<i>Jiangsu</i>	125	631	--	--	--	506	12
<i>Jiangxi</i>	144	935	1	1	--	790	36
<i>Jilin</i>	24	93	--	1	--	68	1
<i>Liaoning</i>	27	121	--	1	--	93	1
<i>Ningxia</i>	4	72	--	--	--	68	3
<i>Qinghai</i>	0	18	--	--	--	18	18
<i>Shaanxi</i>	47	245	--	1	--	197	3
<i>Shandong</i>	360	756	--	6	--	390	9
<i>Shanghai</i>	58	337	--	3	--	276	4
<i>Shanxi</i>	26	133	--	--	--	107	3
<i>Sichuan</i>	209	538	4	3	--	326	16
<i>Tianjin</i>	30	135	--	3	--	102	6
<i>Tibet</i>	0	1	--	--	--	1	--
<i>Xinjiang</i>	30	76	--	3	1	43	9
<i>Yunnan</i>	22	174	--	2	--	150	6
<i>Zhejiang</i>	261	1,205	--	1	--	943	62
Total (Provincial Reports)	39,919	78,823	326	2,788	44	36,116	3,637
Total (NHC Reported)	39,919	78,824	327	2,788	44	36,117	3,622

Notes: -- zero cases. Source: NHC and provincial health commissions

3. (U) **MFA DipNote on Protocol for Handling Suspected COVID-19 Cases:** The Protocol Department of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) issued a DipNote on February 27 outlining procedures for how PRC authorities will handle any COVID-19 cases among diplomatic personnel in Beijing. Per the notice, any infected personnel shall be sent to one of Beijing City's 20 designated treatment hospitals for treatment of COVID-19 cases, "where they are entitled to

the same diagnosis and treatment procedures as the Chinese citizens...” [Note: MFA did not respond to MED’s request for clarification as to whether the Embassy’s Med Unit can take samples in-house and send them to Beijing CDC for testing. The notice was also silent as to the Mission’s request for clarity regarding permission to discharge patients for medical evacuation, and as to the provision of ambulance services. **End note.**] The notice further requests the “understanding and cooperation” of missions in allowing “Chinese professional medical and disease control personnel” to enter diplomats’ residences and embassy facilities to “sterilize the working place” of the infected personnel and “conduct the epidemiological surveys and close contact tracing and management.”

4. (U) For the monitoring of close contacts of infected patients, the MFA DipNote allows missions to decide whether to send personnel to institutional quarantine sites or to conduct at-home quarantine and observation. For at-home quarantine and observation, “Chinese medical and disease control institutions will inform [diplomatic missions] of the deadline, legal basis, and matters needing attention during the medical observation and the contact detail of the responsible medical institution.” Lastly, for diplomatic patients receiving treatment at one of the designated hospitals, the notice stipulates that “personnel from the diplomatic corps and their dependents are, in principle, not allowed to go to the hospital to visit or comfort the patients.” MGT will follow up with the Department and MFA regarding particulars, such as access to Mission China personnel in quarantine or treatment as well as access to residences and facilities for sterilization.

5. (U) **Operating Licenses Revoked for All Wildlife Farms Selling Animals for Food:** China’s National Forest and Grassland Administration (NFGA) announced on February 26 that it would conduct a “thorough stocktaking of all captive wildlife breeding facilities” currently in operation and cancel the licenses for all facilities raising wild animals for food. NFGA also pledged to “comprehensively strengthen the permitting, review, and supervision of non-food utilization of wildlife” ([link](#)). [Note: The announcement follows the decision by the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress on February 24 outlawing the consumption and trade of wildlife for food. **End note.**] The sudden crackdown on wildlife farms raising animals for food has revealed the immense scale of the industry. According to remarks by NFGA Vice Administrator Wang Weisheng at a February 27 press briefing, as of February 26, authorities had inspected 153,000 captive breeding facilities and 3.5 million markets and restaurants selling wildlife ([link](#)). Regulators have also taken aim at online trading, shutting down 11,000 sellers and removing 1.4 million posts advertising wild animals for sale, according to a representative from the State Administration for Market Regulation (SAMR). Wang added that NFGA was in the process of revising the PRC’s Catalogue of Wildlife Species for National Key Protection as well as the national catalogue of species of special ecological, scientific, and social value.

(U) THIRD COUNTRY RESPONSE EFFORTS AND INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

6. (U) **Local Policies Targeting Foreigners:** The Shenzhen sub-district of Xiangmihu – a popular neighborhood for foreigners – [announced](#) stepped up efforts February 27 to screen South Koreans residing in or returning to the subdistrict, namely at-home self-isolation for 14 days upon return from South Korea. As of August 2019, 533 South Koreans resided in Xiangmihu. Meanwhile, Guangdong provincial authorities began recruiting Korean interpreters.

7. (U) **Korean Arrivals Spark Public Outrage:** The February 26 arrival of 80 Korean passengers on a flight from Seoul sparked public outrage after Chengdu authorities did not require the passengers to self-quarantine. Members of the public reportedly filed complaints with the national State Council, accusing Sichuan and Chengdu authorities of risking public health.

8. (U) **More cities impose quarantine requirements on travelers from Japan.** Suzhou, Kunshan, Nanjing, Changzhou, and Jiaxing are officially requiring people who have traveled recently to Japan to complete a 14-day self-quarantine, according to the Japanese Consulate and notices sent by local governments. Another five cities have given similar informal guidance, including Nantong, Lianyungang, and Jiangyin District in Wuxi in Jiangsu; Xiaoshang District of Hangzhou in Zhejiang, and part of the Shushan District in Hefei, Anhui.

(U) ECONOMIC AND SUPPLY CHAIN IMPACT

9. (U) **China to Accelerate Infrastructure Investment to Boost GDP:** Central government departments were accelerating infrastructure project assessment and approval, while local governments have mapped out trillions of RMB worth of investment plans, media reported. A Chinese economist told the *Global Times* that such large investments carry risks but would be effective, likely boosting GDP by 1-1.5 percentage points in 2020. A Ministry of Transportation official told media that China would initiate a flurry of infrastructure projects “ahead of schedule” (*Global Times*).

10. (U) **State Council Convenes High-Level Joint Ministry Briefing to Reassure SMEs:** The central government was rolling out additional fiscal and monetary measures to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) affected by the coronavirus outbreak, senior officials from the People’s Bank of China, Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, State Administration for Industry and Commerce, and the China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission briefed to press on February 27. The officials said local governments would be encouraged to waive taxes and administrative fees for targeted SMEs, small commercial banks will issue loans to small businesses at a rate no higher than 4.55 percent, and SMEs that miss payments on utilities will still receive services. The central government encouraged banks to roll over loans due in the period between January 25 and June 30 (*China.com*).

11. (U) **Government Prioritizing Assistance to Hard-Hit Food Service Industry:** The central government will expand credit lines for the \$713.4 billion (5 trillion RMB) food service industry after the COVID-19 epidemic effectively wiped out the industry’s expected business during the Chinese Lunar New Year. In seven days during the holiday period, the Chinese restaurant industry suffered about \$71 billion (500 billion RMB) in losses, and the China Cuisine Association found that the restaurant industry has suffered a 93 percent closure rate of all restaurants during the ongoing outbreak. As of 2018, China had about eight million restaurants and the industry employed 30 million workers (*China Daily*).

12. (U) **Epidemic Control in Beijing Tops Central Government’s Virus Battle:** The central government would prioritize efforts on epidemic prevention and control work, officials from the China Center for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC) confirmed on February 27. Given Beijing’s dense population and role as a national center for medical services and education, China

CDC chief epidemiologist Zeng Guang cautioned the risk of an outbreak occurring in Beijing remained high. Chinese top leaders have stressed that containing the spread of the virus in Beijing is as important as safeguarding Wuhan (*Global Times*).

13. ~~(SBU)~~ **Guangzhou Ports Operating Normally:** Guangzhou's main ports had resumed normal operations as of late February, according to South China port contacts. Shenzhen's Yantian port was operating normally by February 17, and it handled over 7000 containers February 24, a similar volume compared to a year earlier, contacts noted. Ports across the region had various capacity to handle frozen containers, with 88 percent of reefer plugs available for containers to connect to at Guangzhou ports, 75 percent unoccupied at Xiamen, 68 percent at Shenzhen West, and 51 percent at Yantian. Guangzhou ports announced 30 percent discounts on storage and electricity charges for frozen containers, as well as continued waivers of some dockage fees. Meanwhile, smaller ports across the Pearl River Delta region continued to experience labor shortages and operational delays, contacts added.

14. (U) **Guangdong's Agricultural Production Holds Steady:** Year on year, production was steady, provincial officials said February 27, adding that pork was the only commodity in short supply but that Guangdong targeted a return to near normal output by the end of 2020. In Guangzhou, 85 percent of the city's 600 wet markets were open as of February 23, an industry official told media, adding that "emergency measures" were taken to stabilize supply and guarantee "three meals a day" for residents.

15. ~~(SBU)~~ **Seafood Importers Halt Purchases:** Weak restaurant demand and limited air cargo space prompted some south China fresh seafood importers to halt purchases, including geoduck clams from the U.S. Pacific Northwest, according to contacts. For their part, some Guangzhou poultry importers said they stepped up U.S. orders in February, hoping for a market rebound. With many restaurants and institutional caterers still closed or running at partial capacity, poultry sales prices were lower, and traders said cash flow was tight. Poultry contacts said nearly 100 containers originally bound for Shanghai and Tianjin ports had to divert to Busan or Malaysia, presumably because of congestion, and it was uncertain when the shipments would move. Shipping costs rose about \$1400 per container in February, the contacts added, predicting an additional \$1000 rise in March.

16. ~~(SBU)~~ **Shanghai Back in Business, But Labor and Cash-flow challenges remain:** Eighty-six percent of businesses are operating to some degree, with 90 percent of large companies open, though only 53 percent of small and medium enterprises are back to work, municipal officials told Shanghai-based Consuls General on February 27. They added that electricity use is only 70 percent of pre-crisis levels, indicating that even if businesses are open, productivity has not returned to normal. This could be because of human resource shortages, which officials noted is the largest problem companies face. They added that only 63 percent of workers have returned to their jobs and 60 percent of Shanghai's 10-11 million migrant workers have returned to the city. A lack of operating capital is another major concern for businesses. To address these challenges, Shanghai authorities are working with companies to bring back workers from other parts of China and are working with financial institutions to increase cash flow.

17. (U) **AmCham Members Still Face Labor and Travel Challenges:** An AmCham China

survey of 169 large-, medium-, and small-sized enterprises conducted February 17-10 and released on February 27 found that travel disruptions and reduced staff productivity present the most significant challenges for respondents. Nearly half of respondents expect 2020 China revenues to decrease if business cannot return to usual before April 30, with nearly one-fifth reporting 2020 revenues will decline more than 50 percent if the epidemic extends through August 30. Approximately one-third of respondents say they already face increased costs and significantly reduced revenue. Eighty percent of the companies say they have provided some form of assistance to China to fight the COVID-19 epidemic and another 14 percent are planning to do so.

18. (U) **Shanghai Customs Expands Green-Channel Access:** In order to support industries and companies badly hit by the epidemic and help businesses to resume their industrial, supply, and logistics chains, Shanghai Customs authorities announced February 26 they will expand green-channel coverage from just epidemic prevention and control supplies to more fields, including raw materials, components, machines for resuming production, and items for agricultural use. The clearance of food and daily necessities will also speed up, they said.

19. (U) **Sichuan Industry Up and Running:** As of February 25, 92 percent of Sichuan's 14,560 industrial enterprises had resumed operations and 61 percent of industrial workers have returned to work, according to a government press release.

~~(SBU)~~ SUPPORT FOR U.S. CITIZENS

Guangzhou

20. ~~(SBU)~~ **Passport Workload Down:** In the month since the start of authorized departure, ACS has seen a 50 percent year-over-year reduction in minor passport and consular record of birth abroad adjudications, and a 14 percent reduction in adult passport adjudications. Post expects to see a resulting higher demand later in the year.

(U) INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

21. (U) **PRC Donates Masks to ROK:** MFA Spokesperson Zhao Lijian said February 27 that the PRC Embassy in Seoul had donated 25,000 surgical masks for use in Daegu, South Korea.

~~(SBU)~~ POST OPERATIONS

Beijing

22. (U) **Beijing Maintains Strict Closed-Management Measures:** After the news of an infected ex-convict from Hubei slipping into Beijing, and 10 new cases reported on February 26, Beijing City Vice Secretary said that no residents from Hubei would be permitted to enter the city and that Beijing would continue to enforce strict closed-management measures. According to *Global Times*, local authorities would also begin to "implement all-day inspections" of residential areas. Furthermore, "Local authorities in the capital city are also urged to set up checkpoints at highway entrances to the city to screen incoming people and vehicles" ([link](#)).

23. (U) **Embassy Housing Community Requires Japan/ROK Quarantines:** A residential community housing Embassy community personnel announced February 28 that residents returning from South Korea or Japan are required to observe a 14-day home quarantine. On February 26, the community management said government authorities mandated residents must use a “special pass” to enter or exit until “the threat of coronavirus is over.”

Chengdu

24. (U) **Carriers Resume Operations:** Several Chinese carriers announced they will resume operations of some international flights by February 29, including flights to Frankfurt, Cairo, and Tokyo. The only remaining viable direct flight from **Chongqing**, to Bangkok, has been canceled through March 5.

(U) OTHER COVID-19 DEVELOPMENTS AND GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

Chengdu

25. (U) **Sichuan Party Secretary Urges Vigilance Around Overseas Visitors:** On February 26, Sichuan Party Secretary Peng Qinghua stressed that epidemic response efforts must not relax despite Sichuan’s downgraded emergency response level. With the virus spreading internationally, Sichuan should carefully monitor the temperatures of foreign visitors, he said.

26. ~~(SBU)~~ **Despite Official Guidance, Closed Management Continues:** District governments are maintaining strict access controls to residential compounds a week after Chongqing announced areas without COVID-19 cases could relax such measures, Canadian diplomats report. All persons arriving in Chongqing must self-isolate for 14 days and undergo daily temperature checks, or report to a government quarantine center if they do not have a permanent address.

27. (U) **Schools to Start Online Classes March 2:** Chongqing announced on February 26 that K-12 schools should begin online classes starting March 2. Post-secondary institutions will remain closed until COVID-19 is effectively under control, authorities said.

28. ~~(SBU)~~ **Small Business Remain Shuttered:** According to an informal survey conducted by Canadian diplomats, local Chongqing business contacts in manufacturing, retail, food service, and entertainment sectors were reportedly quite pessimistic about the possibility of re-opening, with only one of eight businesses having done so to date.

29. (U) **Guizhou to Go Back to School:** Guizhou province has announced that junior high and high school students will resume classes starting March 16.

Shanghai

30. ~~(SBU)~~ **Shanghai to Remain at Emergency Alert Level 1:** Shanghai officials told Consuls General (CGs) on February 27 that because Shanghai is still in an inward migration phase, is

more urban, and has a higher public transportation utilization rate than the other areas of East China, the city does not have immediate plans to reduce the emergency alert level down from the current level. [Note: Jiangsu and Anhui have reduced their alert level from 1 to 2 and some areas in Zhejiang have reduced their alert levels. End note.]

31. ~~(SBU)~~ **Shanghai Expanding Medical Services and Sharing Experience with COVID-19 Treatment Success:** Medical services, including most routine services, are available throughout Shanghai through appointments, the Director of Shanghai's Health Commission told Shanghai-based Consuls General on February 27. He emphasized that complex, non-COVID-19 related cases from elsewhere in China are being sent to Shanghai for treatment and surgery. Separately, Shanghai's COVID-19 treatment methodology has attained a high success rate at preventing cases from escalating from mild to severe, he said. The Director noted Shanghai is sharing its experience with other areas. Officials announced the Shanghai CDC and 16 district offices in the city can perform rapid testing and fever clinics are now able to start treating COVID-19 patients prior to the patient being transferred to a central hospital.

32. (U) **QR Code for Shanghai Metro and Buses Goes into Effect, City Tries to Manage Passenger Numbers:** Shanghai's new QR code for Metros and buses goes into effect today. The system allows passengers to voluntarily scan a QR code and enter their phone number, enabling authorities to contact them if someone who rode in the same car, at the same time, later tests positive for COVID-19. A similar code was launched for taxis on February 21. The city is also increasing attempts to reduce crowding at busy metro stations. Transportation authorities told CGs on February 27 that their goal is to reduce the passenger density of public transportation to 60 percent of pre-crisis levels.

Shenyang

33. (U) **Heilongjiang Cities Remove Roadblocks:** Hegang lifted restrictions on all private vehicles, as well as roadblocks and checkpoints on main roads, to facilitate smooth flow of traffic. Qiqihar announced that checkpoints in villages will gradually be lifted, and Qitaihe, Heilongjiang's second smallest city in terms of population, reopened one of its main highways. Jixi, which recently implemented a strict 24-hour watch system at all checkpoints, also said that roadblocks between low-risk villages will be removed.

34. ~~(SBU)~~ **But Public Transportation Remains Idle in Many Places:** While many Heilongjiang cities are starting to lift onerous checkpoints and disruptive roadblocks, residents across Heilongjiang complain that public transportation system has not yet fully resumed. On Weibo, Heilongjiang residents living in small cities lamented that they were "stuck" in rural areas and had no way of getting to the cities. In Yichun, none of the city's public transportation system had resumed, a contact told ConGenOff. In Shuangyashan, it was reported that only a few buses operate during certain times of the day.

35. (U) **Jilin Ready for Spring Plowing:** In response to Premier Li Keqiang's emphasis on the importance of facilitating spring plowing and farming preparation, Jilin officials said that the province is committed to guaranteeing loans and funds for farmers, as well as supporting agricultural enterprises resume production as soon as possible. So far, out 15 pesticide production

companies in Jilin, 14 has resumed operations. Officials noted that Jilin had already purchased 32.66 billion kilograms of grain, a 6-billion-kilogram increase from previous year.

36. ~~(SBU)~~ **Liaoning Maintains Closed Management in Residences:** Contacts throughout Liaoning say that there has not been a significant change to closed management in residences despite Liaoning downgraded emergency alert level from 1 to 3. Most contacts in Shenyang and Dalian report that same measures, such as checking temperature and allowing only entry/exit access point, remain in place. Supermarkets throughout Shenyang still check for temperatures, and some Shenyang apartments continue to issue entry/exit passes for residents. Virtually all residences forbid delivery personnel from entering the compound. However, contacts in Fuxin city said restrictions seem to have somewhat relaxed, noting that few apartment complexes now permit entry of non-residents and no longer check body temperatures.

37. ~~(SBU)~~ **Liaoning Reopens Toll Stations and Expressways:** All Liaoning toll stations are now fully open. No fees will be charged at any toll station. Authorities will register vehicles entering from high-risk areas, and vehicles transporting PPE and other daily supplies will not be inspected. All of Liaoning's 293 expressways were also reopened. Shenyang FAO told ConGenOff that except for vehicles coming from other provinces, Liaoning residents traveling within the province will not be stopped for inspection. A contact at Feed Mills Shenyang, an animal feed manufacturing company that has faced logistical challenges in the early days of the outbreak, told ConGenOff that opening toll stations and highways have greatly reduced burdens on delivering products.

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Signature: Branstad

Drafted By: BEIJING:Multiple Mission China Drafters

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Griffin, Cynthia (Beijing)	
RSO	
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Sent: Wed, 18 Nov 2020 09:39:52 GMT
To: SMART Core
Subject: PRC Claims of COVID Transmission via Cold Chain Food Imports Growing

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From: AMEMBASSY BEIJING
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TAGS: ECON, PGOV, ETRD, PREL, CDC, HHS, FDA, CN, EAGR, FAS, AGR
Captions: SENSITIVE
Subject: PRC Claims of COVID Transmission via Cold Chain Food Imports Growing

1. ~~(SBU)~~ **Summary:** Although official PRC data indicate the community transmission of COVID-19 has been largely eliminated in China, there continue to be small-scale outbreaks throughout the country. PRC authorities have implicated imported, refrigerated (i.e., cold chain) food products and packaging as the probable vector for many of these outbreaks, while the World Health Organization and UN Food and Agriculture Organization maintain that transmission of COVID via food products and food packaging is highly unlikely. Some state media appear to be using the alleged transmission via imported food to cast doubt on a Wuhan origin for COVID-19. The PRC has implemented a series of measures purportedly aimed at limiting the spread of COVID via the cold chain, including a system of disinfecting, testing, and tracing cold chain imports. To-date, the PRC has suspended food imports from 99 food companies based in 20 countries due to COVID contamination. Trading partners continue to push the PRC to make its data and analysis on cold chain transmission public, and to be transparent about testing and rules for suspended products. Likeminded contacts in Beijing advocate concerted action through multilateral organizations to push the PRC to provide data the global scientific community can use to evaluate China's claims and take appropriate mitigation measures. **End Summary.**

Science on Cold Chain COVID Transmission Still Emerging

2. ~~(SBU)~~ Following a June 2020 outbreak of COVID-19 linked to the Xinfadi wholesale food market in Beijing (Reference 20 Beijing 1022), Chinese investigators discovered the SARS-CoV-2 virus on a cutting board used for salmon. They concluded the outbreak may have been linked to imported seafood, though virus samples were also found on food products from other parts of the market. In early July, Deputy Director of the PRC State Food Safety Evaluation

Center Li Ning stated the evidence indicated there was only a very slight possibility that cold chain food could have been the source of the Xinfadi outbreak. None of the over 80,000 COVID cases previously reported in the PRC had been linked to imported food. Following an October outbreak in Qingdao, a port city on China's eastern coast, which infected 13 people including dock workers and the hospital staff treating them, the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC) announced it had detected and isolated live coronavirus on the packaging of imported frozen fish, and had found virus with the same genetic sequence in infected workers. Until the results of an epidemiologic investigation on the Qingdao cases are made known, it remains unclear whether the workers caught the virus elsewhere and transferred it to the packaging, or whether the packaging itself was the source of the infection. Following the Qingdao outbreak, several subsequent cases of individuals infected with COVID have also been attributed to imported cold chain food, including in Dalian, Tianjin, Chengdu, Yanbian, and Shanghai. Over just the past two weeks, PRC authorities also claim to have detected the SARS-CoV-2 virus on French pork in Xiamen, German pork in Shandong, Indian fish in Shanxi, Argentinian beef in Jiangsu, Brazilian beef in Wuhan, Argentinian pork in Henan, and beef from New Zealand. (Note: New Zealand has disputed the findings. End note.)

3. ~~(SBU)~~ Medical experts outside the PRC note that although Chinese research papers they have seen to-date provide some data supporting the hypothesis that the virus can be transmitted through cold chain products, the evidence is not conclusive. Chinese research on this topic is still preliminary, and it is not possible to replicate the results in countries with high rates of community transmission, or in countries that are not routinely performing environmental sampling on imported products. In New Zealand, a country that has also had scattered cases and a low incidence of community transmission, scientists have not found evidence to support the cold chain transmission theory. From the Chinese research findings published so far, it is not clear whether the food on which the virus was found was contaminated as a result of improper handling in the market or somewhere else on the supply chain. It is also not clear whether virus particles on food can be aerosolized to infect people and whether there are also risks to consumers of the products. Thus far, PRC authorities have reported that only workers handling the products have been infected, not consumers. The PRC's aggressive testing campaigns following detection of cases connected to cold chain food products have determined that few workers from affected facilities tested positive. In October, China CDC announced it had found 22 positive samples out of 670,000 cold chain food packaging samples tested. This suggests the likelihood of contracting the virus via cold chain products is very low compared with human-to-human transmission via airborne particles.

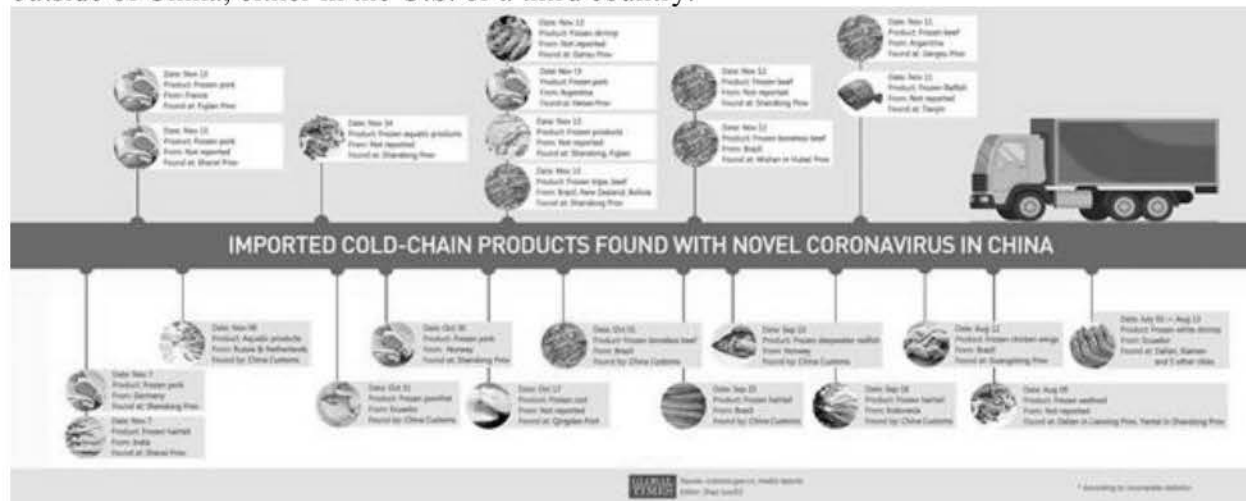
PRC Tracing and Testing Based on Weak Sources; Create Uncertain Commercial Conditions

4. ~~(SBU)~~ On November 9, following statements by China CDC and other health authorities that several recent COVID outbreaks in the PRC were linked to cold chain food imports, the State Council issued guidance requiring disinfection, testing, and traceability for all imported cold chain food products. (Note: In practice, it appears that the guidelines are being implemented unevenly at different ports. In a recent cursory review of imported cold chain products at a local grocery store in Beijing, only a small number of products on display were marked to indicate that they met inspection, disinfection, and tracing requirements. End Note.) Companies with products that test positive face import suspensions that the PRC's General Administration of Customs (GACC) calls "temporary," but which in practice have no clear end date. As of mid-November, the PRC had suspended cold chain food imports from some 99 companies based in

20 countries. Though virus samples have not been found on any U.S. imports, GACC has suspended two U.S. poultry facilities from exporting to China based on information reportedly gleaned from the internet about COVID cases among workers in those plants. Contacts from third countries have concurred that PRC authorities seem to be basing decisions to suspend imports from various facilities (whose products had not tested positive) largely on foreign news articles about outbreaks, and exporters have not received clear information on the reasons for the suspension or the process for re-certification. Exporters could also be negatively impacted by additional costs associated with mandatory disinfecting and tracing of products, and the possibility that importers may become less willing to take the risk of importing food products that could be destroyed or returned should they test positive upon arrival.

State Media Seizes on Narratives that Deflect PRC Responsibility

5. (SBU) No internationally peer-reviewed study supports the hypothesis that the COVID virus can be transmitted through the cold chain. Research published in Chinese scientific journals – notably in a October 27 article by Tsinghua University, China CDC, and the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences in China’s “National Science Review” –discussed the cold chain theory as a source of possible transmission, but not as a theory for how the virus appeared in China. However, some PRC state media outlets have speculated that the source of the outbreak in Wuhan could have been imported frozen seafood, including the Global Times on November 16 and Xinhua on November 17 (see figure below for a recent example of PRC state media reporting on cold chain transmission). Contacts have argued the narrative of COVID entering China on imported cold chain food could be used by the PRC to obfuscate the origins of the virus and deflect responsibility for its botched early handling of pandemic. One informed PRC media sector contact recently opined to us that a third of China’s population believes COVID originated outside of China, either in the U.S. or a third country.



On November 16, Global Times, a State-run Media Outlet published the above outbreak timeline in an article entitled “Was Wuhan Outbreak Caused by Imported Food Products?” <https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1207027.shtml>

Like-Minded Partners Critical of PRC Approach on Cold Chain Transmission Issue

6. (SBU) During a November 11 meeting of Agricultural Counselors from 30 countries in Beijing, participants agreed the PRC’s actions to curtail cold chain transmission had not yet had a significant impact on trade, but confirmed the need to push China to share data on its findings and clarify its testing, disinfection, and certification procedures through the WTO. Participants

agreed the PRC’s actions on this issue have been inconsistent and not science-based, and that improper disinfection without separating imports by product and risk type could create more food safety problems.

7. ~~(SBU)~~ Although some countries whose imports have been suspended complied with PRC requests for information and “video audits” of facilities, those facilities have not been re-certified, and companies alleged that some of the PRC information requests were related to corporate trade secrets, not food safety. A Brazilian contact confirmed that despite requests, the PRC has not provided a copy of the test results for the products it claimed tested positive for COVID-19. Additionally, it was unclear whether the virus samples the PRC reportedly found were of live virus or only non-viable fragments of viral RNA, which the interlocutor said was insufficient to confirm the products in question posed an infection risk.

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XMT: CHENGDU, AMCONSUL; CARACAS, AMEMBASSY; ST PETERSBURG, AMCONSUL

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From: SMART Archive
Sent: Tue, 25 Aug 2020 08:53:12 GMT
To: SMART Core
Subject: PRC Making Progress in Race to Develop a COVID-19 Vaccine

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MRN: 20 BEIJING 1512
Date/DTG: Aug 25, 2020 / 250851Z AUG 20
From: AMEMBASSY BEIJING
Action: WASHDC, SECSTATE *ROUTINE*
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TAGS: TSPL, PGOV, PREL, SENV, SHLH, TBIO, TPHY, SCUL, OEXC, KPAO, FDA, HHS, NSF, CN
Captions: SENSITIVE
Reference: 20 SAO PAULO 390
Subject: PRC Making Progress in Race to Develop a COVID-19 Vaccine

1. ~~(SBU)~~ **Summary and Comment:** Chinese biomedical companies CanSinoBIO, Sinopharm and Sinovac Biotech have developed three out of six of the COVID-19 vaccine candidates worldwide that have been approved to begin phase III clinical trials, the final step required by most regulatory organizations to secure official approval for public use. Given the low rate of COVID-19 infection in China, Sinopharm and Sinovac Biotech began phase III clinical trials overseas in July, making them the only two Chinese companies to enter the final phase of human testing for a COVID-19 vaccine. Despite not having yet undergone phase III clinical trials, CanSinoBIO’s vaccine candidate received one-year special approval for military use from the Central Military Commission (CMC) Logistic Support Department Medical Services Directorate. Sinopharm also began to vaccinate employees of state-owned enterprises and at-risk members of the Chinese public. Some Chinese public health contacts have expressed uncertainty about the potential effectiveness of Chinese vaccine candidates, speculating the coronavirus may mutate over the fall and winter months making it more resistant to vaccine treatments. While senior PRC officials have vowed to share COVID-19 vaccines as “global public goods” – notably with low- and middle-income countries – experience gained during the 2009 H1N1 pandemic showed that high income countries negotiated advanced orders of vaccines, which crowded out low-income countries from the market. Subsequent donations from high-income countries were only made after they had covered their own populations. It remains to be seen if and how China follows through on donating PRC-produced vaccines to other countries while having to cover its own massive population. **End Summary and Comment.**

Chinese Biomedical Companies Lead in COVID-19 Vaccine Development

2. ~~(SBU)~~ Chinese biomedical companies are making significant progress in global vaccine development efforts to treat COVID-19. According to the World Health Organization, eight out of over twenty vaccines for COVID-19 currently in human clinical trials around the world are being developed in China. Most of these Chinese vaccine candidates are in phase I and II of clinical trials, although three have already been approved to enter phase III, the final step required by most regulatory organizations to secure official approval for public use. To date, only six vaccine candidates worldwide are in phase III trials. **[Note:** Phase I trials involve groups ranging from 20 to around 100 patients to check a vaccine for negative side effects. Phase II trials include hundreds of patients who are tested to determine the safety and efficacy of the vaccine. Phase III trials contain thousands of participants who are tested to better understand the effectiveness of the vaccine, the benefits, and the range of possible adverse reactions. **End Note.]** Four Chinese biomedical companies relied on well-established technology to create inactivated vaccines, which contain killed virus particles meant to induce an immune response in the vaccine recipient. In addition, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) was working with Chinese vaccine developer Walvax Biotechnology to explore new technology that could produce mRNA vaccines using a synthetic version of the genetic code that the coronavirus uses to form proteins designed to induce immunity.

CanSinoBIO Developed the First Chinese Vaccine Candidate

3. ~~(SBU)~~ Chinese biomedical company CanSino Biologics Inc (CanSinoBIO) developed the first vaccine candidate against COVID-19 in China – known as Ad5-nCoV – in collaboration with the Beijing Institute of Biotechnology, which is subordinate to the PLA Academy of Military Science (AMS) Academy of Military Medical Sciences (AMMS). **[Note:** Ad5-nCoV is a viral vector vaccine that uses a harmless virus called adenovirus type-5 (Ad5) to carry genetic material from the novel coronavirus (nCoV) into the body to induce an immune response. **End Note.]** PLA Major General Chen Wei, a top epidemiologist and virologist at AMMS who led the phase I clinical trial for Ad5-nCoV, reported the vaccine candidate results were encouraging and had no "serious" side effects, but admitted more research needed to be done. On March 20, Chen was reportedly the first to be injected out of 108 volunteers. Neutralizing antibodies increased significantly among the 108 participants at day 14 and peaked 28 days post-vaccination. **[Note:** Neutralizing antibodies are part of the body's immune response that protects against infections. **End Note.]** Moreover, no serious adverse events were noted within 28 days post-vaccination. However, some vaccine recipients reported mild to moderate symptoms including fever (54 percent), while patients also experienced fatigue (44 percent), headaches (39 percent), and muscle pain (17 percent). Results from phase II trials begun in April with 508 participants from Wuhan found that the Ad5-nCoV vaccine was safe and induced significant immune response of neutralizing antibodies at day 28 in the majority of recipients after a single immunization.

4. ~~(SBU)~~ At that time, CanSinoBIO still needed to broaden its testing pool to conduct phase III trials and determine the effectiveness of the vaccine before it could be licensed for public use in China. However, the low rate of COVID-19 infections in China made it difficult to conduct

large-scale domestic vaccine trials, stated Chinese public health experts. Consequently, CanSinoBio partnered with the National Research Council of Canada in May and was preparing to conduct phase III clinical trials of Ad5-nCOV with Canadian volunteers in the near future. CanSinoBio also entered discussions with Russia, Brazil, Chile, and Saudi Arabia about launching phase III human clinical trials among their populations, said CanSinoBio co-founder and executive director Qiu Dongxu on July 11. On August 9, Saudi Arabia announced phase III clinical trials on around 5,000 people would begin soon using CanSinoBio's vaccine candidate while discussions remain ongoing in the other three countries. Separately, Mexico signed a memorandum with CanSinoBio and Walvax Biotechnology to conduct human testing trials of Ad5-nCoV between September and January 2021, said Mexican Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard during an August 11 news conference. On the same day, the PRC National Intellectual Property Administration issued China's first COVID-19 vaccine patent approval to CanSinoBio for Ad5-nCOV. CanSinoBio Executive Director Qiu revealed that 40,000 volunteers would be recruited for upcoming trials and a new factory in China with the capacity to produce 100-200 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines per year by early 2021 was under construction.

Sinopharm and Sinovac Biotech Enter Phase III COVID Trials

5. ~~(SBU)~~ The state-owned China National Pharmaceutical Group (Sinopharm) and Sinovac Biotech began phase III clinical trials overseas in July, making them the only two Chinese biomedical companies to-date to enter the final phase of human testing for a COVID-19 vaccine. Sinopharm Chairman Liu Jingzhen told a state-run media outlet in late May that 180 recipients of Sinopharm's inactivated vaccine candidate, including himself, developed antibodies with a 100 percent protective rate against COVID-19 during phase I clinical trials. Following phase II clinical trials on more than 1,000 volunteers, Sinopharm released an official statement in late June saying the vaccine candidate was safe and effective with adverse reactions far lower than other vaccines undergoing trials. Phase III trials were currently underway in the United Arab Emirates with around 15,000 participants as of July 15 using two different inactivated vaccine types. Sinopharm also announced in late July an agreement with Parana Technology Institute (Tecpar) to begin vaccine trials in Brazil soon. In Bahrain, phase III clinical testing was scheduled to begin on August 10 with 6,000 volunteers over the next 12 months, reported the Bahrain Ministry of Health. Sinopharm announced August 20 that Peru, Morocco, and Argentina approved phase III clinical trials on volunteers in their countries. During a July 22 interview, Sinopharm Chairman Liu estimated phase III trials would be completed in three months. [Note: Following completion of the phase III clinical trial, the company would need to apply for regulatory approval before the product would be available to the domestic market. End Note.] Partnering with Sinopharm, the Beijing Biological Products Institute and the Wuhan Institute of Biological Products both developed two different inactivated vaccines that were expected to be available by the end of December at the price of RMB 1,000 (USD 144). Sinopharm was also preparing to expand its annual production capacity to a combined 220 million vaccine doses.

6. ~~(SBU)~~ Chinese vaccine developer Sinovac Biotech also produced an inactivated vaccine candidate called CoronaVac that has entered phase III human testing trials and is projected to begin production early next year. [Note: During the outbreak of SARS in 2003, Sinovac was the only Chinese firm to enter phase I vaccine trials; however, research ended following the SARS

pandemic. Sinovac was able to build on this earlier research given the similarity between COVID-19 and SARS. **End Note.**] Sinovac said phase I and II trials for CoronaVac showed favorable immunogenicity and safety profiles, and no severe adverse events were reported. Sinovac Biotech experts noted that two doses of the vaccine candidate were needed to immunize one person, but observed the reduction of neutralizing antibodies 14 days after the vaccination. [**Note:** There are still knowledge gaps about COVID immunity; however, reduction in neutralizing antibodies may suggest a possible waning of immunity over time. **End Note.**] Sinovac Biotech had already begun phase III clinical trials by July in Brazil and committed to sharing 60-100 million doses through a collaboration with São Paulo-based Instituto Butantan (Ref A). Sinovac Biotech CEO Yin Weidong disclosed on July 11 that his company was “actively in discussion with several countries” in Asia, including Indonesia, Turkey, and Bangladesh, about conducting phase III trials and was exploring options to carry out human trials in Europe. Since then, the Bangladesh Medical Research Council (BMRC) approved phase III clinical trials on July 22, which were to be conducted by International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) on 4,200 volunteers in seven hospitals specialized in COVID-19 treatment. Indonesian state-owned company Bio Farma also partnered with Sinovac Biotech and began carrying out phase III clinical testing on August 14 that will ultimately involve as many as 1,620 patients in Indonesia. Yin explained that Sinovac Biotech aimed to produce 300 million doses per year.

PRC Authorities Approve Vaccine for Special Use

7. ~~(SBU)~~ Despite not having undergone phase III clinical trials, the Central Military Commission (CMC) Logistic Support Department (LSD) Medical Services Directorate issued one-year special approval for CanSinoBIO’s Ad5-nCOV as a “military-specially-needed drug” on June 25. With this special designation and approval, CMC could begin pharmaceutical production of Ad5-nCoV solely for limited military use among Chinese armed forces. [**Note:** Major General Chen Jingyuan, the Director of the CMC LSD Medical Services Directorate, announced during a March 3 press conference that the Chinese military has reported zero cases among its personnel. **End Note.**]

8. ~~(SBU)~~ With approval from the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council, Sinopharm also began inviting employees of state-owned enterprises to take the vaccine. More than 1,000 Sinopharm employees were voluntarily vaccinated without any adverse effect, reported the biomedical company in June. China TravelSky, a Chinese state-owned civil aviation and information technology company, prioritized its research and development (R&D) staff and airport terminal workers for vaccination, but also offered to vaccinate overseas travelers, medical staff members involved in COVID-19 prevention efforts, and residents from medium and high-risk communities in Beijing. Media reports also indicated that PetroChina employees were asked to take the Sinopharm vaccine. Separately, Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC) Director Gao Fu revealed during a webinar on July 26 that he had been injected with an experimental COVID-19 vaccine. Gao explained, “Everybody has suspicions about the new coronavirus vaccine. If even we didn’t do it, how can we persuade...the public to be vaccinated.” Gao refused to disclose details about the vaccine he took, saying he did not want to appear to be “doing some kind of propaganda.” [**Note:** Gao coauthored a paper in June on an

"inactivated" vaccine candidate developed by SinoPharm leading some to speculate he was injected with the same vaccine. **End Note**]. However, a few Chinese public health contacts expressed doubts over the effectiveness of Chinese vaccine candidates, speculating that the coronavirus may mutate over the fall and winter months making it more resistant to vaccine treatments. [**Note**: If this problem were to occur, the impact would not be limited to Chinese vaccine candidates. **End Note**.]

Senior Chinese Leaders Pledge to Share Vaccines

9. ~~(SBU)~~ Chinese Communist Party Chairman Xi Jinping announced on May 18 during a virtual speech to the World Health Organization that China would make its COVID-19 vaccine a “global public good” ensuring it is accessible and affordable in developing countries. Subsequently, PRC Foreign Minister Wang Yi said in late July that China pledged a \$1 billion loan to help Latin American and Caribbean countries access COVID-19 vaccines once available during a virtual conference with his Latin American counterparts. China CDC Director Gao also emphasized during a July 31 virtual seminar that the vaccine needed to be shared in low and middle-income countries unable to afford it. On August 24, Premier Li Keqiang Li stated during the third leaders meeting of the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC) organization that any Chinese-produced COVID-19 vaccine would be provided to Mekong countries “on a priority basis.”

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XMT: CHENGDU, AMCONSUL; CARACAS, AMEMBASSY; ST PETERSBURG, AMCONSUL

Dissemination Rule: Archive Copy

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From: SMART Archive
Sent: Mon, 27 Jul 2020 06:33:26 GMT
To: SMART Core
Subject: PRC Uses Pandemic Response to Promote Traditional Chinese Medicine

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MRN: 20 BEIJING 1272
Date/DTG: Jul 27, 2020 / 270631Z JUL 20
From: AMEMBASSY BEIJING
Action: WASHDC, SECSTATE *ROUTINE*
E.O.: 13526
TAGS: TSPL, PGOV, PREL, SHLH, TBIO, TPHY, SCUL, KPAO, FDA, HHS, NIH, NSF, CN
Captions: SENSITIVE
Reference: 20 CHENGDU 114
Subject: PRC Uses Pandemic Response to Promote Traditional Chinese Medicine

1. ~~(SBU)~~ **Summary and Comment:** Following the outbreak of SARS in 2003 and the 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic, the PRC government began to actively promote traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), and the 2017 National TCM Law officially placed TCM on an equal status with Western medicine in the PRC healthcare system. Meanwhile, a 2016 State Council white paper made clear that the PRC views TCM as a soft power tool and would seek to export TCM to the rest of the world. The COVID-19 pandemic has subsequently given the PRC an avenue to further globalize TCM by having Chinese medical experts recommend TCM treatments for COVID-19 and provide TCM-based medical assistance to countries in Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and South East Asia. Despite these efforts to broaden the acceptance and use of TCM, many Chinese medical sector contacts remain skeptical about the effectiveness of and scientific basis for TCM treatments for COVID-19. In addition to questions about the effectiveness of TCM, concerns also remain about the use of trafficked wildlife in some TCM remedies, which post will report septel. **End Summary and Comment.**

PRC Steps Up Efforts to Globalize TCM

2. ~~(SBU)~~ Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) relies on a range of treatments that include herbal remedies prescribed to prevent and treat infectious diseases and illnesses. During the SARS outbreak in 2003 and the 2009 H1N1 pandemic, China’s health ministry and the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention strongly recommended the use of herbal TCM

treatments and praised their curative effects ([link](#)). In 2016, China's State Council released its first white paper on traditional medicine clearly outlining the intention to "actively introduce TCM to the rest of the world" ([link](#)). The following year, the PRC passed the 2017 National TCM Law officially placing TCM on an equal status with Western medicine in the PRC healthcare system and requiring provincial governments to enhance the promotion of TCM prescriptions ([link](#)).

3. ~~(SBU)~~ During the COVID-19 outbreak, PRC authorities have doubled down on promoting TCM. 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.

4. ~~(SBU)~~ China's 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. Among China's top 10 TCM export destinations, the percent increase of TCM exports to Vietnam (69 percent), India (34 percent), and Malaysia (25 percent) rose by double digits in 2019 alone, according to the PRC General Administration of Customs. The Ministry of Commerce has announced plans to lift restrictions on foreign investment directed towards the processing and production of TCM, which could contribute to further growth of the industry (ref A). Under the Belt and Road Initiative, the PRC Ministry of Commerce and the National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine established 17 TCM centers in China last year to help TCM companies further commercialize traditional medicine for the overseas market, increase TCM exports, and ultimately "enhance the soft power of Chinese culture" ([link](#)).

Seizing the "Opportunity" to Promote TCM During the COVID-19 Pandemic

5. (U) During the COVID-19 pandemic, PRC health experts have promoted the use of TCM for treatment of COVID-19 infected patients. The current outbreak presented an "opportunity" to expand the global use of TCM by integrating it with Western medicine for treatment of COVID-19, said PRC senior government advisor on COVID-19 Zhang Boli in an April 1 interview ([link](#)). In combination with Western medicine, TCM treatments were effective in alleviating symptoms, reducing mortality rates, and improving the rate of recovery for COVID-19 cases, claimed Zhang, referring to PRC National Health Commission (NHC) guidelines. [Note: Based on TCM treatments for COVID-19 cases in Wuhan, the NHC recommended several of the six herbal prescriptions known as the "three formulas and three medicines" for confirmed cases in its *Diagnosis and Treatment Protocol for COVID-19* ([link](#)). These TCM treatments reportedly relieved COVID-19 symptoms such as fever, cough, inflammation, diarrhea, loss of appetite,

nausea, shortness of breath, and fatigue. **End Note.**] The State Council also released a white paper titled *Fighting COVID-19: China in Action* promoting the PRC's use of TCM treatments for COVID-19 ([link](#)). Zhang refuted the notion that China was politicizing the promotion of TCM or engaging in a form of "culture invasion," stressing that "saving lives outmatches everything."

6. (U) The PRC continues to include TCM experts on its medical teams and provide TCM in its medical assistance to countries impacted by COVID-19. PRC medical teams dispatched to Italy in March brought with them over 100,000 boxes of Lianhua Qingwen capsules as medical aid.

[**Note:** Lianhua Qingwen - 莲花清瘟 - capsules contain 13 herbal components such as forsythia fruit and sweet wormwood that are prescribed for relieving fever, cough, and fatigue. TCM in foreign medical assistance from the PRC has mainly included herbal remedies without animal components tied to wildlife trafficking. **End Note.**] Shortly afterwards, the PRC sent about 20,000 boxes of instant TCM herbal mixtures to the Netherlands for distribution to other European countries, including Italy, Germany, France, and Spain. In the Middle East, Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) medical volunteers visited hospitals in Iran and extensively shared their clinical experience with convalescent plasma therapy and TCM, said the head of the Chinese medical team to Iran, Zhou Xiaohang. After Chinese medical experts recommended TCM treatments for COVID-19 during visits to Zimbabwe and Equatorial Guinea in May, Zimbabwe's Health and Child Care Minister Obadiah Moyo announced that Zimbabwe was planning to establish a TCM unit at the Parirenyatwa Group of Hospitals in Harare. China has also dispatched teams of TCM experts to Ethiopia, Cambodia, Iraq, and Laos, while various Chinese companies have donated TCM to countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, and Canada among others.

Mixed Reviews on the Effectiveness of TCM Treatments for COVID-19

7. (U) Publishing the results of his own study in May, leading PRC government medical adviser and prominent respiratory disease expert Zhong Nanshan argued that the TCM herbal capsule Lianhua Qingwen (LHQW) proved particularly effective as an anti-inflammatory and anti-viral treatment for COVID-19 during clinical trials ([link](#)). In a prospective multicenter open-label randomized controlled trial comparing LHQW plus the usual treatment for COVID-19 versus the usual treatment alone in 284 patients, the recovery rate for confirmed COVID-19 cases was significantly greater in the LHQW group (91.5%) compared to the usual treatment group (82.4%). [**Note:** A review of the clinical characteristics of the population in the study showed that most of the patients met the case definition for mild illness and would have been expected to clinically recover from their illness **End Note.**] The median time to symptom recovery was 7 days in the LHQW group versus 10 days in the treatment group. Time to recovery of symptoms such as fever, fatigue, and coughing were shorter in the LHQW group compared to the usual treatment group. The rate of clinical cure (no fever for 3 days, symptom recovery, improvement in chest CT, and two negative SARS-CoV2 RNA tests at least 24 hours apart) was reported to be significantly higher in the LHQW treatment group (78.8%) versus the usual treatment group (66.2%). There were no differences in the rate of conversion to severe cases and no serious adverse events were reported. [**Note:** Online rumors claimed the son of Zhong Nanshan owned a TCM company which, according to many Chinese netizens, explained Zhong's recent strong support of TCM treatments for COVID-19 compared to his silence on TCM during the SARS

outbreak. **End Note.**]

8. ~~(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.

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ESTH: (b)(6)
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ESTH: (b)(6)

Approved By: (b)(6)
Released By: BEIJING: (b)(6)

Info: NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC *ROUTINE*; CIA WASHINGTON DC *ROUTINE*; DIA WASHINGTON DC *ROUTINE*; PACOM IDHS HONOLULU HI *ROUTINE*; DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC *ROUTINE*; CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE *ROUTINE*; ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE *ROUTINE*

XMT: CHENGDU, AMCONSUL; CARACAS, AMEMBASSY; ST PETERSBURG, AMCONSUL

Dissemination Rule: Archive Copy

UNCLASSIFIED
~~SBU~~

From: SMART Archive
Sent: Wed, 27 Nov 2019 07:19:16 GMT
To: SMART Core
Subject: Plague Cases Show China's Crisis Communication Improving, But Public Doubts Remain

UNCLASSIFIED
~~SBU~~



MRN: 19 BEIJING 3056
Date/DTG: Nov 27, 2019 / 270717Z NOV 19
From: AMEMBASSY BEIJING
Action: WASHDC, SECSTATE *ROUTINE*
E.O.: 13526
TAGS: SHLH, KPAO, KMDR, CDC, HHS, NIH, CN
Captions: SENSITIVE
Subject: Plague Cases Show China's Crisis Communication Improving, But Public Doubts Remain

1. ~~(SBU)~~ **Summary and Comment:** On November 12, 2019, Chinese health officials announced that two individuals in Beijing had been diagnosed with pneumonic plague, the only form of the disease that can transmit from person to person. Limited initial details from the government, despite media interest, prompted discussion, concern, and rumors online. There was an insatiable public demand for detailed, accurate, and timely information that health authorities were not able to meet in the first few days after the announcement. China’s ability to respond to health crises and implement risk communication strategies has improved since the 2003 SARS epidemic, and the government’s medical response appears to have prevented further spread of the disease beyond the two patients. However, these plague cases showed communication gaps remain and the public still doubts the timeliness and transparency of government-provided health information. The PRC’s general impulse to control information – in this case related to health – can run counter to effective risk communication and may exacerbate the public’s suspicion that information is being purposefully withheld. **End Summary and Comment.**

Case History

2. ~~(SBU)~~ On November 3, Beijing’s Chaoyang Hospital admitted a married couple with severe pneumonia who had been transferred by ambulance from Inner Mongolia after their symptoms worsened. The hospital diagnosed the patients with pneumonic plague on November 11 and the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC) confirmed the diagnoses on

November 12. Authorities then transferred the couple to Beijing's Ditan Hospital for specialized care. China CDC believes the husband likely contracted the disease while working the soil on his farm after a large rodent die-off in the area. Chinese authorities informed the World Health Organization (WHO) on November 13 and on the same day, WHO's Coordinator for Disease Control in China told media that "the National Health Commission is implementing efforts to contain and treat the identified cases and increase surveillance." The binding WHO International Health Regulations state national health commissions should inform WHO within the 24 hours of learning of a suspected plague case. 447 individuals in Beijing were quarantined for medical observation based on their possible exposure to the disease via the infected couple. Health officials notified one American citizen on November 13 that he had been potentially exposed to the plague and subsequently placed him in quarantine until November 20.

SARS Outbreak Highlighted Risk Communication Deficiencies

3. ~~(SBU)~~ Chaoyang Hospital is one of Beijing's primary municipal hospitals and along with Ditan Hospital was involved in the 2003 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak that resulted in 5,327 cases and 349 deaths in China. The government's initial lack of transparency, including a decision to deny SARS cases had reached Beijing in order to prevent disturbing a National People's Congress meeting taking place in the capital, caused significant public and international doubts regarding China's risk communication transparency. The controversy resulted in the firing of Beijing's mayor and the health minister.

4. ~~(SBU)~~ After the SARS outbreak, WHO revised its International Health Regulations to include risk communication as one of the core capacity areas for national health commissions. Stung by criticism of its SARS response, China's government sought to improve its operating procedures over the following years, including through a capacity building collaboration with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (U.S. CDC). Beginning in 2006, the U.S. CDC and China CDC launched a Global Disease Detection program to strengthen China's capacity to detect, respond to, and prevent emerging health threats. As part of this program, the United States placed U.S. CDC experts in China to support China CDC in training field epidemiologists to investigate disease outbreak as well as training health officials in risk communication during health outbreaks. U.S. CDC continues to provide technical support to China's Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP), and in 2015, helped launch a Western FETP to strengthen the epidemiological capacity of underdeveloped provinces, including Inner Mongolia and provinces in western China. FETP graduates were among the responders to the plague investigation.

5. (U) The China National Health Commission integrated communication responses into its public crisis response plans, and the government's actions during the 2013 H7N9 influenza outbreak received praise from the international community, while surveys showed that public trust in government health information had risen. China also scored high on the 2019 Global Health Security Index for risk communication, and its 2014 "Overall Contingency Plan for National Public Emergencies" enumerates communication methods to release information to the public. However, the summer 2018 vaccine scandal in which two Chinese vaccine makers sold poor-quality vaccines for infants, prompting China's drug regulator to review all vaccine producers in the country, and the April 2019 closing of a hospital for giving fake HPV vaccines

to patients, renewed public doubt in the government's ability to manage and share health crisis information in a timely and transparent manner.

State Media Remains Factual...

6. ~~(SBU)~~ The Beijing Chaoyang district government released a short statement the night of November 12, stating that two people had been diagnosed with plague and that, "relevant prevention and control measures have been implemented." Following the statement, major state media outlets, news portals, and social media platforms widely reported and reprinted statements issued by health commissions in Beijing and Inner Mongolia as well as the China CDC. These press reports focused on the low risk of the disease spreading in Beijing and stated there was no need to panic. Many news stories also conveyed medical messages about plague, encouraging the public to take precautions to cut off epidemic transmission. News reports were timely and factual but lacking in detailed information. An op-ed in the November 13 China Daily English edition – the PRC's messenger to external English-speaking audiences – called for the release of timely and transparent information about the plague cases to avoid rumors and the spreading of panic, citing the government's poor response to the 2003 SARS epidemic. Many international outlets also covered the story, often with more sensational headlines.

Social Media Reflects the Public's Demand for Facts and Caution of Rumors

7. ~~(SBU)~~ On Chinese social media, two popular threads of conversation under hashtags related to plague were viewed collectively more than 60 million times. The Embassy's Weibo account released a factual article about plague that was very popular. Many commenters were concerned about the plague and asked other netizens not to spread rumors and not to eat wild animals. Said one, "Do not eat wild animals, bamboo rat and groundhogs all contain pathogens." Many also mentioned the Black Plague in the 13th century. On Weibo, most netizens blamed the plague on those who eat or touch wild animals.

8. (U) Many netizens speculated that Chinese censors controlled social media postings related to plague, as had been reported in international media. Some netizens complained that "cover-ups only make things worse!" Others reacted to reports that Chaoyang Hospital's diagnosing physician had her November 13 social media post about the cases censored and wondered about the health of the doctors treating the patients. Media reported that the doctor, in a since-deleted social media post titled, "Are you afraid of plague? Beijing's pneumonic plague patients first doctors have something to say," described the patients arriving to Beijing on November 3 with severe pneumonia and noting that she originally had trouble diagnosing which pathogen caused the illness, but suspected it was rare. She defended health officials not making an announcement on the patients' conditions sooner, stating that official health notices must be accurate and rigorous, and therefore, "cannot be issued casually."

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

Signature:

BRANSTAD

Drafted By:
Cleared By:

BEIJING: (b)(6)
ESTH: (b)(6)
CONS: (b)(6)
PD: (b)(6)
HHS/OGA: (b)(6)
HHS/CDC/CGH: (b)(6)

Approved By:
Released By:
Info:

ESTH: (b)(6)
BEIJING: (b)(6)
WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC *ROUTINE*; CIA WASHINGTON DC *ROUTINE*; PACOM IDHS HONOLULU HI *ROUTINE*; NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC *ROUTINE*; CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE *ROUTINE*; ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE *ROUTINE*
XMT: CARACAS, AMEMBASSY; ST PETERSBURG, AMCONSUL

Dissemination Rule: Archive Copy

UNCLASSIFIED
~~SBU~~

From: SMART Archive
Sent: Wed, 24 Jan 2018 06:45:05 GMT
To: SMART Core
Subject: A Most Inconvenient Year: Central China's Interference in U.S. Activities in 2017
Attachments: Consulate Wuhan BFBs 2017.pdf, Reciprocity Counter-examples- Chinese Chicago CG Hong Lei in U.S. 2016-2017.pdf

UNCLASSIFIED

~~SBU~~



MRN: 18 WUHAN 10
Date/DTG: Jan 24, 2018 / 240643Z JAN 18
From: AMCONSUL WUHAN
Action: WASHDC, SECSTATE *ROUTINE*
E.O.: 13526
TAGS: PREL, PGOV, KPAO, SOCI, CN, SCUL, OEXC, OIIP, OFDP
Captions: SENSITIVE
Reference: A) 16 BEIJING 470
B) 14 BEIJING 2146
C) 17 BEIJING 2212
D) 17 BEIJING 706
E) 17 WUHAN 148
Subject: A Most Inconvenient Year: Central China's Interference in U.S. Activities in 2017

1. ~~(SBU)~~ **Summary and Comment.** A review of U.S. Consulate Wuhan's 2017 activities shows how Chinese provincial governments continue to routinely violate the spirit of the U.S.-China Consular Convention by blocking or interfering with our diplomatic outreach. Such interference is particularly bad for our public affairs team (Refs A-B), and clearly aims to prevent U.S. government engagement on Chinese campuses (Ref C) and to muzzle U.S. government messaging. But it goes far beyond this, causing difficulties with all aspects of the Consulate's activities. A brief Internet search and summary of Chinese Consul General to Chicago Hong Lei's activities (attached) shows, by contrast, uninhibited Chinese access to U.S. campuses and high-level state officials, including unimpeded Chinese messaging to large public audiences.

(b)(5)

End Summary and Comment.

2. ~~(SBU)~~ Consulate Wuhan documented 39 instances in 2017 when a Chinese government entity cancelled or substantially altered U.S. Consulate Wuhan programming, meetings or

activities. The full list and details are attached to this cable. Article 22(c) through (e) of the Consular Convention between the United States of America and the People's Republic of China states that routine consular functions include "contributing to the development of economic, cultural, scientific and tourist relations between the sending and receiving state," "promoting in various ways the friendly relations between the sending and receiving state," and "ascertaining by all lawful means conditions and developments in the political, commercial, economic, cultural, educational and scientific-technological life of the receiving State, and reporting thereon to the government of the sending State." That convention entered into force on February 19, 1982.

Sorry, Our Students Don't Have Time to Listen to the Ambassador

3. ~~(SBU)~~ Of those 39 instances, the most notable were:

- The Hubei Foreign Affairs' Office (FAO) rejection of our request for Ambassador Branstad to address university students in Wuhan because all students were "too busy studying the spirit of the 19th Party Congress" to listen to him
- Hunan Province and the Sanyou Environmental Company's blocking of two U.S. diplomats from a U.S.-China energy forum organized as part of the U.S. State Department-sponsored EcoPartnerships program
- The Hubei FAO's cancellation of an "American Culture Week" after months of planning by a Chinese and U.S. university
- The Henan Province FAO's refusal to support our public affairs officer's visit to a museum that received a \$50,000 U.S. government "Ambassador Fund for Cultural Preservation" grant
- The Hubei FAO's refusal to arrange a visit by a State Department nurse to a hospital where diplomats are treated
- Jiangxi and Hunan Provinces' inability to arrange a single meeting for our new Consul General with a provincial government leader, despite repeated requests over five months.

4. ~~(SBU)~~ The Chinese often cancelled activities abruptly just one or two working days in advance—and sometimes with only a few hours' notice—leaving the Consulate insufficient time to make alternate visit or meeting arrangements. Our Consul General was summoned with a day's notice to a hastily-arranged meeting with a vice governor in Hubei Province on the sidelines of a forum, leaving little time for preparation. When the Consul General wanted to complain to the Hunan FAO director about U.S. diplomats being blocked from the EcoPartnerships event, we literally could not get the director on the phone, and a lower level official said all such communication had to be made in the form of a faxed "diplomatic note." Such behavior displayed a consistent lack of respect and consideration for the U.S. government, and for international norms of diplomatic behavior.

5. ~~(SBU)~~ It's often unclear to the Consulate who, specifically, has cancelled an event or meeting and why. Chinese partners sometimes privately tell us that security or other Chinese government officials have approached them and warned them not to meet with us. Official cancellations often come with the time-honored explanation that a requested meeting is simply "inconvenient" (*bu fangbian*). Other excuses range on a spectrum of credibility, with provincial officials' most innovative reason in recent months being that the people we wish to meet with

are too busy studying "Xi Jinping Thought" or the "Spirit of the 19th Party Congress" (Ref E).

Seriously? A Kids' Bike Race?

6. ~~(SBU)~~ Even the most benign events and activities suddenly become "inconvenient" when U.S. diplomats become involved, forcing us to curb our own outreach out of concern that we will get our non-government Chinese partners and contacts in trouble. As just one example, a Children's Day bike ride planned by a local Chinese-run bicycle shop in Wuhan was postponed and ultimately cancelled, after local officials insisted the Consulate needed to send a formal "diplomatic note" if we wished to participate. We sent the note, after which officials then said that two weeks was insufficient time to approve Consulate participation.

7. ~~(SBU)~~ Not all trends in central China were negative. However, the challenging environment makes diplomatic outreach and meetings that would be routine in other countries seem like huge breakthroughs in China. As one example, after years of failed attempts, Consulate Wuhan officials in 2017 were finally able to physically access a U.S. taxpayer-funded "American Culture Center" in Henan Province, after it moved from a public university to a private affiliate. What would have been an unexceptional visit to a U.S.-funded facility became, in the context of China's aggressive interference, a rare public outreach victory.

Signature: FOUSS

Drafted By: WUHAN: (b)(6)
Cleared By: CONS/AG: (b)(6)
MGT: (b)(6)
PD: (b)(6)

Approved By: EXEC/LEG: (b)(6)

Released By: WUHAN: (b)(6)

Info: CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE ROUTINE

Attachments: Consulate Wuhan BFBs 2017.pdf, Reciprocity Counter-examples-Chinese Chicago CG Hong Lei in U.S. 2016-2017.pdf

Dissemination Rule: Archive Copy

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~~SBU~~

CONSULATE WUHAN

INSTANCES OF CHINESE INTERFERENCE WITH ROUTINE U.S. CONSULAR FUNCTIONS

2017

The following is a list of instances where U.S. Consulate Wuhan programming, meetings or activities was cancelled or substantially altered, along with other examples of Chinese government interference in routine consular activities.

Article 22(c) through (e) of the Consular Convention between the United States of America and the People's Republic of China states that such consular functions include "contributing to the development of economic, cultural, scientific and tourist relations between the sending and receiving state," "promoting in various ways the friendly relations between the sending and receiving state," and "ascertaining by all lawful means conditions and developments in the political, commercial, economic, cultural, educational and scientific-technological life of the receiving State, and reporting thereon to the government of the sending State." That convention entered into force on February 19, 1982.

1. ~~(SBU)~~ Jiangxi Province Cancels CG's Meeting with Government Leadership, Blocks Talk with Students

DATE: December 2017

LOCATION: Jiangxi Province

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL OR OFFICE: Jiangxi Foreign Affairs Office (FAO)

SUMMARY: The Consulate sent a formal dipnote request nearly a month in advance of a Dec. 19-20 introductory visit by Consul General Jamie Fouss to Jiangxi Province, requesting the CG meet a provincial leader at the Vice Governor level and give remarks to students at Jiangxi Normal University. The FAO asked about the content of the CG's planned remarks and we sent a rough outline; the FAO then said students would be too busy with final exams to listen to the CG (final exams at most Chinese universities actually take place in mid-January ahead of the Chinese New Year break). Two working days before the visit, the FAO said the CG could meet an Executive Vice Governor, and we re-arranged a factory visit to accommodate the timing of this meeting. One working day later the FAO cancelled this meeting, and said no other Vice Governors were available to meet with the CG, either. The Consulate had hoped that CG Fouss could raise an important advocacy case involving a Jiangxi-based company (the Jade Art Group) which violated U.S. law and defrauded U.S. investors, according to a U.S. court ruling. Instead, we were only able to pass a letter about the case to a Jiangxi FAO deputy-director.

2. ~~(SBU)~~ Wuhan City Dis-Invites Consulate From Tourism Conference, One Day After Inviting Us

DATE: December 2017

LOCATION: Wuhan

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL OR OFFICE: Wuhan Foreign Affairs Office (FAO)

SUMMARY: On Friday, December 8, the Wuhan FAO sent the consulate's protocol assistant an invitation for a Consulate official to attend, but not speak at, a tourism conference two days later, on Sunday, December 10. We responded that our Consular Chief Terry Mobley would attend. On Saturday, December 9, around 11 p.m. the night before the event, the Wuhan FAO contact sent a WeChat message, saying "due to significant changes in the content of the tourism conference, foreign mission representatives are no longer invited to the conference tomorrow."

3. ~~(SBU)~~ Wuhan Institute of Virology Cancels Meeting

DATE: December 2017

LOCATION: Wuhan

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL OR OFFICE: Wuhan Institute of Virology

SUMMARY: The Consulate reached out to this Institute's international liaison unit to arrange an informal meeting over coffee, so we could tee up a visit by the Consul General to the P4 lab for studying infectious diseases, which the Institute operates. A day before the meeting the liaison contacted the Consulate to cancel, saying they now had an "official" meeting they had to attend instead. The Consulate had twice in the past three years made official requests by dipnote to visit the lab, both of which were rejected.

4. ~~(SBU)~~ U.S. Diplomats Blocked from Attending State Department and NDRC-sponsored "EcoPartnerships" Event

DATE: November 2017

LOCATION: Changsha, Hunan Province

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL OR OFFICE: Unclear; either the Hunan Sanyou Environmental Technology Company and/or the Hunan Province Foreign Affairs Office (FAO)

SUMMARY: In January 2017, a Stony Brook University official notified the U.S. Embassy and U.S. Consulate Wuhan about a "Sino-U.S. Energy and Environment Forum" planned for Changsha, Hunan Province on October 12-14, as part of a U.S. State Department and NDRC sponsored "EcoPartnerships" program. Stony Brook University and Tongji University planned to establish a "Sino-US Energy and Environment Innovation Research Center" at the Sanyou Company as part of the forum. We notified the official that Consul General Fouss planned to attend and give remarks. The organizers postponed the event from October until December 4-5, when the CG was on leave, so on November 9 we notified the Stony Brook official that a diplomat from the Embassy's ESTH unit, a U.S. Embassy Science Fellow and Consulate Wuhan's Econ-ESTH officer would attend, but not the CG. On Nov. 20 the Consulate sent a formal dipnote to the Hunan FAO notifying them of our attendance at this forum. On Nov. 28, one working day before the forum, Ms. Guo Dian from the Sanyou Company informed Consulate Wuhan that only the Embassy Science Fellow could attend the forum, and disinvited the two diplomats. Sanyou followed up with a letter explaining that the company needed one month's advance notice to get permission to invite diplomats to the event, so it was too late. When the Wuhan CG attempted to directly complain to the Hunan FAO Director, who had just a few weeks earlier hosted him for lunch, the Hunan FAO's Yang Qi told Consulate staff the director was "busy these days." Calls to the cell and office numbers on the FAO director's business card went unanswered.

5. ~~(SBU)~~ All Hunan Officials Too Busy Studying the "Spirit of the 19th Party Congress" to Meet with U.S. Diplomat

DATE: November 2017

LOCATION: Changsha, Hunan Province

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL OR OFFICE: Hunan Foreign Affairs Office (FAO), working level official Yang Qi

SUMMARY: As part of planned visit to Changsha for the forum, Consulate Wuhan requested by formal dipnote meetings with the Hunan Province Health and Family Commission and Center for Disease Control, the Hunan Province Department of Agriculture to learn more about how it would implement a \$100 million World Bank loan for soil remediation, a Hunan Low Carbon Innovative Research Center run by an IVLP nominee and provincial DRC official, and a meeting with the provincial Environmental Protection Bureau to discuss its planned trip to the United States to meet with U.S. EPA and California State environmental officials. The Hunan FAO's Yang Qi complained to Consulate staff that the Consulate was sending "too many" dipnotes, and that health officials were not available. He asked "what does the World Bank loan have to do with the United States?" (the United States is the bank's key founder and currently contributes about 16 percent of its budget, far more than any other country). He said the EPB no longer planned to visit the United States. Two working days before the visit, he said all provincial officials were too busy "studying the spirit of the 19th Party Congress" to meet with U.S. diplomats. One working day before the visit, the DRC official and IVLP nominee called to cancel our meeting, saying he now had to attend a "team-building" session at the time we requested.

6. ~~(SBU)~~ IVLP Alumnus Blows Off U.S. Diplomat, Has Underling Walk Diplomat Aimlessly Along River

DATE: November 2017

LOCATION: Changsha, Hunan Province

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE OFFICE: IVLP alumnus Sun Cheng, head of the Green Hunan NGO

SUMMARY: An Embassy-based diplomat requested a meeting with Sun and a visit to Green Hunan as part of his investigation into China's "river chiefs" program to enlist NGO and citizens' help in monitoring water quality. While initially enthusiastic, Sun later said he was unable to meet with the U.S. diplomat and went so far as to dis-invite the diplomat from a Green Hunan event without giving any reasons. He grudgingly agreed to have the diplomat tour the Green Hunan office at a different time with another assistant but insisted that he could not meet with the diplomat in person. One Embassy contact said that Sun was no longer as welcoming to diplomats after begin promoted from research inspector to head of Green Hunan. Sun did not respond to the Consulate's invitation to attend our "Going Green," environmentally-themed July 4 reception and display and promote his NGO's work at a table along with other NGOs and businesses.

Entered By: (b)(6)

7. ~~(SBU)~~ Hunan Says No Government Leader Available to Meet Consul General on His First Visit to the Province

DATE: November 2017

LOCATION: Hunan Province

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL OR OFFICE: Hunan Foreign Affairs Office (FAO)

SUMMARY: The Consulate sent a formal dipnote request nearly four weeks in advance of a Nov. 7-8 introductory visit by Consul General Jamie Fouss to Hunan Province, requesting the CG meet a provincial leader at the Vice Governor level, in addition to other activities. A week before the visit the Hunan FAO informed us that no Vice Governors were available to meet with him. Instead, the provincial FAO Director—who has very little decision-making authority—hosted a lunch.

Entered By: (b)(6)

8. ~~(SBU)~~ School Blocks Students From Coffee with the Consul General at the U.S. Consulate, With One Day's Notice

DATE: November 2017

LOCATION: Wuhan, Hubei Province

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL OR OFFICE: School of Foreign Languages, Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST)

SUMMARY: The founder of an educational equality NGO planned to bring 14 undergraduate students from HUST's School of Foreign Languages to visit the Consulate and to discuss cross-cultural communication with Wuhan's Consul General. The NGO's founder himself graduated from the school, and he as an alumnus wanted to create an opportunity for extracurricular enrichment for the students. The day before the meeting, the NGO founder notified the Consulate that school officials had called him to say there was a "procedural error" with the plan to take a group of students to the Consulate and asked him to cancel the meeting. He shared with a Consulate staff member the school's warning to him that any foreign government or religious presence on university campuses or even any foreign government or religious involvement with college students was deemed to be "crossing the line" and was strictly forbidden. The late cancellation left us insufficient time to schedule other activities for the Consul General.

9. ~~(SBU)~~ Tencent Cancels Live WeChat Session About Study in the United States

DATE: November 2017

LOCATION: Wuhan, Hubei Province

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL OR OFFICE: Unknown

SUMMARY: During a casual lunch hosted by Consul General Fouss for Hubei Foreign Affairs Office staff to find out how we can better cooperate, our Public Affairs Officer learned that officials from Tencent, the Chinese company that operates the popular social media chat application WeChat, had cancelled a planned live WeChat event the following week about study in the United States. No reason was given, but a TenCent contact told our Consulate staff that it was "likely" because of the visit of U.S. President Donald Trump to China.

10. ~~(SBU)~~ Coffee-shop Declines to Hold PAO Talk With Students, Just Hours Before Event

DATE: November 2017

LOCATION: Wuhan, Hubei Province

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL OR OFFICE: Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST) Foreign Affairs Office (FAO)

SUMMARY: Wuhan's Public Affairs Officer (PAO) planned to give a talk at a coffee-shop on the HUST campus. Three hours prior to the event, coffee-shop staff told Consulate officials that

due to the high number of students who had registered to attend, the event was moved to a student lounge at a nearby driving school. The coffee-shop's CEO came into the coffee-shop at one point to make sure no event was taking place. During the PAO's talk at the driving school, school staff came in to observe, and asked Consulate staff to take down the consulate's pull-up poster.

11. ~~(SBU)~~ Hubei FAO Cancels "American Culture Week" After Months of Communication

DATE: October 2017

LOCATION: Wuhan, Hubei Province

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICE: Hubei Foreign Affairs Office (FAO) and Wuhan University FAO

SUMMARY: For months, Bob Eckhart, U.S. director of the American Culture Center (ACC) between Wuhan University and Ohio State University, had been in contact with his counterpart, Wuhan University's Liu Junping, about holding an "American Culture Week" at Wuhan University and a corresponding "Chinese Culture Week" at Ohio State University from October 23-27, 2017. He had also been in touch with Wuhan University Foreign Affairs Office (FAO) director Cheng Xueming. The U.S. Consulate on Sept. 27 sent a formal diplomatic note requesting to join the event, and a U.S. Embassy Cultural Affairs Officer also planned to join. On October 12, the Hubei FAO called and said that, according to the Wuhan University FAO, the ACC was in a "dormant" condition, and that the original Ohio State University and Wuhan University cooperation time period had "expired." The ACC's China director Liu Junping claimed he "didn't know anything" about a planned American Culture Week, despite Bob Eckhart's correspondence, and the Wuhan FAO made similar remarks. Mr. Liu, although a frequent participant in national-level ACC conferences, refused to meet with his counterpart Eckhart or the Embassy Cultural Affairs Officer in Wuhan.

12. ~~(SBU)~~ Hubei FAO Rejects Request for Ambassador to Address Students; Says FAO Has "No Plan" to Receive Ambassador

DATE: October 10, 2017

LOCATION: Wuhan

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICE: Hubei Foreign Affairs Office (FAO), Ms. Wu Lijuan

SUMMARY: Consulate Wuhan sent a formal dipnote request in late September asking for the Hubei FAO's assistance in arranging a talk by Ambassador Branstad to students at Wuhan's Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST) during his visit to Wuhan on October 16-17. On October 10, after repeated inquiries, the Hubei FAO's Wu Lijuan said it was an "inconvenient" time for such a speech given the opening of the 19th Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Congress on October 18, and said students would be too busy studying the "spirit of the 19th Party Congress" to listen to the Ambassador speak. Contacted the next day about approving the participation of a government-sanctioned Catholic priest's hosting of Ambassador Branstad at a historical Catholic church in Wuhan, Ms. Wu declined to respond and said with irritation that the Hubei FAO had "no plan to receive the Ambassador."

13. ~~(SBU)~~ Hubei FAO Disinvites Consulate Officials to Enshi Selenium Cities Conference

DATE: September 20, 2017

LOCATION: Enshi, Hubei Province

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICE: Hubei Foreign Affairs Office (FAO)

SUMMARY: The Hubei FAO sent a WeChat to disinvite the Consulate from the Selenium Cities Conference in Enshi. The rejection came as a surprise since the FAO had originally invited us to attend. The FAO said too many people had already accepted the invitation and they didn't want to overburden Enshi officials. As a result, the FAO decided to disinvite foreign mission attendees. In checking on the website associated with the event, only four such representatives of foreign missions had accepted the invitation: two from the U.S. Consulate and two from the South Korea Consulate in Wuhan. When asked if the Consulate could proceed with scheduled meetings on the day following the conference, that too was denied.

14. ~~(SBU)~~ CG Disinvited From "Eye On Africa" Photo Exhibition And Charity Sale

DATE: September 2017

LOCATION: Wuhan, Hubei Province

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICE: Hubei Foreign Affairs Office (FAO)

SUMMARY: Mr. Shi, vice president of Hubei Photographers' Association, wanted to invite CG Fouss and PAO Michael Dubray to participate in an "Eye on Africa" photo exhibition and charity sales event organized by a Hubei photographer. Shi and his staff reported the U.S. Consulate and South Korean Consulate's participation to the Hubei FAO. The FAO told Shi that because the 19th Party Congress was approaching, and the exhibition theme had little relation with the United States or South Korea, it would be better not to invite foreign government guests to the opening. Shi suggested to Consulate staff that the Consul General could instead come see the exhibit on his own a few hours after the event, and have a discussion with the photographer. But he later withdrew that offer as well, telling Consulate staff he was worried he would come under "pressure."

15. ~~(SBU)~~ Children's Day Bike Ride Cancelled

DATE: August 2017

LOCATION: Wuhan

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL OR OFFICE: Wuhan City Foreign Affairs Office (FAO)

SUMMARY: A Chinese-run bike shop planned a Children's Day bike ride at a local park. They received all the proper permissions. Then they invited the U.S. Consulate to join. When the park officials heard that U.S. Consulate officials were to attend, they demanded a diplomatic note to the local FAO. This was two weeks before the event. The Consulate sent the diplomatic note, but were informed that it would be unlikely for the diplomatic note to be approved in time for the event, if at all. The event was initially postponed and then cancelled.

16. ~~(SBU)~~ Wuhan Police Delay Requested Meeting For One Year

DATE: August 2017 (updated December 2017)

LOCATION: Wuhan

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICE: Wuhan Public Security Bureau (PSB)

SUMMARY: ConOff in late 2016 requested a meeting with the Wuhan PSB (the police) about a new policing program cited in the Wuhan media sources that reportedly focused on foreign residents in Wuhan. The PSB told ConOff to wait until March 2017 when the new program was more developed. ConOff followed up twice, in March and August 2017, but the PSB refused to

give a substantive response. A year after the original request, ConOff and Wuhan's RSO finally were able to meet with the PSB.

17. ~~(SBU)~~ Senior City Officials Skip Annual Wuhan City Dialogue with AmCham, With No Notice or Reason Given

DATE: August 30, 2017

LOCATION: Wuhan

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICE: Wuhan City Government

SUMMARY: Central China AmCham officials assured Wuhan's Foreign Commercial Services unit that Vice Mayor Xu Honglan and Commerce Department Director Chen Ping would attend the Aug. 30 annual Wuhan City dialogue with AmCham members, so we planned to have Wuhan Consul General Fouss attend. When Wuhan's Principle Commercial Officer (PCO) arrived at the event he learned that neither city official would attend; no reason was given. The top official representing the city was a Vice Secretary General (Chen Mingquan) who had only been in his job for three days. The PCO was able to call CG Fouss before he had left home and tell him not to come to the event.

18. ~~(SBU)~~ Hubei Province, Wuhan City Indefinitely Postpone Courtesy Meetings with New Consul General

DATE: August 2017

LOCATION: Wuhan

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICE: Hubei Province Government, Wuhan City Government

SUMMARY: The Consulate on August 18 sent a formal dipnote to the Hubei Province Foreign Affairs Office (FAO) requesting courtesy meetings for new Consul General Jamie Fouss with a Hubei Vice Governor and Hubei FAO leadership on August 31, and with the Wuhan Mayor, a Vice Mayor and city FAO leadership on September 1. Ten days later (and three days before our requested meeting), after repeated requests for a response, the Hubei FAO said the vice governor was not available on the date requested, but did not offer any alternate dates or times. On August 29, again after repeated requests for an update, the city FAO informed us that the mayor could not meet on the date we requested, but did not propose any new dates or times. The late responses gave us insufficient time to schedule other meetings or activities for CG Fouss on those days.

19. ~~(SBU)~~ Hubei FAO Rejects Visiting State Department Nurse's Visit to Hospital Where Consular Staff are Treated

DATE: August 2017

LOCATION: Hubei Province

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICE: Ms. Wu Lijuan, Hubei Foreign Affairs Office (FAO)

SUMMARY: The State Department's Chengdu-based nurse, who covers Consulate Wuhan in the absence of a dedicated nurse, hoped to visit Union West Hospital on August 18, to get a hospital tour and meet with an Ob-Gyn who may assist with pre-natal visits by a post officer and EFM. The hospital is home to an American-run VIP clinic for foreigners, which serves Wuhan's consular community. The hospital told us that we should submit a formal request to the Hubei FAO to approve such a visit. Post made the formal request by dipnote to the Hubei FAO on

August 16, and the FAO rejected the visit, saying two days was not enough time to "process" the visit.

20. ~~(SBU)~~ Jiangxi to New Consul General: We're Super Busy, Get Back to Us Later this Fall

DATE: August 16, 2017

LOCATION: Jiangxi Province

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICE: Jiangxi Foreign Affairs Office (FAO)

SUMMARY: In response to our dipnote requesting an introductory trip to Jiangxi Province by new Wuhan Consul General Jamie Fouss in September, the Jiangxi FAO responded that there wasn't a single government official who could host us in September or early October because they were "super busy with other stuff." They recommended the CG visit in late October or November instead. The Consulate had hoped that CG Fouss could raise an important advocacy case by requesting that Jiangxi Province help enforce a U.S. court ruling that found that a Jiangxi-based company (the Jade Art Group) violated U.S. law and defrauded U.S. investors.

21. ~~(SBU)~~ Jiangxi to Outgoing Consul General: No Goodbye Trip for You

DATE: July 25, 2017

LOCATION: Jiangxi Province

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICE: Jiangxi Foreign Affairs Office (FAO)

SUMMARY: After initially responding positively to Consul General Zadrozny's request by dipnote to make a farewell visit to Jiangxi Province, the provincial FAO cancelled with less than three days' notice. The CG had hoped to introduce new Ambassador Terry Branstad's priorities, visit a bonded logistics center in Nanchang, and explore ways to increase U.S. exports to Jiangxi Province.

22. ~~(SBU)~~ Pre-Advance Health Visit to Henan Province Scotched Two Days Prior

DATE: June 26, 2017

LOCATION: Henan Province

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICE: Ministry of Health

SUMMARY: Two days before Consulate Wuhan's Economic Officer and Pol-Econ LES were due to go to sites in Henan Province to join a "pre-advance" trip on June 28 and 29 for a possible visit by Health and Human Services Secretary Price, Embassy staff called off the entire Henan part of the advance trip. The Chinese Health Ministry reportedly said they did not want a high-level U.S. visitor to go to sites in Henan related to U.S.-China health cooperation to fight tuberculosis (TB) because they were not "positive" enough. Researchers from the U.S. health agency NIAID (part of NIH) have longstanding cooperation with the Henan Chest Hospital to fight TB, and the U.S. and China recently launched a clinical trial that could have a global, positive impact on how TB is diagnosed and treated (see [17 WUHAN 48](#)).

23. ~~(SBU)~~ Seldom-Visited Ganzhou City Says It's Got Too Much Work to Host Consul General

DATE: June 2017

LOCATION: Ganzhou, Jiangxi Province

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICE: Jiangxi Province Foreign Affairs Office (FAO)

SUMMARY: The Jiangxi Province FAO informed us by dipnote that they could not host a visit by Consul General Joe Zadrozny to the remote, seldom visited city of Ganzhou because local officials had too many visits to deal with already. They made the formal response two weeks after the Consulate's request by dipnote. The Consulate had asked to visit a local university to have the Consul General give remarks to students, visit a U.S.-invested joint venture making batteries for electric vehicles, and visit a tungsten-smelting company and mine.

24. ~~(SBU)~~ Xiangyang City FAO Take Economic Officer to Sludge Factory Instead of Cancer Village

DATE: June 2017

LOCATION: Xiangyang, Hubei Province

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICE: Hubei Province and Xiangyang City Foreign Affairs Offices (FAOs)

SUMMARY: The Hubei Province FAO and Xiangyang FAO approved a request by dipnote for EconOff to visit the city's Zhaiwan Village to find out about the "success story" by which local officials, working with the Green Han River NGO and with some foreign financial assistance, provided clean drinking water to Zhaiwan and other nearby villages. A day before the visit, the Xiangyang FAO informed us that we could not visit Zhaiwan Village because it was busy with anti-flood exercises. The Xiangyang FAO took EconOff to a wastewater treatment facility instead. At a meeting organized at EconOff's request to talk about the Zhaiwan Village case, officials tried to avoid the topic, either because the FAO had not passed on EconOff's request in the dipnote, or because they had been instructed not to discuss the issue. An unidentified woman recorded the entire meeting with her smartphone from the side, without informing EconOff or asking for permission.

25. ~~(SBU)~~ Wuhan PAO Dis-invited to Kaifeng City Museum that Received a \$50,000 Ambassador's Fund Grant from the U.S. Government

DATE: June 2017

LOCATION: Kaifeng, Henan Province

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICE: Henan Province Foreign Affairs Office (FAO)

SUMMARY: Wuhan's Public Affairs Officer (PAO) planned to visit Kaifeng Museum on June 13, 2017, but was dis-invited a day before the visit because the FAO had not officially approved his visit. The PAO previously visited the Kaifeng Museum directly (without the FAO's assistance) in 2015, was impressed by its original *nianhua* (woodcut painting) collections and conservation efforts, and then helped the museum secure an Ambassador Fund for Cultural Preservation grant of \$50,000. The PAO became good friends with the curator. When our local staff contacted the curator again in May 2017, he welcomed the PAO to visit again to learn how the museum had used the grant, and designated a lower level museum official to handle our visit. In the afternoon the day before the visit, that official insisted that we send a formal "dipnote" about our visit to the Henan FAO, otherwise it would be "hard for them to cooperate." After our local staff sent the according note on the morning of June 13, the Henan FAO said it was sent with too short notice and refused to approve the trip. The Kaifeng Museum official and curator then refused to meet with us in the museum or in any outside location, although they did allow us to enter the museum on our own to see the woodcut painting production line and talk to the artist.

26. ~~(SBU)~~ Henan Province FAO Cancels Water Bureau Meeting with Two Days' Notice

DATE: May 2017

LOCATION: Zhengzhou, Henan Province

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICE: Henan Province Water Bureau and Henan Province Foreign Affairs Office (FAO)

SUMMARY: The Henan Province Water Bureau informed an Embassy Science Fellow and Embassy ESTH Officer that their planned meeting two days later had been cancelled by the Henan Province FAO, which said it was "not a good time to visit Henan." They had requested the visit to discuss China's South to North Water Diversion project, which passes through Henan Province.

27. ~~(SBU)~~ Ganzhou, Jiangxi Province FAO Refuses to Help with Outreach Visit

DATE: May 2017

LOCATION: Jiangxi Province

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICE: Ganzhou Foreign Affairs Office (FAO)

SUMMARY: A U.S. Consulate Guangzhou Consular Officer and Guangzhou local consular staff requested the Ganzhou City, Jiangxi Province FAO's help in setting up an outreach visit. They requested a visit to a tungsten mine and smelting operation, the Ganzhou environmental protection bureau, Gannan Normal University, and Gannan Medical University. The FAO declined to help set up any of those meetings. The Consular Officer proceeded to visit a U.S. company, Farasis, Wenqing School, and a travel agency, which were the only three organizations willing to communicate directly with local consular staff and to meet.

28. ~~(SBU)~~ Shiyan, Hubei Province FAO Refuses to Help with Outreach Visit

DATE: May 2017

LOCATION: Shiyan, Hubei Province

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICE: Hubei Foreign Affairs Office (FAO)

SUMMARY: An Embassy Beijing Consular Officer requested the Shiyan City, Hubei Province FAO's help in setting up an outreach visit. He requested a visit to the Shiyan #2 Middle School, the Dongfeng Cummins auto components company, and the Shiyan Tourism Bureau. The FAO declined to help set up any of those meetings. The Consular Officer proceeded to visit with a private school, visited the Wudangshan tourism area and Kung-Fu schools, and met with a local American citizen Warden. The FAO said they (1) could not accommodate the visit because they were busy with the Daoist Forum that was taking place at the same time as the planned visit and (2) said there was no need for a school visit.

29. ~~(SBU)~~ Police Pressure Cultural Center to Cancel Scheduled Talk

DATE: May 2017

LOCATION: Wuhan

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICE: Wuhan Public Security Bureau

SUMMARY: An American citizen and Yale-China Guizhishan Fellow planned to give a talk at the 403 Cultural Center about his great-grandfather, and the topic of Chinese and American educational exchange. The Center reported the event to the provincial police's Entry and Exit Bureau (EEB), as it does routinely, and usually with no response. This time, shortly after the document was sent, the Center's event coordinator got a phone call from the local police office, which "strongly suggested" that the center "postpone" the event because it was "not appropriate

to host the event now." The policeman did not explain why the timing was inappropriate. The talk went ahead with a smaller group at the Consul General's residence.

30. ~~(SBU)~~ NGO Pressured to Cancel Meeting with Pol/Econ Officer

DATE: May 2017

LOCATION: Xiangyang, Hubei Province

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICE: Hubei Province Foreign Affairs Office (FAO)

SUMMARY: The Green Han River NGO, based in Xiangyang, Hubei Province, enthusiastically agreed to meet with Wuhan's Economic Officer and Economic local staff, and said the meeting would be fine as the NGO has good relations with the Xiangyang Foreign Affairs Office (FAO) and would keep them informed. A day later, an official from the NGO contacted Wuhan's Economic local staff and said the Hubei Province Foreign Affairs Office had contacted her and told her she could not meet with U.S. Consulate officers and that any such request had to be made through the Hubei Province FAO.

31. ~~(SBU)~~ National-Level Ministry of Water Reluctant For Diplomats to Join Trip

DATE: April 2017

LOCATION: Beijing and Jiangxi Province

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICE: Ministry of Water

SUMMARY: Consulate Wuhan's Pol-Econ officer and Pol-Econ LES hoped to join a visit to Poyang Lake, Jiangxi Province, requested by an Embassy Science Fellow and organized by the Jiangxi Province Water Bureau, which reports to the national-level ministry. After a long delay in confirming the trip details, the Ministry of Water contact told the Embassy Science Fellow that if a U.S. diplomat joined the trip, the group would only be able to have a formal meeting with the provincial water bureau, and would not be able to make any site visits to Poyang Lake itself, or other facilities. He added that having Consulate Wuhan's local staff join wouldn't be a problem because she didn't look like a foreigner and no-one would have to know she was from the Consulate. The Consulate decided not to participate in the trip as it would only complicate the Science Fellow's meetings, and the Science Fellow had a full, two-day visit to multiple sites and facilities on the Lake.

32. ~~(SBU)~~ Hunan FAO Blocks Outreach Trip by Guangzhou Consular Officer

DATE: April 2017

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICE: Mr. Yang Qi, Hunan Foreign Affairs Office (FAO) Section Chief

SUMMARY: Mr. Yang Qi at the Hunan FAO contacted local Consulate staff on April 27 to say that the Hunan FAO would not support an outreach visit to Hengyang City by a U.S. Consulate Guangzhou Consular Officer. Yang said that the school we requested to visit was not interested in a visa presentation, and that the Hunan FAO had discouraged an SOE steel company from meeting with the Consular Officer, as we had requested. Yang said visa information was available on U.S. government websites, and Chinese students can easily look for help outside campus if they need more information on visas or study overseas. Yang claimed schools were not willing to arrange presentations to encourage students to go study in any other country. The Hunan FAO also sent a formal dipnote claiming the Hengyang FAO was occupied by other work

arrangements and couldn't accommodate the Consular Officer's visit, and that local schools had no need for visa briefings.

33. ~~(SBU)~~ Hubei FAO Cancels PAS-Organized Urban Planner Talk Three Hours Prior to Event

DATE: April 21, 2017

LOCATION: Wuhan

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICE: Hubei Foreign Affairs Office (FAO)

SUMMARY: Wuhan PAS hosted the IIP Speaker Jeff Soule, an Urban Planner, for two days on April 21-22. His scheduled talk at the Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST) was called off by the provincial FAO three hours before the planned start time. Our contact at HUST explained that the university FAO was fine with the event but they were contacted the day of the event by the provincial FAO who informed them not to proceed. The consulate had sent a dipnote to the provincial FAO several weeks in advance with this and the other public lectures clearly mentioned. Soule's talk at a private college and two bookstores continued as planned.

34. ~~(SBU)~~ Hubei FAO Cites Provincial Regulation to Block EducationUSA Training

DATE: March 13, 2017

LOCATION: Wuhan

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICE: Hubei Foreign Affairs Office (exact official unknown)

SUMMARY: Wuhan's Public Affairs Section has been trying for three years to host one of the EducationUSA high school guidance counselor workshops that have been held all over China. This year we sent a dipnote to the provincial FAO in January requesting to hold the workshop at the Weiming private school. We attached a three-year history to the dipnotes of all the dates and cities that have held similar workshops across the country. After much deliberation we were told the event could not be approved due to a regulation in the *Hubei Province's Management Regulations on Intermediary Services for Self-funded Study Abroad*. They quoted rule number 5, which roughly says "Item 5: Foreign organizations and individuals, foreign governments' representative agencies in China, foreign invested companies, and programs or schools cooperatively run by Chinese and foreign organizations shall not, at this moment, engage in any forms of intermediary (consulting and counseling) services for self-funded (non-Chinese-government-sponsored) study abroad." This is the first time the provincial government has cited this rule to Consulate Wuhan. If enforced under the local government's understanding of EducationUSA, this could be applied to any EducationUSA-related activity.

35. ~~(SBU)~~ Two Wuhan Radio Stations Propose Cooperation, Then Cancel

DATE: February 2017

LOCATION: Wuhan

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICE: Unknown

SUMMARY: Two prominent radio stations in Wuhan approached Consulate Wuhan's Public Affairs Section to cooperate. Hubei Radio (107.8FM) had started one-minute English lesson broadcasts and requested the consulate to provide native speakers. Consulate Wuhan's Public Affairs Officer (PAO) and Media Assistant recorded eight lessons. However, after the recording and before airing the radio host informed us that they were told they could not mention that the "English teachers" were from the U.S. Consulate. They even kindly requested that we not re-

post the web links to the broadcast on our social media platforms. We had planned to use our English Language Fellow to record further episodes but were told if so they could only say the Fellow was an English Teacher in Wuhan; they could not mention the State Department or the Fellow program. So, we canceled the project. The other request was from a sports program on Hubei Traffic Radio (92.7FM). They wanted consulate officers to be special guests and talk about American Sports on the air. We happily agreed to participate. After the face-to-face meeting in our office we never heard again from the host.

36. ~~(SBU)~~ Two Requests for "Study in the U.S." Presentations Declined

DATE: March, 2017

LOCATION: Yichang, Hubei Province

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICE: Yichang City Foreign Affairs Office (FAO)

SUMMARY: Consulate Wuhan's Consular Chief requested by dipnote to do presentations on "Study in the U.S." and "Student Visas" at two schools, China Three Gorges University and Yichang Tianwen International School. The local FAO rejected the request for presentations but did arrange for the Consular Chief to make official visits to the school to meet with school officials.

37. ~~(SBU)~~ Local NGO Dis-Invites Wuhan CG at Behest of Xinhua Bookstore

DATE: March 2017

LOCATION: Wuhan

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICE: Unknown

SUMMARY: A local NGO, the China Endangered Cultural Protector (CECP), invited Consul General Zadrozny to attend and give remarks at the launch of a book about Wuhan's history that included some of the connections to old U.S. and other foreign architecture in the city. A week before the event our contact at CECP informed us that the host venue of the event, a state-owned Xinhua Bookstore, told them that the Consul General was not welcome to give remarks, or to attend the event at all.

38. ~~(SBU)~~ Institute Too Busy Doing Research to Meet with EconOff

DATE: January 2017

LOCATION: Wuhan

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICE: Hubei Academy of Social Science

SUMMARY: The Hubei Academy of Social Sciences' Yangtze River Institute declined EconOff's request for a meeting to discuss commercial fishing and conservation efforts on the Yangtze River, saying all of the institute's researchers were unavailable because they were "out doing research." They could not provide any time frame in which their researchers would be able to meet.

39. ~~(SBU)~~ Hubei Declines Top Embassy Environment Official's Request to Meet with Dam Operators, Water Commission

DATE: January 2017

LOCATION: Wuhan

RESPONSIBLE CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICE: Hubei Foreign Affairs Office (FAO)

FUNDING: N/A

SUMMARY: The Hubei FAO turned down our requests for the visiting Embassy ESTH Counselor to meet with the Gezhou Dam Group, a major Chinese dam-builder; the Changjiang Water Resources Commission, which has had extensive contacts with U.S. government agencies and universities; and the Landslide Research Institute. Separately, the Three Gorges Corporation, which operates the dam of the same name, declined to hold a meeting with the ESTH Counselor, and instead dispatched a "consultant" to give the Counselor a tour of the dam and attached museum. Several months later the consulate was able to set up a productive meeting with the Changjiang Water Resources Commission for two visiting officials from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, by communicating directly with commission staff and circumventing the Hubei FAO.

CHINESE CONSULATE GENERAL CHICAGO'S ACTIVITIES IN THE UNITED STATES

2016-2017

The following is a list of just a few selected instances where the Chinese Consul General in Chicago has been able to hold meetings and activities in the United States that are routinely blocked for the United States government in China.

Article 22(c) through (e) of the Consular Convention between the United States of America and the People's Republic of China states that such consular functions include "contributing to the development of economic, cultural, scientific and tourist relations between the sending and receiving state," "promoting in various ways the friendly relations between the sending and receiving state," and "ascertaining by all lawful means conditions and developments in the political, commercial, economic, cultural, educational and scientific-technological life of the receiving State, and reporting thereon to the government of the sending State." That convention entered into force on February 19, 1982.

1. (U) Chicago Consul General Hong Lei Gives Remarks at Loyola University

DATE: October 27, 2017

LOCATION: Chicago, Illinois

SUMMARY (from Chinese Consulate [website](#)): Chicago Consul General Hong Lei gave remarks on "China's New Era and China-U.S. Relations."

2. (U) Chicago Consul General Hong Lei Visits Indiana University Bloomington

DATE: October 15-17, 2017

LOCATION: Bloomington, Indiana

SUMMARY (from Indiana University [website](#)): Chicago Consul General Hong Lei will visit Indiana University Bloomington this month to meet with students, faculty and administrators and give a public lecture on U.S.-China relations, "China's Recent Advances and the China-U.S. Relationship." He is expected to be accompanied on the visit by other officials from the Chinese consulate in Chicago. The consulate covers nine Midwestern U.S. states, including Indiana. Hong is scheduled to meet with University officials including President Zaret. He also will meet with representatives of IU's student services and international admissions offices and tour facilities such as the Office of International Services and the Kelley School of Business.

3. (U) Chicago Consul General Hong Lei Visits Michigan State University

DATE: October 5-6, 2017

LOCATION: East Lansing, Michigan

SUMMARY (from Michigan State University [website](#)): Consul General Hong Lei of the Chinese Consulate General in Chicago visited Michigan State University on October 5 and October 6, 2017. The visit was mainly to promote stronger roles of universities in Chinese students' health and safety while studying in the U.S. On October 6, Mr. Hong Lei met the leaders of the Office of China Programs, Confucius Institute, Office of International Students and Scholars, Education Abroad and Associate Provost and International Studies and Programs Dean Steven Hanson. He also met with President Simon and Provost June Youatt. The Consul General and his team gave a safety and security seminar in the Kiva of Erickson Hall. Mr. Hong also delivered a public

speech to MSU students and faculty in the College of Business, titled "China's New Development and China-US Relations in the New Era."

4. (U) Chicago Consul General Hong Lei Gives Remarks at the University of Denver

DATE: September 26, 2017

LOCATION: Denver, Colorado

SUMMARY (from Chinese Consulate [website](#)): On September 26, Consul General Hong Lei delivered a speech, "China's New Development and China-US relations" at the University of Denver. An audience of over 200 people including Counselor of Education Chen Yinghui, faculty and students from the School of International Studies, and representatives from political, business and academic sectors in Colorado attended the speech.

5. (U) Chicago Consul General Hong Lei Visits Iowa State University

DATE: September 12, 2017

LOCATION: Ames, Iowa

SUMMARY (from Iowa Daily [website](#), with edits): Chicago Consul General Hong Lei met with the Interim President of Iowa State University, and visited the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. He gave a public speech on campus about China's rapid growth of economic development, agricultural trade, and even the increasing number of Chinese travelers to the U.S.

6. (U) Chicago Consul General Hong Lei Meets Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner

DATE: September 5, 2017

LOCATION: Chicago, Illinois

SUMMARY (from Chinese Consulate [website](#)): Consul General Hong Lei met with Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner at the Consulate General of China in Chicago. Deputy Consul General Liu Jun, Commercial Counselor Zou Xiaoming and Secretary of Illinois Economic Development Mark Peterson were also present. (*Note: The rough Chinese equivalent of a U.S. governor is a provincial Chinese Communist Party Secretary. Typically, our U.S. Consuls General in China are only able meet at the provincial level with vice governors, two ranks down from a provincial party secretary—and one rank below the provincial deputy party secretary—if they are able to meet with any provincial government leader at all. End Note.*)

7. (U) Chicago Consul General Hong Lei Gives Remarks at Michigan University's Michigan-China Forum

DATE: March 26, 2017

LOCATION: Ann Arbor, Michigan

SUMMARY (from Ministry of Foreign Affairs [website](#)): Chicago Consul General Hong Lei visited the University of Michigan at the invitation of the Chinese Students and Scholars Association and gave remarks at the Michigan-China Forum.

8. (U) Chicago Consul General Hong Lei Gives Remarks at Washington University in St. Louis

DATE: February 22, 2017

LOCATION: St. Louis, Missouri

SUMMARY (from Ministry of Foreign Affairs [website](#)): Chicago Consul General Hong Lei

Delivered a Speech entitled "Promoting Further Development Through Communication and Cooperation."

9. (U) Chicago Consul General Hong Lei Meets Michigan Governor Rick Snyder

DATE: February 11, 2017

LOCATION: Detroit, Michigan

SUMMARY (from Ministry of Foreign Affairs [website](#)): Chicago Consul General Hong Lei and a Guangdong Friendship Working Group led by Director General Chen Qiuyan of Guangdong Foreign Affairs Office met with Michigan Governor Rick Snyder, who attended the "Happy Spring Festival" show presented by the Guangdong Provincial Art Troupe at the Ford Community & Performing Arts Center in Detroit, Michigan.

10. (U) Chicago Consul General Hong Lei Meets Kansas Governor Sam Brownback

DATE: February 2, 2017

LOCATION: Topeka, Kansas

SUMMARY (from Ministry of Foreign Affairs [website](#)) Consul General Hong Lei met with Governor Sam Brownback of Kansas in capital city Topeka on February 2. Heads of Wanxiang America Cooperation, ZTE, Wanda Group and Hainan Airlines North America were also present.

11. (U) Chicago Consul General Hong Lei Visits Minnesota, Including MSU

DATE: October 7, 2016

LOCATION: St. Paul, Minnesota

SUMMARY (from University of Minnesota [website](#), with edits): On October 7, 2016, newly appointed Chinese Consul General Hong Lei visited the University of Minnesota–Twin Cities campus at the invitation of the University of Minnesota China Center and Confucius Institute. Hong met the University President, attended a business lunch hosted by the University of Minnesota China Center and the Minnesota Trade Office, and delivered a speech on how to develop win-win cooperation with the global business community. He attended a Chinese J-1 scholar reception hosted by the China Center and International Student and Scholar Services, and gave a campus lecture "Let History Be a Guidance to the Future: Jointly Building A New Type of Major Country Relationship between China and the U.S." to more than 250 university members and representatives of the Minnesota community in the Humphrey School of Public Affairs. Hong also attended the Fourth Annual Chinese Proficiency Awards Ceremony presented by the University of Minnesota Confucius Institute and Minnesota Department of Education. In addition to the University activities, Hong visited the Mayor of St. Paul, the Star Tribune newspaper, the Minnesota Timberwolves and Lynx basketball teams, and unveiled the Chinese Community Service Center supported by the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office."

12. (U) Chicago Consul General Hong Lei Visits University of Kansas

DATE: August 23, 2016

LOCATION: Lawrence, Kansas

SUMMARY (from Ministry of Foreign Affairs [website](#), with edits): On August 23, 2016, Consul General Hong Lei paid a visit to Confucius Institute of the University of Kansas. CG Hong Lei congratulated on the progress made by the Institute, and spoke highly of its contributions to the Chinese language education and promotion of Chinese culture. He said that, as the largest developing country and the largest developed country, China and the United States are building a

new model of major-country relations, and language is an important media in terms of culture and communication.

From: SMART Archive
Sent: Fri, 17 Feb 2017 10:09:40 GMT
To: SMART Core
Subject: Embassy Science Fellows Program 2017 (Beijing, China)

UNCLASSIFIED



MRN: 17 BEIJING 380
Date/DTG: Feb 17, 2017 / 171009Z FEB 17
From: AMEMBASSY BEIJING
Action: WASHDC, SECSTATE *ROUTINE*
E.O.: 13526
TAGS: TSPL, SENV, ENRG, SHLH, EINT, CN
Reference: 17 STATE 626
Subject: Embassy Science Fellows Program 2017 (Beijing, China)

1. (U) Embassy Beijing seeks to host Embassy Science Fellows between September 2017 and May 2018 for a period of 30 to 90 days each. Embassy Beijing includes representatives from a large number of U.S. science agencies, including the National Science Foundation (NSF), Health and Human Services (HHS), National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Cancer Institute (NCI), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Department of Energy (DOE), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), all of whom are working with Chinese counterparts to advance U.S. interests and to research shared challenges. Fellows would work out of Embassy Beijing's Environment, Science, Technology and Health section and therefore need to hold a Sensitive clearance. Chinese language skills are helpful but not required.

Topics for Science Fellows

2. (U) Proposal Descriptions: Embassy Beijing is seeking Embassy Science Fellows with experience across a wide spectrum of topics in the areas of environment, science, technology, and health. Qualified Fellows may have expertise in technology standards, infectious diseases, hydrology, Earth system sciences, natural resources management, food safety, zoonotic diseases, waste management, fisheries, cancer research, synthetic biology, aquatic microbiology,

genomics, or soil pollution.

3. (U) Topic 1: Technology Standards and Computer Science: China, with one of the world's largest and most consequential technology sectors, is attempting to shape global technology standards to its advantage. China's research on artificial intelligence, supercomputing, integrated circuit development, big data analytics, and computer science is closely tied to its policy priorities, including industrial policy, restricting market access for U.S. companies, 5G standards development, global Internet governance, and even regime stability. An expert on computer science or another field related to these issues could contribute to the Embassy's research and reporting on these issues together with our interagency technology team. A Fellow focusing on computing and/or telecoms regulatory issues would be well-positioned to engage multiple offices and Beijing-based experts. This project might have particular connections with the work of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), but also the Air Force Research Laboratory, NASA, and other science agencies whose work is supported and affected by advanced computing issues; it is directly in line with the priority topics of open data and science, technology, and innovation cooperation.

4. (U) Topic 2: Fisheries Management: NOAA recently developed a new seafood traceability program to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing that requires U.S. companies importing certain seafood to report information on the type of fish and the chain of custody. These types of regulations help strengthen fishery management and improve the livelihoods of legitimate fishers by reducing IUU fishing. China is a major fish and seafood reprocessing nation, and although the Chinese government regulates China's fishing industry, IUU fishing is still a major problem. NGOs in China contend that China's traditional ocean conservation model is insufficient, leading many to believe that the government must take a leadership role encouraging more transparent and traceable sales of marine products. A NOAA fisheries science expert could assist in the implementation of the new traceability rules, research IUU fishing issues and fisheries management, and delve deeper into fisheries science and ocean sustainability in China.

5. (U) Topic 3: Water Scarcity: China's scarce water resources will soon fail to meet the country's demands for agriculture, industry, energy production and household use. The government has invested in major infrastructure projects to collect and divert water, and has passed strong plans to address water pollution, but economic and population growth will continue to strain water resources. An Embassy Science Fellow with expertise in hydrology, engineering, sustainable

resource management, or water quality could help determine areas where U.S. technical assistance is needed in China's overall water management system. The Fellow's activities could inform and advance the missions of EPA, Army Corps of Engineers, NOAA, or EPA.

6. (U) Topic 4: Haff Disease: Haff disease is unexplained rhabdomyolysis that occurs after eating cooked seafood, resulting in severe illness or death. From June 27 to August 24, 2016, 1,347 cases were reported in nine provinces in Central China. The epidemiology and clinical characteristics of Haff Disease are well known, but an Embassy Science Fellow with expertise in aquatic microbiology or toxicology is needed to help determine the etiology and provide marine and/or environmental laboratory assistance. The Fellow, based at the Chinese CDC, would first work with the epidemiological team, then go into the field with Chinese marine biologists to investigate and collect samples, and hopefully raise Haff Disease's profile with the Chinese science community. The Fellow would help strengthen collaboration between U.S. CDC, China CDC, and provincial CDCs.

7. (U) Topic 5: Tobacco Control: China is the largest tobacco producer in the world, and lung cancer is the top cause of death in the country. The National Cancer Institute (NCI) has supported translational research examining tobacco use and control, which has helped limit the uptake of smoking and mitigate the impact of smokers on their friends and families. With the advent of Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT), now available on the Chinese market, an Embassy Science Fellow would work with experts in the national tobacco control program at the Chinese Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, design targeted pilots to offer cessation programs using NRT, and target life events such as heart attack, birth, or surgery as opportunities to quit smoking. The Fellow should be familiar with global health issues, methods, and practice.

8. (U) Topic 6: Curcumin Nutritional Trial: Curcumin is the main ingredient in curry spice and research has found it is effective as an anti-inflammatory agent and in mitigating the growth of cancer, including stomach and colon cancer. However, to date, no large-scale clinical trial has looked at the anti-cancer properties of curcumin. An Embassy Science Fellow with expertise in cancer research and global health issues would work with clinical trial and cancer epidemiologists and experts in the NCI, Chinese CDC, and Shougong Hospital, in western Beijing, to help design and help launch a curcumin nutritional trial.

9. (U) Topic 7: Global Virome Project/Ecology and Evolution of Infectious

Diseases: Human population growth and changes in land use have accelerated the emergence of new infectious diseases — many of which emerge in Asia, threatening global health security. An Embassy Science Fellow with expertise in microbiology, ecology, genomics, and big data systems could visit related research institutes and funding agencies in China to map the landscape of research and infrastructure in this area, which spans forestry, agriculture, aquatic/marine science, and human health. The Fellow would participate in discussions with Chinese funding agencies as they develop a comprehensive national and global approach to preventing future pandemics. One active and growing platform is the Global Virome Project (GVP), a global partnership to detect and characterize virtually all of the planet's unknown viral zoonotic pathogens for the purpose of developing proactive solutions and preparedness measures. Possible products would be joint U.S.-China workshop(s) and a comprehensive report that will facilitate broad U.S. Government engagement in this area. This fellow's activities would advance the interests of CDC, USAID, NSF, and NIH.

10. (U) Topic 8: Waste Management: China's waste management practices have not kept pace with its increasing volume and ever-changing content of waste. China also processes most of the world's discarded electronic products and components. If China does not radically and efficiently adapt its recycling and targeted waste disposal technologies, the entire world will soon face catastrophic environmental consequences, including exhaustion/multiplication of landfills, run off into rivers and oceans, unhealthy waste disposal alternatives, such as burning, and waste of potential energy resources. The United States and China currently have a marine litter sister city program, and an Embassy Science Fellow with expertise in environmental sciences, waste management, or engineering could explore current Chinese waste management practices and replicate the sister city relationship. This project is relevant to EPA, and potentially other U.S. agencies, and would be a useful technical exchange for U.S. companies that have developed waste disposal technologies.

11. (U) Topic 9: Earth System Science: China is making significant investments in the Earth system sciences, both in expertise and infrastructure, which provides potential opportunities for collaboration. An Embassy Science Fellow with a background in Earth system sciences could explore opportunities for increased bilateral cooperation in the fields of Earth observations (in-situ and/or remote sensed), data and infrastructure sharing, numerical modeling, and service applications. The Fellow's focus could be on ocean, land, and the atmosphere, data and modeling, and the use of Earth system information to improve climate resilience. The fellow's activities would inform and advance the missions of

NASA, NOAA, USDA, DOE, USAID, and EPA.

12. (U) Topic 10: Synthetic Biology and CRISPR Technology: China has developed into one of the preeminent countries for life science research and is at the vanguard of new technologies such as CRISPR, which has generated interest from policy circles throughout the U.S. Government and is a priority area of engagement for Embassy Beijing. An Embassy Science Fellow with expertise in genetics and/or cell biology would research synthetic biology and the development, commercialization, handling, and use of living modified organisms — such as transgenic plants, animals, and microbes — that could have adverse effects on biodiversity or human health if released into the environment. The fellow could also research China's advances in the use of CRISPR technology with a particular focus on its potential negative implications for human and animal health as well as ethical concerns.

13. (U) Topic 11: Food Safety, Soil Pollution and Contamination: An Embassy Science Fellow with expertise in soil and agriculture would look at sources of pollution, data availability regarding soil contamination, the make-up and composition of pollution, and general soil safety.

14. (U) Topic 12: Snowmaking for the Winter Olympics: The 2022 Winter Games will be hosted by Beijing, and will rely almost entirely on manufactured snow. An Embassy Science fellow with expertise in water resources in mountainous dry areas would research water usage, pollution mitigation, and snowmaking in the dry northeast of China for the Olympic Games. The Fellow would ideally have knowledge of snowmaking in water-stressed areas. The Fellow should also have a background in water usage for non-agricultural purposes, such as dust suppression.

Policy Objectives, Administrative Support, and Contacts

15. (U) Objective 3.3 of Mission China's Integrated Country Strategy focuses on working with China to research energy and environmental challenges, reduce its negative environmental impact, improve data transparency, and increase climate change resilience. Objective 3.2 focuses on cooperating with China on global health and improving global health security. All of the above proposed projects would contribute to these objectives.

16. (U) Administrative Support: Embassy Beijing will provide housing, office support including telephone/computer/internet access, and, when possible and if

necessary, language interpretation during host-country meetings and in-country travel arrangements. Availability of housing is fluid and subject to constraints imposed by other demands on the housing pool. In exchange, the Embassy Science Fellows are expected to contribute some of their time to State Department activities, such as writing cables for a Washington audience.

17. (U) Regional Security Officer (RSO) Concurrence: RSO has no objection to hosting an Embassy Science Fellow for a period not to exceed 90 days. Embassy Beijing has a 15 percent hardship differential.

[Redacted]

(b)(7)(E)

[Redacted]

18. (U) Through February 2018, the primary point of contact in Beijing is (b)(6) (b)(6) who can be reached at (b)(6) or (b)(6). Through August 2017, the back-up point of contact is (b)(6) who can be reached at (b)(6) or (b)(6). After February 2018, the primary point of contact is (b)(6) who can be reached at (b)(6) or (b)(6).

Signature: RANK

-
- Drafted By:** BEIJING: (b)(6) (Beijing)
 - Cleared By:** CDC: (b)(6) (Beijing)
 - ESTH: (b)(6) (Beijing)
 - PAS: (b)(6) (Beijing)
 - RSO: (b)(6) (Beijing)
 - MGMT: (b)(6) (Beijing)
 - GSO: (b)(6) (Beijing)
 - NSF: (b)(6) (Beijing)
 - ESTH: (b)(6) (Beijing)
 - ECON: (b)(6) (Beijing)
 - ESTH: (b)(6) (Beijing)
 - NIH: (b)(6) (Beijing)
 - (b)(6)
 - Approved By:** CONS: (b)(6) (Beijing)
 - Released By:** BEIJING: (b)(6) (Beijing)
 - Info:** (b)(6) ROUTINE; (b)(6) ROUTINE
-

Dissemination Rule: Archive Copy

UNCLASSIFIED

From: SMART Archive
Sent: Thu, 28 Sep 2017 07:55:10 GMT
To: SMART Core
Subject: China's Interest in the Global Virome Project Presents an Opportunity for Global Health Cooperation

UNCLASSIFIED
~~SBU~~



MRN: 17 BEIJING 2458
Date/DTG: Sep 28, 2017 / 280753Z SEP 17
From: AMEMBASSY BEIJING
Action: WASHDC, SECSTATE *ROUTINE*
E.O.: 13526
TAGS: PREL, SHLH, TBIO, KGHI, CDC, AID, CN
Captions: SENSITIVE
Subject: China's Interest in the Global Virome Project Presents an Opportunity for Global Health Cooperation

1. ~~(SBU)~~ **Summary and Comment:** The proposed Global Virome Project (GVP), an international non-governmental organization built on a decade-long prototype initiated by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), seeks to address vulnerability from emerging diseases by creating a global database of viruses of animal origin and identifying those pathogens with greatest potential to jump to humans through sequencing their genomes, understanding the ecology involved in transmission, and assessing risk to humans. This knowledge could then be used to devise treatments and countermeasures. In the months leading up to the planned January 2018 launch of the Global Virome Project to codify this “proof of concept” into an international organization, China has expressed considerable interest in becoming a leader of this nascent global effort by contributing to collaborative academic papers, hosting symposia, participating in international activities, and by proposing its own associated China Virome Project. While the GVP will have to navigate complex issues concerning sharing of specimens and data across national borders, China’s interest in the Global Virome Project, represents a positive indication that health cooperation, safeguarding global health security, and advancing innovation in science remain priorities for China and presents new ground for potential U.S.-China collaboration. Absent U.S. government leadership in GVP agenda-setting, governance, and funding the Chinese government could likely take a leading position in this potentially path breaking endeavor undermining years of USG leadership and considerable investment in this critical field of public health.

2. ~~(SBU)~~ By continuing to work with other nations, including China, and playing a leading role

in the Global Virome Project, the United States would benefit from the advances in health science, intellectual property, and commerce that will come from it. U.S.-China collaboration on the Global Virome Project is an opportunity to lead innovation in science, collaborate with China, and potentially contribute to scientific breakthroughs. **End Summary and Comment.**

Health Security is a Global Agenda

3. ~~(SBU)~~ The Global Virome Project as proposed could be an important scientific contribution to the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA). Launched in February 2014, the GHSA is a multi-sectoral effort aiming to accelerate implementation of the World Health Organization's International Health Regulations (IHR) in order to make the world safe and secure from infectious disease threats, whatever their source. Under the Global Health Security Agenda, the United States assists 31 countries and the Caribbean Community, including \$1 billion for 17 at-risk countries to strengthen global health security through a whole-of-government effort to prevent, detect, and respond to disease outbreaks at the local, subnational and national levels.

Pandemic Disease is a Global Threat

4. ~~(SBU)~~ A component to the overall Global Health Security Agenda is reducing the threat of pandemic disease, which is a widespread epidemic of naturally emerging deadly infectious pathogens. According to "The Global Virome Project," a collaborative paper written by several of the foremost experts on pandemic health issues, viruses of animal origin have caused significant outbreaks, such as SARS, influenza, MERS, Ebola, HIV, and Zika. Outbreaks such as these have had major economic and geopolitical impact and have threatened global security. There are an estimated 1.6 million such viruses worldwide. Scientists have estimated that only 1% of the potential viral threats have been identified and hundreds of thousands of unknown viruses in wildlife have the potential to infect people. However, less than 0.1% of all viruses with the potential to pose a threat to global health are estimated to have spilled over from animals to humans. With growing populations, reduced animal habitats and increasing international travel and trade, these types of emerging infectious diseases pose increasing risks of a global nature.

The Global Virome Project's Beginnings as a U.S. Investment

5. ~~(SBU)~~ GVP grew out of the PREDICT project of USAID, which has, over its seven year history, received \$130 million in U.S. funding and has thus far sampled over 56,000 wild animals and identified about 1000 new viruses. PREDICT hosts the GVP Secretariat at University of California-Davis. The GVP concept was validated at a gathering of international stakeholders in 2016, which included scientists and public health practitioners from the public and private sectors. Its first follow-up meeting was held in Beijing in early 2017, including a half-day session to initiate the associated China National Virome Project (CNVP). GVP expects to be incorporated as an international not-for-profit organization prior to its official launch, which is planned for January 30, 2018 in Thailand at the Prince Mahidol Awards Conference.

The Global Virome Project's Audacious Agenda

6. ~~(SBU)~~ The Global Virome Project is, by the project leadership's own admission, ambitious. Over the course of ten years and at an estimated cost of \$1 billion (\$100 million a year for ten years), the Global Virome Project aims to sample 63% of global mammalian diversity to find 71% of mammalian viromes. The projected costs cover sample collection and laboratory analysis, with phases including countries with the highest diversity of mammalian species. Phase One includes 10 countries and 1562 mammals, Phase Two, 16 countries and 970 mammals, Phase Three with 23 countries and 447 mammals. GVP also expects to collect samples from 740 waterfowl species.

7. ~~(SBU)~~ GVP's core principles include embracing an international scope while fostering local ownership, promoting equitable access to data and benefits, instilling transparency, building national capabilities for prevention, detection, and response for emerging viral threats, and encouraging global ownership through an international alliance. If successful, this initiative will provide a wealth of publicly accessible unbiased data, which should enable innovative research on the mechanisms and ecology of disease transmission, and informatics focusing on virus families as opposed to individual viruses. Such research could accelerate the development of new diagnostics, vaccine technologies, and risk mitigation strategies against whole families of emerging viral diseases.

Like all Risky Endeavors Failure is a Possibility

8. ~~(SBU)~~ GVP looks to the Human Genome Project as a model, in which a comprehensive, ambitious approach led to the development of new technologies and a vast data resource now available to all. Unlike the Human Genome Project, GVP is by design not 'owned' by an institution or specific country, because of its international sampling scope. Its infrastructure will also be distributed globally. Thus GVP faces significant challenges as it transitions from a start-up to an independently operating foundation: Who will own the samples that are collected from many countries? Where will they be analyzed? Will all GVP data be freely available to the public? GVP expects to grapple with these legal and ethical issues very early, but it will take time for policies to be proposed and approved by the many countries that will be either allowing sample collection or storing specimens and data.

GVP Enjoys Strong Chinese Government Support in Principle and in Kind

9. ~~(SBU)~~ The Chinese government has shown strong interest in the Global Virome Project and is not shy about expressing interest in funding projects where Chinese scientists will take a lead. The new Director of China Center for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC), Dr. George Gao, a distinguished virologist, told EmbOfs that the Global Virome Project is a priority project that China CDC must push hard on to get stakeholders involved and organize funding. He stated that China's involvement in this project is a good follow-up to the August 21 World Health Organization dialogue meeting at which Health and Human Services Secretary Price and US Ambassador Branstad where both sides agreed on the need for increased U.S.-China collaboration against growing health threats at the intersection of animal and human health. In February 2017, Gao led a symposium proposing a China virome project, however the specific details of how the two will integrate was left undefined.

10. ~~(SBU)~~ The Beijing Genomics Institute (BGI), now based in Shenzhen, made a blanket offer to conduct 30% of the sequencing for GVP, but did not provide details on how that sequencing would take place or where the subsequent data would be housed. Its current leader, Yang Huanming, was instrumental in China's involvement in the Human Genome Project in the 1990s, and is a proponent of sharing data. BGI's commitment (as opposed to Yang's commitment) to GVP's values of open, free access to data has not yet been officially stated however. [Note: The BGI group has enjoyed significant funding from the Chinese government. BGI Genomics became a publically-traded company in July 2017.]

11. ~~(SBU)~~ The GVP expects to raise its \$1 billion ten-year budget from a variety of sources, both public and private. Roughly \$5 million per year will cover operations of the non-governmental organization, to include working groups, sample and data standardization and management, and technical assistance to participating country field operations. However, specifics on funding commitments have not been publicly announced.

Both the U.S. and China Strongly Support GVP-related Collaborative Research

12. ~~(SBU)~~ Beyond creating the database of viral sequences which carries the \$1 billion price tag, GVP recognizes the importance of research on the mechanisms and ecology of infectious disease transmission. This type of research already enjoys strong support in both China and the United States, and scientists are increasingly collaborating with each other.

13. ~~(SBU)~~ Shi Zhengli, a senior scientist at the Wuhan Institute of Virology, Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) who studied mechanisms of transmission of SARS between species, stated that CAS has already allocated funding for GVP-related research. Wang Zhengwu, Department of International Affairs at CAS, stated that CAS is working on a process and mechanism to support Chinese scientists with backing from the Ministry of Sciences and Technology and The National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) for Global Virome Project type research. He noted that CAS encourages Chinese scientists to take part in or lead international research projects and that CAS has a budget for seed funding to incubate research projects, workshops, and collaboration that can be used for the Global Virome Project. Significant USG support for GVP-related research already exists, including the Ecology and Evolution of Infectious Diseases (EEID) program, which is jointly supported by NIH, USDA, and NSF, is actively seeking collaboration in China, and plans to host a joint workshop supported by NSFC and CAS in early 2017.

Global Virome Project Provides China a Platform for International Collaboration

14. ~~(SBU)~~ It is encouraging that China, along with other countries, is ready to take what started as a U.S.-led initiative and proof of concept to a global scale. The GVP still awaits a commitment of funding for its viral sampling and processing infrastructure. It is likely that the Chinese government will engage both with funding and with in-kind support, which will likely give China a large voice in GVP governance and data-sharing policies. While U.S.-based NGOs and academics are likely to provide some leadership for the GVP, it will be important for the USG to remain engaged in significant ways with the GVP, to ensure that U.S. interests are adequately reflected in this effort, which will facilitate the development of countermeasures

against future threats (pandemic preparedness), and enable rapid detection of viral threats and increase the capacity to handle them.

Signature: BRANSTAD

Drafted By: BEIJING: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Cleared By: USAID: (b)(6) (Beijing)
HHS/OGA: (b)(6) (Beijing)
CDC: (b)(6) (Beijing)
NSF: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Approved By: ESTH: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Released By: BEIJING: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Info: TOKYO, AMEMBASSY *ROUTINE*; SEOUL, AMEMBASSY *ROUTINE*;
ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE *ROUTINE*

Dissemination Rule: Archive Copy

UNCLASSIFIED
~~SBU~~

From: SMART Archive
Sent: Fri, 04 Nov 2016 19:07:31 GMT
To: SMART Core
Subject: DOS Clearance on CDC-China MOU
Attachments: MOU_China_US_CDC Sept 21 -L-.doc

UNCLASSIFIED

MRN: 16 MDA 22612
Date/DTG: Nov 04, 2016 / 041907Z NOV 16
From: (b)(6)
Action: jessica.stewart@hhs.gov ROUTINE
E.O.: 13526
TAGS: SHLH, TBIO, CN
Subject: DOS Clearance on CDC-China MOU

Good afternoon Jessica,

This email is to formalize the DOS clearance sent to you September 27, 2016 on the attached MOU with tracked edits, which you sent to us for review on September 21, 2016. L/OES, L/T, OES/IHB, OES/STC, and the China desk reviewed the document.

Additional changes require DOS's affirmative concurrence *prior to signature of the final MOC*. If a Chinese version is being produced for signature, the Department's Office of Language Services MUST do a translation and conformance of the texts.

Please remember to send us a PDF copy of the MOU upon signature for our records.

Thank you,

(b)(6)

Drafted By: OES_EX:(b)(6)
Approved By: OES-DRL/EX:(b)(6)
Released By: OES_EX:(b)(6)
Attachments: MOU_China_US_CDC Sept 21 -L-.doc

Dissemination Rule: Archive Copy

UNCLASSIFIED

Withheld pursuant to exemption

(b)(5)

From: SMART Archive
Sent: Tue, 16 Jun 2015 15:57:03 GMT
To: SMART Core
Subject: DOS Clears on US - China EID MOU
Attachments: China_EID MOU_for state.docx

UNCLASSIFIED

MRN: 15 MDA 13350
Date/DTG: Jun 16, 2015 / 161557Z JUN 15
From: (b)(6)
Action: Jessica Stewart (jessica.stewart@hhs.gov) *ROUTINE*
E.O.: 13526
TAGS: SHLH, TBIO, CH
Subject: DOS Clears on US - China EID MOU

Good morning, Jessica.

This email is to confirm that DOS clears on the attached (with tracked edits) MOU between HHS and the National Health and Family Planning Commission of China, which you sent to us for review on 6/3/15. OES/IHB, L/OES, L/T and EAP/CM all reviewed the document.

If there are additional changes, DOS's affirmative concurrence is required prior to signature of the final extension. Also, please keep in mind that the Department's Office of Language Services MUST do a translation and conformance of the texts and they cannot start into that process until we have both final English and Chinese versions.

Please remember to send us a PDF copy of the MOU upon signature for our records.

Cheers,

(b)(6)

Drafted By: OES_IHB:(b)(6)
Released By: OES_IHB:
Info: (b)(6) *ROUTINE*; (b)(6)
(b)(6) *ROUTINE*
Attachments: China_EID MOU_for state.docx

Dissemination Rule: Archive Copy

UNCLASSIFIED

(b)(5)

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(b)(5)

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Withheld pursuant to exemption

(b)(5)

From: SMART Archive
Sent: Thu, 5 Jun 2014 14:38:31 -0400
To: svcSMARTBTSP0P4
Subject: HHS/CDC PERSONNEL ASSIGNMENT NOTIFICATION FOR (b)(6) CDC POSITION #152) ATD # 14465

UNCLASSIFIED

MRN: 14 CDC ATLANTA GA 1390
Date/DTG: Jun 05, 2014 / 051838Z JUN 14
From: CDC ATLANTA GA
Action: KAMPALA, AMEMBASSY *ROUTINE*
TAGS: XTAG, APER, AMGT, ASEC, CDC, UG
Pass Line: KAMPALA FOR HR AND MGMT OFFICER
KAMPALA INFO CDC/WUHIB AND CONNER
SECSTATE FOR AF/E
HHS FOR (b)(6) OGA
Subject: HHS/CDC PERSONNEL ASSIGNMENT NOTIFICATION FOR (b)(6)
(b)(6) (CDC POSITION #152) ATD # 14465

1. This is an action cable. CDC is pleased to assign (b)(6) (b)(6), Medical Officer, GS-14, for a two year assignment with the CDC/Division of Global Health Protection in Kampala, Uganda. It is anticipated that (b)(6) will begin a two-year tour of duty o/a 01 September 2014 and may be extended for an additional two years.

2. CDC is pleased to provide the following information related to the assignment:

Name: (b)(6)
Citizenship: (b)(6)
Diplomatic Passport: Will be issued

The following dependents will accompany (b)(6) to post:

(b)(6)

EDUCATION:

(b)(6)

LANGUAGES: (b)(6)

EXPERIENCE:

(b)(6)

Prior to the above assignment, (b)(6) served as an U.S. Expert Advisor, Chinese FETP, China Center for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC). (b)(6) supervised Chinese FETP officers in investigating disease outbreaks, evaluating surveillance systems, and conducting applied epidemiologic research. (b)(6) reviewed and critiqued Chinese FETP officers' work, and guided the officers in preparing their work for peer-reviewed publication and presentations at scientific conferences. (b)(6) taught epidemiology, biostatistics, and public health to Chinese FETP officers.

3. Security Clearance - (b)(6)

4. Please bill all ICASS costs related to assignee's assignment to agency code 7553.0 HHS - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

5. Please send TMTHREE welcome message and TMEIGHT arrival cable. Please provide shipping instructions for HHE and UAB

direct to post. (CDC does not ship via the US Despatch Agent or ELSO.)

6. Assignee's relocation will be handled by the Department of Treasury, Bureau of the Fiscal Service (BFS). BFS will consign HHE and UAB shipments in the manner specified in the gaining post's TMTTHREE. CDC does NOT authorize post to incur any charges for shipment, clearance, pickup/delivery, storage, packing/unpacking without specific approval of CDC Headquarters. CDC Headquarters can be contacted by emailing cgh-gam@cdc.gov.

7. The CDC program contact for this cable is Sherome Beck, 404-718-8886 or email gtx5@cdc.gov.

8. CDC appreciates Embassy assistance with this request.

KENYON

Drafted By:	ATLANTA GA:Taitt, Tara
Approved By:	ATLANTA GA:Taitt, Tara
Released By:	ATLANTA GA:Taitt, Tara
Info:	WASHDC, SECSTATE <i>ROUTINE</i> ; DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC <i>ROUTINE</i>

Dissemination Rule: Archive Copy

UNCLASSIFIED

From: SMART Archive
Sent: Fri, 10 Jan 2014 07:25:29 -0500
To: svcSMARTBTSP0P7
Subject: Treating the Symptoms without Curing the Disease in China's Health Care Reform

UNCLASSIFIED
~~SBU~~



MRN: 14 BEIJING 122
Date/DTG: Jan 10, 2014 / 101225Z JAN 14
From: AMEMBASSY BEIJING
Action: WASHDC, SECSTATE *ROUTINE*
E.O.: 13526
TAGS: SHLH, TSPL, CDC, HHS, NIH, CH
Captions: SENSITIVE
Reference: 13 BEIJING 1951
Subject: Treating the Symptoms without Curing the Disease in China's Health Care Reform

1. ~~(SBU)~~ SUMMARY: This cable is the first in a series focusing on the ongoing reform of China's health care system. Subsequent cables will address China's public health insurance schemes, fee-for-service health care system, the nation's distribution of doctors, and opportunities for the private sector in public hospital reform.
2. ~~(SBU)~~ The elimination of the Maoist system of "barefoot doctors" in the late 1970s left a gap in China's health care services that excluded, either by cost or accessibility, much of China's populace. Health care reforms initiated in 2009 have expanded insurance coverage to the majority of China's population, but the nation faces serious challenges as it attempts to address problems in controlling both the demand for and the provision of health care services. END SUMMARY.

A Brief History of China's Health Care System

3. ~~(SBU)~~ China's current health care reform efforts are rooted in the vacuum left after waves of reform distanced China's economy from Maoist concepts, wiping out the country's system of "barefoot doctors" in the late 1970s. Despite minimal training and limited resources, these doctors established a general standard for basic rural care and doubled life expectancies in China from 32 years in 1949 to 65 years in 1976. The end of barefoot doctors meant that China's health care system quickly became unaffordable to the majority of its population. For the two decades following China's reform and opening in the late 1970s, the government set prices of basic health care services below cost in order to maintain access for the poor. To

offset this shortfall for service providers, the government allowed a 15 percent profit margin on drugs, encouraging health care providers to overprescribe. By 2001, 60 percent of total health expenditures in China were out of pocket, and 90 percent of China's populace lacked insurance coverage.

4. ~~(SBU)~~ China's households face the daily threat of destitution resulting from unanticipated catastrophic medical expenses. A survey by the Development Research Centre of the State Council in 2004 found that disease and injury were the leading cause of impoverishment in rural areas. Consequently, many households commit a substantial portion of their income towards household medical savings. Improved health care insurance and prevention systems might shift remove the threat of catastrophic medical expenses. Such a transformation could provide a powerful stimulus to China's economy as it seeks to encourage the development of its nascent service sector [ref A] and shift household preferences away from these savings patterns in order to promote more sustainable consumption-led growth.

Why Health Matters

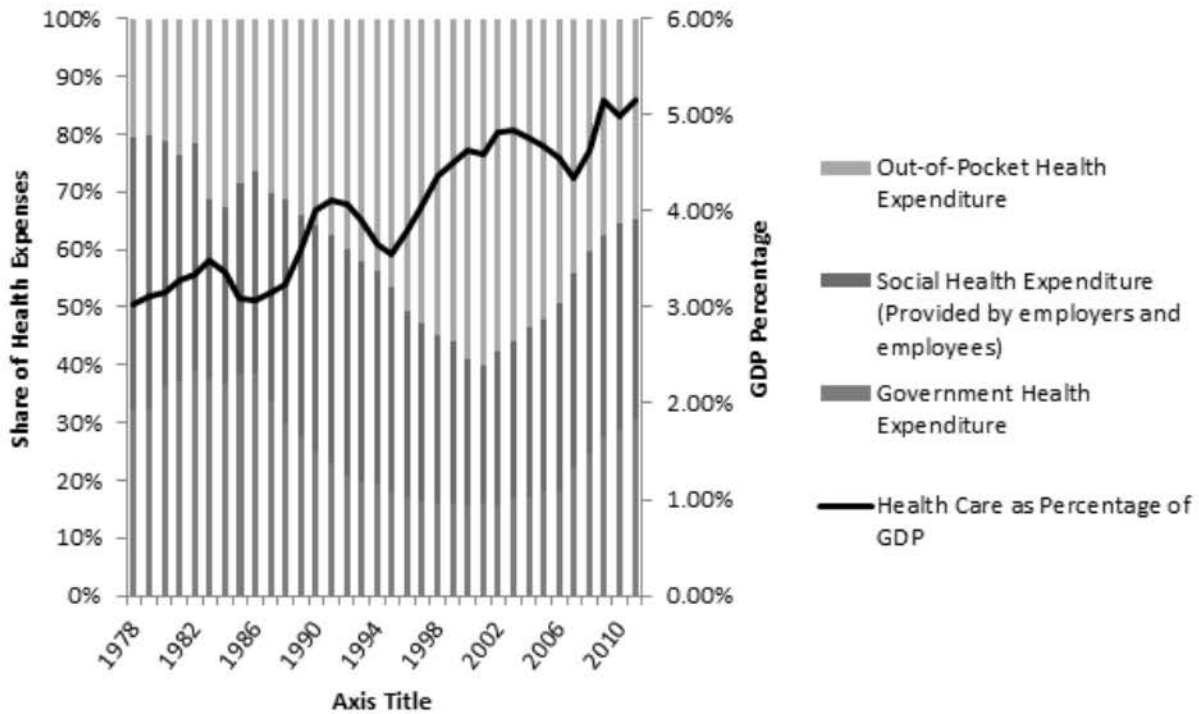
5. ~~(SBU)~~ Public health has become not just a matter of social well-being but also an important issue for China's economic development and stability. Both infectious and chronic diseases pose major threats to China's economy in terms of lost productivity and diminished revenues. For example, as estimated by the U.S.-based National Academy of Sciences, the 2002-2003 outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) led to global losses of \$40 billion, a cost borne largely by mainland China and Hong Kong.
6. ~~(SBU)~~ High sodium diets and widespread tobacco use are leading to a rapid rise in the prevalence of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) in China. The Disease Prevention and Control Bureau under the Ministry of Health and the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention published findings in 2011 that stated deaths from chronic diseases accounted for 85 percent of total deaths in China each year. A study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in 2013 estimated 11.6 percent of adults in China have contracted diabetes. These 114 million diabetics account for one-third of global sufferers of the disease, but only one-third of Chinese patients were aware of their condition and even fewer were taking sufficient steps to control their blood sugar.

Addressing China's Health Issues

7. ~~(SBU)~~ In 2009, the Chinese government began a health care reform program in an effort to strengthen the state's role in the provision and management of health care. The main outcome of this effort was the expansion of health care insurance coverage more broadly to China's populace, especially rural and migrant populations. China's government pledged 850 billion RMB (\$128 billion) to this effort over three years, setting five major goals:
- Expanding insurance coverage to more than 90 percent of both urban and rural residents through community and rural medical services.
 - Establishing a national essential medicines system to cover the entire process of drug selection, production, supply, and medical insurance reimbursement.
 - Improving the primary care delivery system to provide basic health care and to manage referrals to specialist care between village clinics, urban community health care centers, and urban hospitals.

- Making public health services available and equal for both urban and rural residents.
 - Piloting public hospital reforms.
8. ~~(SBU)~~ Four years into the reform effort, Chinese officials trumpet the coverage of 95 percent of citizens under the country’s various basic health insurance schemes alongside expanded coverage of essential drugs, improved local and rural medical service delivery, and progress in public hospital reform.

Growing Health Care Expenditures and Rising Government Subsidies



Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2012

Shortfalls and Failures

9. ~~(SBU)~~ Reform strategies announced over 2012 and 2013, including an increase of general practitioners and an expansion of China’s essential drugs list, advance the processes established in 2009 and indicate China’s long-term commitment to health care reform. However, the majority of Chinese patients still prefer to seek treatment at the nation’s best-staffed and best-equipped urban hospitals, and these hospitals continue to generate the bulk of their revenues through a system incentivized on the over-provision of health care. [Note: Septel cables focused on China’s doctors and China’s fee-for-service system will address these issues at length.] The next stages of China’s reform process will require a more fundamental transformation based not only on expanding the supply of Chinese health care delivery and coverage, but also on determining how to best manage demand.
10. ~~(SBU)~~ Overcoming bureaucratic obstacles to health care reform also remains a serious issue. China’s health care reform efforts are fragmented across a range of ministries and across different levels of government. For example, when China was formulating its 2009 reform

plan, 18 separate ministries and commissions fed in to the process. The State Council, China’s highest government cabinet body, leads health care reform on the national level, setting top line priorities and determining the responsibilities of other ministries. Line ministries then generate operational plans for implementation at the provincial and county levels. While the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) handles health planning, investing, and pricing, the National Health and Family Planning Commission (NHFP) shares financing responsibilities with the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and two other insurers: the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security (MOHRSS) and the Ministry of Civil Affairs (MOCA). Even the Ministry of Agriculture has a say in health care reform due to its role in protecting rural residents’ welfare. Determining which government agency and which level of supervision is best suited to ensure accountability remains an important and unresolved decision in the long-term reform process.

Government agencies	The State Council									
	MoH	MoHRSS	MoCA	MoF	MoP	NDRC	ODCP	MoA	SFDA	
HCP functions										
Service delivery						★ investment				
Financing	★ NRCMS	★ URBMI	★ MA	★		★ pricing		★		
Human resources	★	★			★		★			
Social security/relief		★	★	★						
Pricing						★				
Policy/regulations	★					★ planning				★

Note: MoA = Ministry of Agriculture; MoCA = Ministry of Civil Affair; MoF = Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Personnel; MoH = Ministry of Health; MoHRSS = Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security; NDRC = National Development and Reform Committee; ODCP = Organization Department of Chinese Communist Party; SFDA= State Food and Drug Administration,

Source: The World Bank, 2013

11. ~~(SBU)~~ China aims to achieve universal population coverage by 2020 and is attempting to resolve ongoing challenges through new initiatives in the current 12th Five-Year Plan (2011-2015) and upcoming 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-2020). While the structure of reform allows innovation on the local level, a lack of laws and regulations for guidance of local authorities has led to a chaotic rollout of various pilot plans. Conflicts of interest are unavoidable due to the dual role of local health bureaus, which serve as both regulators and providers of health services. New national reforms attempt to address this problem by introducing the separation of regulation and management of health care services as well as the separation of the prescription and delivery of pharmaceuticals.
12. ~~(SBU)~~ COMMENT: Achieving near-universal coverage of a populace of nearly 1.4 billion people is a laudable accomplishment for China’s health care reforms. However, bureaucratic hurdles and incentives that conflict with the goals of cost-reduction continue to make China’s health care system an inefficient and costly weight on the country’s economy. Only through overcoming these challenges and implementing a system that focuses on controlling costs while maintaining treatment quality will China be able to lower the savings rates of its citizens while reducing its health care expenditure burden – both actions that would help China reach

its economic growth goals. END COMMENT.

Signature: LOCKE

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Info: BEIJING: (b)(6)

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Dissemination Rule: Archive Copy

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~~SBU~~

From: SMART Archive
Sent: Tue, 18 Feb 2020 10:36:20 GMT
To: SMART Core
Subject: Mission China COVID-19 Update February 18 (U)
Attachments: COVID-19 for 20200218 SitRep.pdf, GZ Flight Status for 20200218 COVID-19 Sitrep.xlsx

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MRN: 20 BEIJING 296
Date/DTG: Feb 18, 2020 / 181032Z FEB 20
From: AMEMBASSY BEIJING
Action: WASHDC, SECSTATE *ROUTINE*
E.O.: 13526
TAGS: SHLH, PGOV, PREL, CASC, AMGT, AMED, ASEC, ELAB, ECON, EINT, KPAO, KHIV, KFLU, KFLO, KFPC, KGHI, KHLS, KSCA, KTBT, CDC, HHS, NIH, AID, OSHA, CN
Captions: SENSITIVE
Reference: A) 20 BEIJING 292, 282, 276, 264, 248, 234, 226, 222, 218, 216, 214, 206, 204, 202, 200, 198, 188, 186, 174, 172, 166, 164, 142, 122, 108, 74
B) 20 BEIJING 260
C) 20 BEIJING 250
D) 20 BEIJING 256
E) 20 BEIJING 254
F) 19 WUHAN 112
G) 20 BEIJING 272
Subject: Mission China COVID-19 Update February 18 (U)

1. ~~(SBU)~~ **Summary and comment:** China's National Health Commission reported 1,886 new cases of COVID-19 in Mainland China on February 17, bringing the total number of recorded cases to 72,436. Updated analysis by ESTHOFF shows the epidemic has continued to intensify across much of Hubei, while trends in the other provinces have been mixed. The Ministry of Emergency Management requested information on how the United States manages emergency stockpiles and reserves. China CDC released the largest epidemiological analysis to-date February 17. The report provides the first epidemic curve that shows onset dates; however, future investigation by PRC health authorities is required to answer outstanding questions. Government officials continue to send conflicting messages about protecting against the virus and returning to work. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed publicly and for the first time February 17 that U.S. experts are participating on the WHO-China joint mission. The joint team conducted a DVC with Wuhan public health staff and clinicians; they also visited a Beijing community health center as well as a Ditan infectious disease hospital prior to beginning their in-

country travel February 18. Multiple media outlets reported that the National People’s Congress Standing Committee would meet on February 24 to consider postponing this year’s “two meetings” (lianghui), which have been held in early March for many years. Renewed focus is also being placed on controlling online narratives about the PRC's efforts, including a concerted effort to retrofit President Xi’s involvement in leading the charge against the virus. In a Qiushi article, one of the CCP’s authoritative mouthpieces, Xi’s involvement was traced back to a January 7 meeting of the Politburo CPC Central Committee, an assertion somewhat at odds with President Xi’s notable public absence during the first few weeks of the epidemic. Meanwhile, the International Air Transport Association updated its list of countries with China-related travel restrictions to 56 countries. **End Summary and comment.**

(U) LATEST UPDATES

2. (U) **Nationwide Cases:** China’s National Health Commission (NHC) reported 1,886 new cases in Mainland China on February 17 as of 24:00, bringing the total number of reported cases to 72,436 ([link](#)). [Note: This includes clinically diagnosed cases in Hubei in addition to lab-confirmed cases in Hubei and the other provinces, though Hubei Health Commission has stopped providing disaggregated figures for clinically diagnosed and lab-confirmed cases. **End note.**] Another 98 deaths were reported on February 16, including 93 in Hubei, as total deaths in Mainland China reached 1,868. The number of patients treated and released from the hospital, meanwhile, rose to 12,552. The total number of currently suspected cases (6,242) and close contacts under medical observation (141,552) continued to decline.

Table 1: Total Officially Reported Cases in Mainland China as of End of February 17

Province/City/Region	Total Cases	New Cases	Total Deaths	New Deaths
Cases in Hubei Province (Lab-Confirmed and Clinically Diagnosed Cases)				
<i>Subtotal</i>	59,989	1,807	1,789	93
Cases in Other Provinces (Lab-Confirmed Cases Only)				
<i>Anhui</i>	982	9	6	--
<i>Beijing</i>	387	6	4	--
<i>Chongqing</i>	553	2	5	--
<i>Fujian</i>	292	2	--	--
<i>Gansu</i>	91	1	2	--
<i>Guangdong</i>	1,328	6	4	--
<i>Guangxi</i>	242	4	2	--
<i>Guizhou</i>	146	1	1	--
<i>Hainan</i>	163	1	4	--
<i>Hebei</i>	302	1	4	1
<i>Heilongjiang</i>	464	7	11	--
<i>Henan</i>	1,257	11	19	3
<i>Hunan</i>	1,007	1	4	1
<i>Inner Mongolia</i>	73	1	--	--

<i>Jiangsu</i>	629	3	--	--
<i>Jiangxi</i>	933	3	1	--
<i>Jilin</i>	89	--	1	--
<i>Liaoning</i>	121	--	1	--
<i>Ningxia</i>	70	--	--	--
<i>Qinghai</i>	18	--	--	--
<i>Shaanxi</i>	240	--	--	--
<i>Shandong</i>	543	2	2	--
<i>Shanghai</i>	333	2	1	--
<i>Shanxi</i>	130	1	--	--
<i>Sichuan</i>	508	13	3	--
<i>Tianjin</i>	125	1	3	--
<i>Tibet</i>	1	--	--	--
<i>Xinjiang</i>	76	1	1	--
<i>Yunnan</i>	172	1	--	--
<i>Zhejiang</i>	1,172	1	--	--
Total Cases (From Provincial Reports)				
<i>Total lab-confirmed cases</i>	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report
<i>Total clinically diagnosed cases</i>	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report
Total cases	72,436	1,888	1,868	98
Total Cases (From NHC Report)				
<i>Total lab-confirmed cases*</i>	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report
<i>Total clinically diagnosed cases</i>	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report
Total cases	72,436	1,886	1,868	98

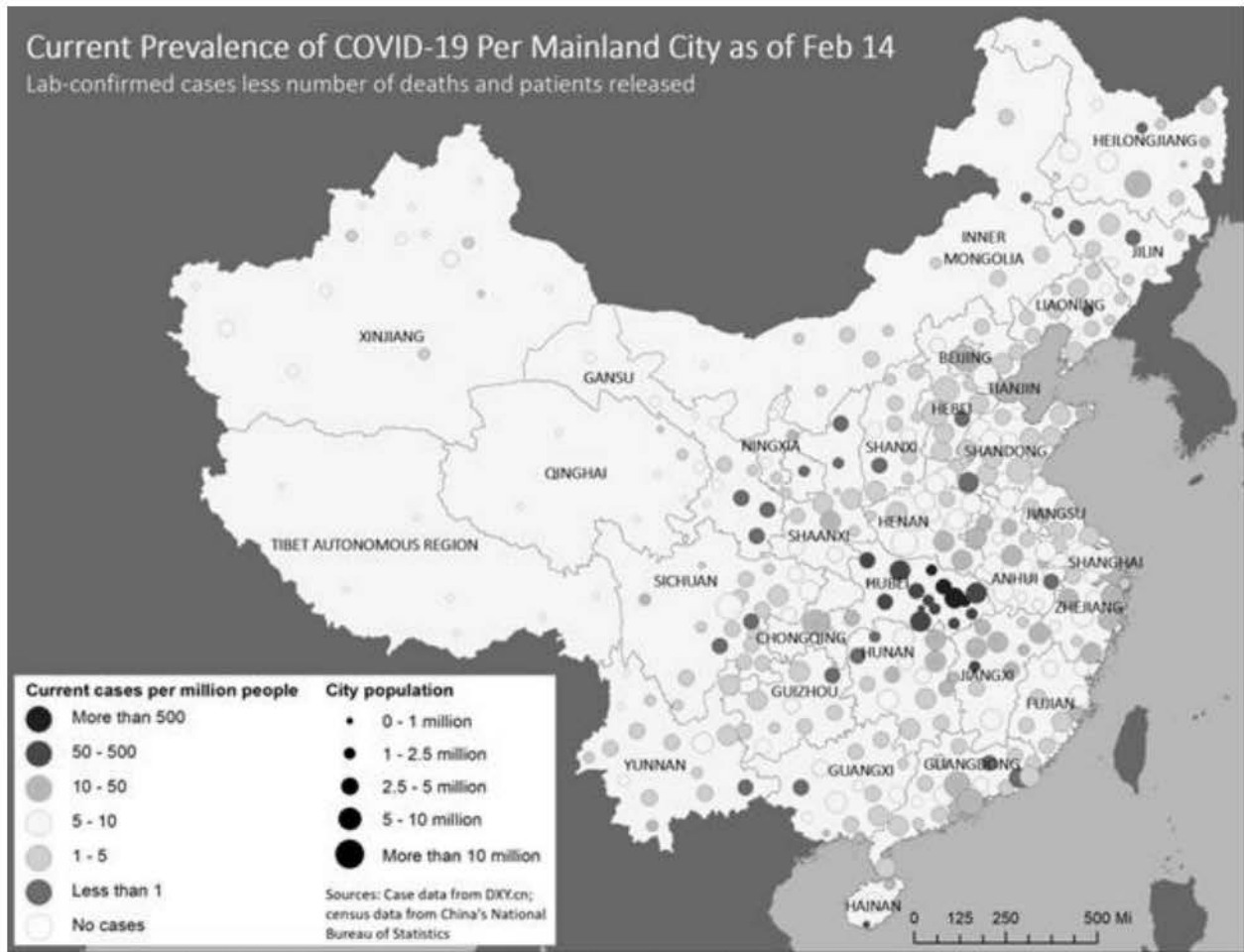
Notes: -- zero cases. Source: NHC and provincial health commissions

3. ~~(SBU)~~ **City-Level Trends:** Updated analysis by ESTHOFF of reports of lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in China's cities from February 9 to 14 shows that the epidemic has continued to intensify across much of Hubei, while trends in the other provinces have been mixed (figure 2). Wuhan City experienced the fastest increase in the current prevalence of COVID-19 cases among Hubei's cities, with a rate of 98 new cases per million residents per day (net of the number of deaths and patients released from the hospital), followed by Ezhou, with a rate of 54 new cases per million per day, and Suizhou, with an increase of 14 new cases per million per day. Despite the worsening trend for the province overall, a few of Hubei's cities recorded substantial *decreases* in the prevalence of lab-confirmed COVID-19 cases. In Tianmen and Xianning, the number of current cases per million residents declined at a rate of 6 and 9 per day, respectively.

4. ~~(SBU)~~ [Note: February 14 is the last day for which Hubei Health commission provided disaggregated statistics for lab-confirmed versus clinically diagnosed cases. The new category of clinically diagnosed cases was introduced into the province's and the country's daily case reports on February 12 (see Ref A, 20 BEIJING 282). Other provinces only report lab-confirmed cases. For the sake of comparability, only data up to February 14 from Hubei and the other provinces have been included here. Also note that ESTH has made two changes to data and methods since the previous analysis of city-level case data presented in the Mission China sitrep for February 10 (see Ref B, 20 BEIJING 260). First, to capture improving and worsening trends in the prevalence of COVID-19 cases over time, the analysis focuses on active cases net of the number of deaths and treated patients released from the hospital. The previous analysis focused on total cases to date, irrespective of the number being actively treated and released. Second, to measure cases per million residents, the previous analysis used statistics from China's Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (MOHURD) on population per city. These statistics only captured the number of permanent residents in urban districts under direct jurisdiction of the municipality, excluding other smaller cities and counties contained within larger municipalities. This created a mismatch in the case reports by local public health authorities, which included data from the entire prefecture or municipality, and the population data. The new analysis presented in today's cable corrects for this, instead using population data prefectures and municipalities from China's latest census (in 2010). ESTH has reproduced the map for case prevalence as of February 9 to be consistent with these new changes (figure 3). **End note.**]

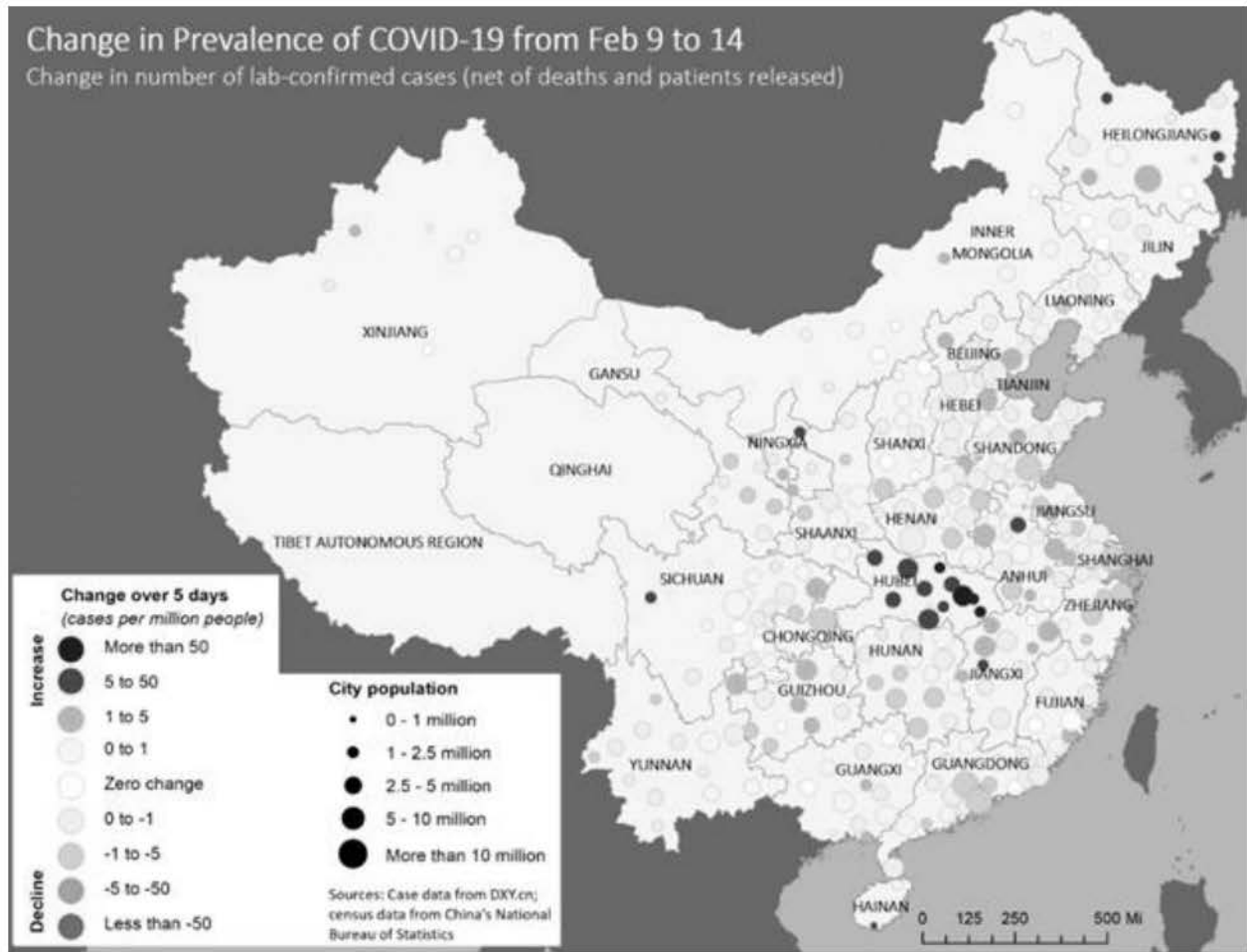
5. ~~(SBU)~~ The prevalence of lab-confirmed COVID-19 cases in the worst-affected cities in Hubei continues to be many times higher than in cities outside the province. The number of lab-confirmed cases under treatment in Wuhan was around 2,000 per million residents on February 14. By comparison, the cities with the highest case prevalence outside Hubei as of February 14 were Xinyu City in western Jiangxi and Sanya City in Hainan, with 82 and 55 cases per million residents, respectively. [Note: Xinyu had a population of 1.1 million in 2010, per the latest census data. **End note.**] Wenzhou in Zhejiang Province, which imposed strict "closed-management" measures on February 4 (see Ref C, 20 BEIJING 250), had 36 cases per million residents as of February 14. [Note: Post had previously reported the case prevalence in Wenzhou at over 200 per million residents for February 9. The downward adjustment owes to the change in population data used for the analysis—not a change in epidemic. Population data for Wenzhou have been adjusted to include surrounding counties and cities outside Wenzhou city proper, consistent with the geographic scope of case reports by Zhejiang health authorities. **End note.**]

Figure 1: Prevalence of Lab-Confirmed COVID-19 in Mainland Cities as of February 14



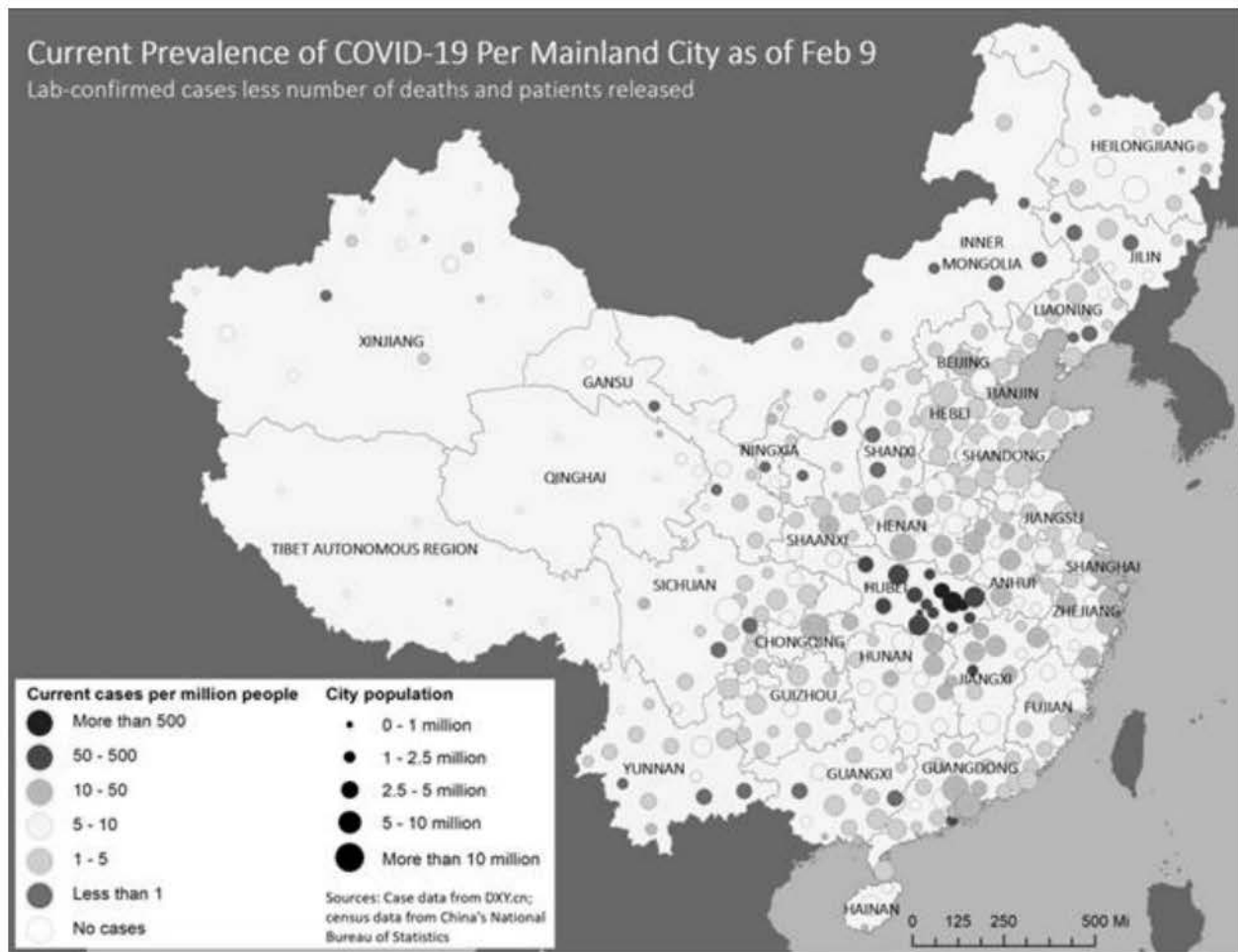
Source: Map by ESTHOFF using data from Ding Xing Yuan (DXY.cn) and 2010 census data.

Figure 2: Change in Prevalence of Lab-Confirmed COVID-19 Cases from February 9 to 14



Source: Map by ESTHOFF using data from Ding Xing Yuan (DXY.cn) and 2010 census data.

Figure 3: Prevalence of Lab-Confirmed COVID-19 in Mainland Cities as of February 9



Source: Map by ESTHOFF using data from Ding Xing Yuan (DXY.cn) and 2010 census data.

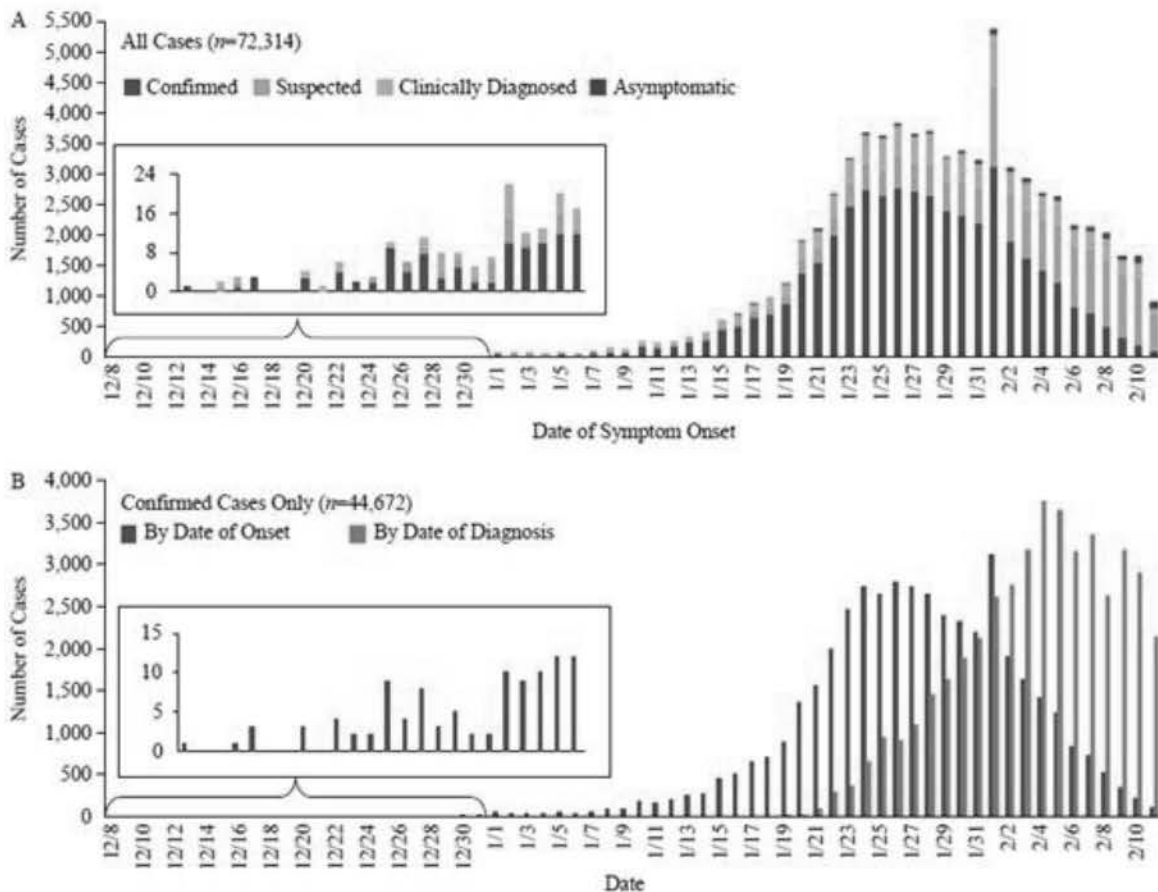
6. (U) **Critical Shortages in Blood Supplies:** Shiyan City COVID-19 command center in Hubei issued an urgent call for blood donors on February 17, writing in an open letter to city residents, “Due to the epidemic, normal blood donation operations in Shiyan City have been unable to function. Supplies of blood are critically low...” (*People’s Daily*). Sichuan Health Commission issued a similar plea on February 16, posting on its social media that “donations of blood have declined greatly, and blood supplies have been in a constant state of emergency...” ([link](#)).

7. ~~(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](#)), included cases from the initial outbreak through February 11.

8. ~~(SBU)~~ 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.**]

9. ~~(SBU)~~ 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.**]



(U) Figure A: Case definitions by onset date; Figure B: Date of onset and date of diagnosis

10. ~~(SBU)~~ 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)].

11. ~~(SBU)~~ 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.]

12. ~~(SBU)~~ The analysis did not report any super-spreader events but states specific causes of medical staff infection and protection failures require further investigation.

13. ~~(SBU)~~ **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.**

14. ~~(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 MEM's request.

15. ~~(SBU)~~ **PRC Messaging, Censorship, and Meetings:** Officials continue to send conflicting messages about protecting against the virus while returning to work at the same time. In Hubei province's Xiaogan, for example, all vehicle traffic was reportedly stopped, with no unofficial transit into or out of the city. At the same time, the government has allowed some online criticism of Xiaogan officials who were caught on video slapping the faces of citizens gathered in a small group to play mahjong. The criticism focused on the officials' overreaction and the fact that they also wore Mao era-style red arm bands, something apparently not ordered by the CCP. In Guizhou province, all checkpoints are reportedly being dismantled, and people are being ordered to speed up economic production to make up for lost time. In Zhejiang province, one of the areas hardest hit outside of Hubei province, the Yiwu municipal government ordered the full resumption of work. Workers who pay their own way to return from another area would be reimbursed, the government announced. At the same time, Xinhua announced that the NPC Standing Committee would meet on February 24 to consider postponing this year's "two meetings" (lianghui), the annual meetings used to set party objectives and give legitimacy to the CCP's political and economic planning. The article asserted that China was "at a crucial moment" and no effort should be spared in fighting against the spread of the virus.

16. ~~(SBU)~~ **Online Narratives:** Renewed focus is also being placed on controlling online narratives about China's 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 Xi's involvement in leading the charge against the coronavirus. In a Qiushi article, one of the CCP's authoritative mouthpieces, Xi's involvement was traced back to a January 7 meeting of the Politburo CPC Central Committee, an assertion somewhat at odds with President Xi's notable public absence during the first few weeks of the epidemic.

Guangzhou

17. (U) Effective February 18, all patrons of public venues in Guangxi – including residential areas, wet markets, supermarkets, shopping malls, restaurants, hospitals, pharmacies, public transport, airports, and railway stations – will be required to use QR code scanning to gain entrance. Nanhai District in Foshan, Guangdong also applied these measures February 17 and ConGenOff reported this procedure has been adopted at a local Guangzhou shopping mall.

18. (U) Guangzhou and Shenzhen metro systems are using QR code scanning at the level of individual cars to scan and register passenger name, gender, identification number, and onboard/offboard station. As of February 18, use of the system is encouraged but not mandatory. While Shenzhen metro has required real-time registration for all metro users, Guangzhou metro riders are encouraged but not mandated to do so.

19. (U) Guangzhou police arrested human rights activist Xu Zhiyong at the home of prosecutor-turned free speech advocate Yang Bin during "coronavirus prevention checks," according to Hong Kong press. Police from the city's Panyu district searched the homes of several of Xu's friends before locating him at Yang's residence. According to the press reports, Xu had been in hiding since attending a gathering in Xiamen to discuss democratic transition.

Shanghai

20. ~~(SBU)~~ **While many Americans in the Shanghai consular district are opting to remain in China, any healthy American citizen in our district who would like to depart can take advantage of approximately 90 international flights** from Shanghai, as well international flights departing from Nanjing and Hangzhou. Travel restrictions remain in place in several cities across East China, but some cities and provinces are relaxing restrictions on intra-city and intra-provincial transport and, in some cases, on vehicle traffic between provinces. American auto and healthcare companies have reported supply chains disruptions due restrictions imposed to contain the spread of COVID-19. CG Shanghai has seen limited signs of stress to the local healthcare system. Nearly 50 percent of total diagnosed cases in Shanghai have now recovered.

21. ~~(SBU)~~ **While several cities in the Shanghai consular district continue to restrict the movement of residents within the city, many municipal and provincial governments are relaxing restrictions on intra-city and intra-provincial transport and, in some cases, on vehicle traffic between provinces.** Over the past week, metro and bus lines resumed or expanded operations in Ningbo, Hangzhou, and Nanjing. Zhejiang announced on February 17

that all vehicle checkpoints across the province, except those in Wenzhou, would be closed. Five cities in Jiangsu issued a joint declaration forbidding blocking inter-regional highways. Jiading District in Shanghai began issuing a special commuting pass for those who work in the district but live in Kunshan or Taicang in Jiangsu Province. Passholders are able to enter Shanghai without having to abide by 14-day quarantine requirements and are able to use a special lane on the highway that allows them to avoid checkpoints at which the wait time is typically more than an hour. However, some cities in East China, including Shanghai, Suzhou, and Hangzhou, are still encouraging (and in some cases requiring) people who are not residents or do not hold a job there to not enter the city and/or have implemented 14-day self-quarantine restrictions for returning travelers from high-risk areas.

22. ~~(SBU)~~ **Shanghai municipal regulations require community visitors to register and pass temperature checks and require self-quarantine for those who have traveled to high-risk areas in the past 14 days, as well as for people returning to Shanghai who work in specific industries, including transportation, healthcare, education, and housekeeping.** Many neighborhood committees are taking more stringent measures, including preventing all visitors from entering and requiring self-quarantine of varying lengths for all returning travelers regardless of where they were. Some neighborhoods where LE staff reside require residents to present a letter from their workplace before the individual is allowed to leave the property.

23. (U) **Following the February 13 launch in Shanghai of two online platforms for employees to verify their health status to employers, on February 17 Shanghai launched an official Health QR Code that must be scanned at many residential buildings and public places to check the health condition of people entering or leaving.** The QR code uses different colors to highlight different risk profiles — green (or black-and-white) for “healthy” people, red for confirmed or suspected cases, and yellow for those from key infection areas and who are under quarantine.

24. (U) **Two districts in Shanghai are experimenting with using wireless door sensors on the homes of residents under mandatory self-quarantine, so community workers will be alerted if the doors are open.** Community workers in Putuo and Jiading Districts say this system will reduce the time they spend ensuring these residents adhere to their quarantine and do not leave their homes.

25. ~~(SBU)~~ **Shanghai municipal bus and metro service are operating normally.** Although ridership remains far below normal levels, authorities reported metro ridership was up 15 percent to 487,000 people by 9:00 am on Monday, compared with one week ago. However, that was still an 82 percent drop compared with the same day and time last year, when there were 2.75 million riders. Authorities are strictly enforcing the mask requirement for all public transportation passengers. Temperature checks are being conducted on all open local metro stations (412) and at 99 bus stops throughout the city, covering 370 routes. The number of flights from Shanghai have declined, but approximately 90 daily flights to international destinations remain available. Japan and Korea remain the most widely served regional transit points, although China Eastern Airlines is scheduled to operate six weekly flights to the United States through March 28.

26. ~~(SBU)~~ **CG Shanghai has seen limited signs of stress to the local healthcare system due to**

the coronavirus. Private hospitals are permitted to operate and provide different levels of services depending on guidance provided by individual district-level governments. The hospitals retain the capability of performing the same outpatient and emergency procedures as they were before the virus, but in some cases are prohibited from doing so by district-level regulations. The two private hospitals most frequented by the official American community can still provide care in most specialties, including emergency care, orthopedics, psychology, dental, immunizations, and pediatrics, among others, though they have suspended purely routine healthcare such as eye exams, teeth cleaning, and routine endoscopies. Many public and private hospitals are offering consultations with doctors via phone, social media, or online. Most private health clinics – including dental clinics – have been ordered to temporarily suspend all services.

27. (U) Experts at Shanghai Public Health Clinical Center in Jinshan District (the city's designated hospital for centralized treatment of coronavirus) announce on Monday that nearly 50 percent of patients diagnosed with COVID-19 - 161 out of 333 - had completely recovered as of February 17. Health officials also announce on Monday that discharged patients must still undergo 14 days of in-home quarantine and must wear masks if they do go out.

28. ~~(SBU)~~ Around the consular district, public hospitals continue to report shortages of PPE such as masks and goggles.

29. ~~(SBU)~~ While the Shanghai government has made no official announcement regarding extending school opening beyond the end of the month, the Shanghai American School (SAS) announced it is unable to reopen March 2 as planned, but will provide three-weeks notice advance notice of reopening. (Note: SAS enrolls the largest number of EFM children in Shanghai. End note.) Dulwich College, a British international school, followed suit and announced it cannot yet provide a date on which the school will reopen, but will provide 21 days advance notice. (Note: No Consulate EFM children attend Dulwich. End note.) Both schools report guidance from local authorities says all students and staff returning to Shanghai, regardless of location, must self-quarantine for 14 days. The two schools will continue to offer distance learning to students in the meantime. Other international schools in Shanghai are expected to follow suit. **All Anhui and Jiangsu schools will remain closed through at least the end of February. Zhejiang schools are closed indefinitely.** Schools in several cities, including Nanjing, Hangzhou, Suzhou, and Ningbo, are already offering distance learning classes.

Shenyang

Heilongjiang

30. (U) Heilongjiang Party Secretary stresses strict enforcement of closed management measures: Heilongjiang Party Secretary Zhang Qingwei said February 17 that the high number of confirmed cases and deaths in the province indicate loopholes and problems still exist in enforcement of closed management regime, and urged officials to diligently monitor all residential complexes and strictly apply all measures already in place. Zhang emphasized that a stricter oversight is needed particularly in senior nursing homes since elders are more prone to contract the virus. Those who fail to strictly enforce closed management measures will be held accountable, said Zhang.

31. (U) **Heilongjiang implements stricter closed management in more cities:** Heilongjiang officials announced February 5 that in Harbin, only one person from each family could leave their homes every two days to purchase necessities, and on February 14, expanded the measure to restrict residents to no more than two hours each time they leave their homes. Authorities on February 17 announced that the same measure would be implemented in all cities and districts that have 10 confirmed COVID-19 cases or more. Moreover, each city has been instructed to apply the “two-two-three” system: deploy two personnel to each checkpoint and conduct two checks (body temperature and ID check), and ask all residents three questions (Where are you going? Why are you going? When do you expect to return?).

32. (U) **Harbin officials urge residents to buy necessities online:** Harbin officials February 17 urged all residents to purchase daily necessities online to minimize overcrowding at shopping malls and stores. Officials also noted that shopping centers and supermarkets should increase their delivery capacity and make their websites and mobile apps more convenient for consumers of all ages. All residential complexes are required to designate a drop off and pick up location and ensure there is no contact between consumers and delivery personnel.

33. (U) **Heilongjiang officials reiterate financial support for businesses:** Officials on February 17 continued to reassure businesses that the province is committed to providing financial support for all businesses to resume normal operations as soon as possible. While the province is committed to assisting all enterprises, Heilongjiang Banking and Insurance Regulatory Bureau said the priority was to support production of medical supplies and PPEs. Officials pledged that provincial banks would implement flexible lending policies and delay loan repayment deadlines.

34. (U) **Suihua and Harbin begin disinfection campaign:** Suihua, Heilongjiang launched a campaign to spray disinfectant throughout the city, focusing its efforts mostly on areas with high number of confirmed cases. According to officials, the city sanitation service center on February 14 dispatched more than 40 vehicles and more than 400 staff members equipped with 20 pulse smoke and water mist dual-use disinfection machines, 150 electronic spray sterilizers and two high-altitude dust suppression vehicles throughout the city. Harbin on February 15 also disinfected several apartment complexes using drones (Note: As of February 18, at A.M. local time, Suihua reported 46 confirmed cases and 4 deaths. Harbin reported 190 confirmed cases and 3 deaths. End Note).



Image: Suihua sanitation service sprays disinfectant *Image: Harbin deploys drones to spray disinfectant*

Jilin

35. (U) **Jilin committed to producing more PPEs:** Jilin Provincial Supervision Bureau said February 17 that the province is reviewing and approving enterprises applying to begin PPE production at an unprecedented pace. At present, 13 companies in Jilin are applying to produce masks, protective clothing and other medical supplies. Authorities expects that once the currently-under-review enterprises begin production, Jilin could manufacture up to 1.59 million masks and 3900 sets of protective clothing per day

36. ~~(SBU)~~ **Changchun residents can only buy five masks every seven days:** Changchun officials said that starting February 18, due to supply shortage, all residents are required to make online appointments prior to buying masks at pharmacies. Each resident is permitted to purchase no more than five masks every seven days. Each customer will be assigned a specific location and time for pick up in order to prevent unnecessary crowding (Note: Contacts throughout Jilin told ConGenOffs that PPE shortage, particularly masks, is a serious problem. One contact lamented that people are constantly looking for newer and better masks but are left to reusing and recycling old ones due to supply shortage. End Note).

37. ~~(SBU)~~ **Yanji government resumes operation:** Yanji announced that all government services and departments have resumed normal operation since February 17. However, Yanji residents seeking assistance from any department must first make an appointment to prevent crowding, and walk-ins without appointments would be denied. As of February 18, at A.M. local time, Yanji reported 5 confirmed cases and no deaths.

Liaoning

38. (U) **Liaoning to disburse more emergency funds to cities:** People's Bank of China Shenyang branch said February 18 that Liaoning Treasury Department allocated 1.957 billion RMB to fund epidemic prevention efforts. The Bank noted that all funds will be disbursed immediately to city, district and county governments. Since the Chinese New Year holiday, Liaoning Treasury already disbursed 1.028 billion RMB to local officials.

(SBU) COVID-19 DEVELOPMENTSBeijing

39. ~~(SBU)~~ **Hubei Strengthens Closed Management Measures:** Hubei February 16 announced new closed management measures restricting movement, including closing all non-essential public venues and expanding restrictions on all non-emergency vehicles province wide. [Note: The circular announcing the new restrictions said prevention and control measures are at a "critical stage," quoting a February 15 statement by National Health Commission Vice-Minister Wang Hesheng, dispatched by Beijing February 11 to Wuhan to replace two high-level Hubei Health Commission officials. End Note.] (*Xinhua*)

40. (U) **Beijing Districts Enhance Closed Management Measures After Quarantine Rule:** Several local districts have announced new measures following Beijing's February 14 announcement that all residents returning to the city must report to their neighborhood committee in advance and then self-quarantine for 14 days. Chaoyang district—which includes the Embassy and housing for many Mission personnel—has placed notices on gates of

residential buildings regarding the rule. Returning residents can choose to self-quarantine at home or a designated facility. Those showing symptoms are transferred to a designated hospital. Daxing district has established 34 locations capable of quarantining 2,429 returning residents, and Haidian district is using hotels for quarantines. Beijing second- and third-class hospitals February 16 began requiring non-emergency patients to make online appointments. (*China Daily*)

Chengdu

Sichuan

41. (U) On February 17, China announced that a delegation of World Health Organization (WHO) experts will visit Beijing, Guangdong, and Sichuan starting on February 17. According to the Global Times, authorities chose Sichuan “in part due to the positive cooperation between China and the United States in the area of public health in the province” (Comment: Our Consulate was surprised by the selection of Sichuan. We are not aware of a greater level of U.S.-China public health cooperation in Sichuan than in other regions of the country. End comment.)

42. (U) In a February 19 press release, the Chengdu municipal government mandated that individuals returning from ten provinces must register, undergo a health screening, and self-quarantine themselves for 14 days before resuming work. The ten provinces are: Hubei, Guangdong, Henan, Zhejiang, Hunan, Anhui, Jiangxi, Beijing, and Chongqing.

43. (U) During a February 14 inspection of epidemic response and rural economic development in Suining, Sichuan Party Secretary Peng Qinghua outlined the following priorities for the provincial government:

- Work harder to prevent and control COVID-19.
- Help farmers with spring plowing.
- Provide employment to migrant workers.
- Encourage businesses to resume operations.
- Introduce practical measures to support rural enterprises.
- Arrange chartered buses to transport migrant workers to their job sites.
- Instruct rural clinics to provide a “health certificate” which employers can use to verify migrant workers’ health status.

44. (U) Sichuan’s COVID-19 Epidemic Response Command released staggered dates for migrant workers to apply for health certificates. Workers from “areas with sporadic cases” and “areas with sporadic cases and current infections” can apply for health certificates on February 19 and February 22, respectively. Workers from areas of Sichuan with greater concentrations of cases are not eligible to apply for health certificates to return to work at this time.

45. (U) On February 18, Sichuan’s COVID-10 Epidemic Response Command issued a notice

announcing the creation of a designated task force to facilitate rural migrant workers' return to their places of work in Guangdong and Zhejiang provinces. The task force will include senior leaders from Sichuan's Human Resource Department, Health Commission, Employment Bureau, Transportation Department, Economic Cooperation Bureau, and China Railway Chengdu Bureau Group. The notice mentions that Sichuan has reached agreements with Guangdong and Zhejiang provinces about the return of rural migrant workers.

Chongqing

46. (U) On February 17, the Chongqing municipal government released a statement touting its expanding efforts to administer RNA tests to cover all close contacts of potential COVID-19 cases "in order to adhere to the early detection and early treatment strategy." A decision by Hubei authorities to begin using clinical diagnosis, rather than RNA testing, led to a spike of fifteen thousand new cases on February 13.

47. (U) Chongqing Party Secretary Chen Min'er reiterated the "double victories" of defeating COVID-19 and achieving the city's economic goals while chairing a February 16 meeting. Chen underlined the following priorities:

- Strengthen clinical screening for asymptomatic COVID-19 carriers.
- Speed up the examination of suspected cases.
- Promote both announced and unannounced inspections of epidemic prevention/control sites, including private enterprises.
- Prevent epidemic outbreaks from occurring as a result of businesses returning to work.
- Promote local consumption.
- Reduce the burdens of foreign enterprises in Chongqing.
- Increase propaganda work.

48. (U) In a public announcement on epidemic prevention and control measures, Chongqing Party Secretary Chen Min'er announced the city's new "Three Stricts" campaign:

- Chongqing should implement the strictest measures for epidemic prevention and control in enterprises.
- Chongqing should implement the strictest system for workplace responsibility.
- Chongqing should implement the strictest supervision and inspection processes.

49. (U) Chongqing dispatched its tenth aid team to Hubei, consisting of 40 healthcare workers and 5 "professionals from relevant fields."

Yunnan

50. (U) During a February 17 meeting with senior officials from Yunnan's COVID-19 Epidemic Response Command, Yunnan Party Secretary Chen Hao stressed the need to implement "parallel processes" of simultaneously resuming work while continuing epidemic response efforts.

Guizhou

51. (U) On February 17, Guiyang issued additional epidemic response measures for public transportation, residential communities, and commercial business spaces. Some measures are similar to previous announcements, and include:

0. Only residents may enter and leave residential developments. When leaving, all persons must wear a mask, have their temperature taken, and scan a QR code linking them to the Guiyang City Epidemic Prevention and Control Information Registration Platform. Non-residents need to seek prior approval before entering and pass temperature screenings.
1. People may not visit friends or relatives, participate in group gatherings or parties, and should avoid crowded public places and wear appropriate PPE.
2. All citizens must assist authorities with screening and prevention measures.
3. Citizens should report to authorities anyone arriving from other regions or provinces, particularly regions with high infection rates.
4. Persons showing any symptoms should wear a mask and seek medical assistance at an appropriate medical facility.
5. Property managers and real estate companies must implement strict sterilization measures on a 24/7 hour basis. Those that fail to comply will be blacklisted. Sub-district communities must establish inspection groups to implement their own control and monitoring measures around the clock.
6. Landlords and residential owners must establish contactless, sanitized delivery procedures for tenants to receive supplies.
7. All building maintenance is to halt, except for urgent repairs. Maintenance personnel must receive temperature screenings prior to commencing repairs.

52. (U) Local media reports featured an announcement by Guizhou Provincial People's Hospital that its last two COVID-19 patients had been discharged on February 17.

Guangzhou

53. (SBU) ConGen staff observed no significant change at seven hospitals designated by Guangdong health authorities to receive COVID-19 patients during February 17 windshield observations. There were no lines at fever clinic entrances. Outpatient entrances at two hospitals had short lines similar to ones observed February 14. The atmosphere was calm at all facilities, and security posture was normal.

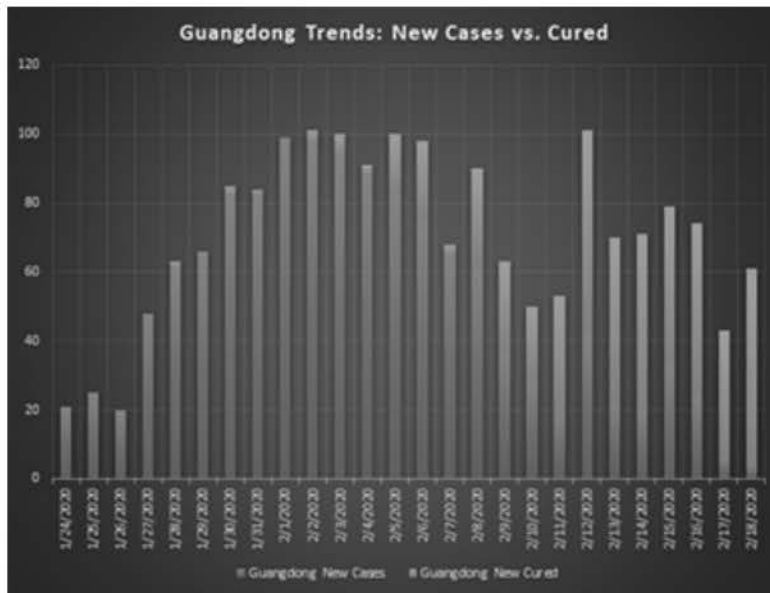
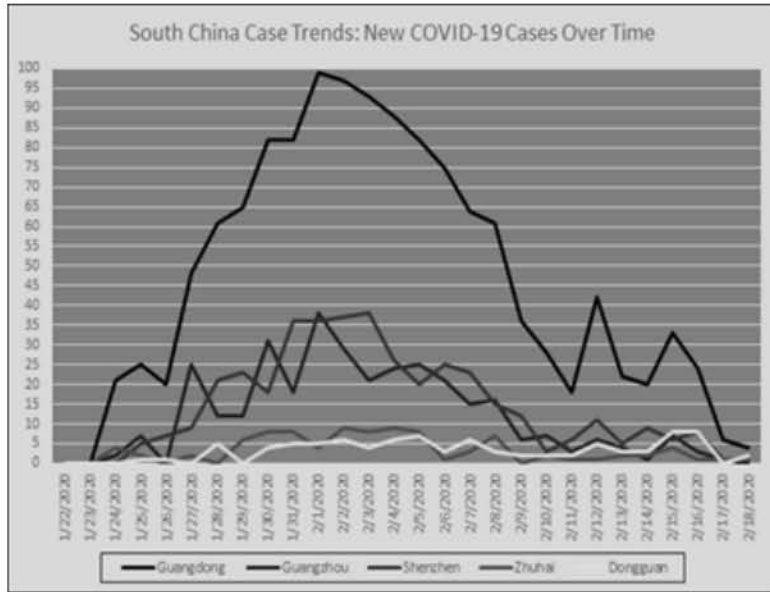
54. (U) The Guangzhou notary office will modify its facemask distribution system effective February 15, according to press. Rather than a daily lottery system that citizens had criticized as unfair, the city will move to a 10-day cycle in which registered residents can enter their names to win 10 masks once every 10 days.

55. (U) The Guangdong Provincial Public Security Department (GDPSD) said in a February 16 press conference the GDPSD had enforced strong measures against wildlife markets and will investigate and severely punish violators. The GDPSD asked the public to report any illegal trade of wildlife or wildlife products.

56. (U) According to Guangdong authorities, there are currently 66 companies in the province

producing 4.11 million face masks and 18 companies producing 17,000 protective suits a day.

57. (U) As of 12:00 p.m. local, cumulative case incidence stood at: Guangdong - 1322 (339 in Guangzhou), Fujian - 290, Guangxi - 238, Hainan - 162 (Deaths: Guangdong – 4, Hainan – 4, Guangxi -2). South China Case Tracker:



(U) INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

58. (U) Over 30 countries around the world have announced donations of money and products, mainly PPE, to help China face the outbreak.

(U) THIRD COUNTRY RESPONSE EFFORTS AND INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

59. (U) The International Air Transport Association (IATA) updated its list of countries with China-related travel restrictions to 56 countries (Figure 4).



Figure 4. IATA lists six countries with outright bans on travelers coming from China or holding China-issued passports (red), 39 countries with conditional bans, typically limited to travelers who were in China in the previous 14 days (orange), and another 10 countries that have rescinded visa privileges like visa-free entry (yellow).

Chengdu

60. (U) Civil aviation is still operating from **Chengdu**, though with decreased viable flights for USG personnel to depart Chengdu for the United States. Viable transit destinations remaining include Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Seoul, and Hong Kong.

Guangzhou

61. (U) As of 10:30 a.m. local, approximately 259 international flights in the next seven days operate on approximately 58 direct routes from South China to foreign destinations, including to the United States, United Kingdom, Amsterdam, Singapore, Russia, Malaysia, Canada, New Zealand, Japan, Korea, Australia, France, Ethiopia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Philippines, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Netherlands, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. In addition to Guangzhou (34), this includes routes from Shenzhen (5), Haikou (1), Fuzhou (2), Xiamen (14), and Nanning (2). Guilin currently has no international routes operating. South China's major cities also maintain flight connections or train routes to major Chinese cities for onward international travel. **See attached spreadsheet for details.** As of February 18, some 24 daily "transit" ferries from seven Pearl River Delta ports direct to the Hong Kong airport for ticketed passengers continue to operate. Ticketed passengers are "in transit" and are exempt from Hong Kong mandatory quarantine for Mainland arrivals.

Shenyang

62. (U) **China Southern reduces flights to Tokyo:** China Southern announced that flights to Tokyo has been reduced from five to four times per week and will be further reduced next week to three times per week. In total, U.S. citizens choosing to depart northeast China out of Shenyang will have 22 international flights to choose from the week of February 17, and 21 flights starting the week of February 24.

(U) ECONOMIC AND SUPPLY CHAIN IMPACT

63. (U) **Retail Supply Chains See Upcoming Shortages:** A major global retailer shared on Monday, February 17 that while it was still able to supply its stores across China (with the exception of Hubei) with daily needs, items in particularly high demand included rice, milk powder, infant formula and instant noodles. Also, fresh pork and poultry were no longer available, with stores being supplied with only frozen products. The contact shared growing concern that without a return to more normal supply chain operations from suppliers in the coming one to two weeks, shortages would likely begin to develop. Two challenges were cited: 1) new movement and quarantine restrictions on workers, and 2) delivery issues to small towns and rural areas in the "last mile." Separately, while retail prices have remained high but stable over the past several days, at least one major Chinese retailer is offering coupons for 10-yuan free with a 90-yuan purchase.

64. (U) U.S. food and agricultural export groups report that they have postponed or cancelled market promotion activities across China thru late May.

65. (U) China's Ministry of Finance announced that financial authorities at all levels had allocated nearly \$13 billion in subsidies to support epidemic prevention and control efforts across the nation.

66. (U) The General Administration of China Customs (GACC) issued 10 measures Sunday to support foreign enterprises in resuming business and limiting the impact of the outbreak. The measures included simplifying registration and filing procedures, accelerating inspections, expediting the release of needed materials, granting import permissions for agricultural products, reducing quarantine examination and approval times, and performing bureaucratic approvals simultaneously.

67. (U) The State Administration for Market Supervision (SAMR), the National Medical Products Administration (NMPA), and the National Intellectual Property Administration (CNIPA) also issued 10 measures to support the resumption of business and production, including expediting patents for COVID-19 prevention and treatment, suspending deadlines, and extending and restoring IP rights.

68. (U) China's National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), Ministry of Transportation (MOT), and Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA) issued a joint statement encouraging local governments to issue supportive measures to allow enterprises, involving feed and livestock and poultry slaughtering and processing, to resume work, without imposing restrictions such as examinations or approvals. Priority should be given to ensuring the demand for personnel protection materials and the supply of water, electricity and gas in the

enterprises, the statement said. It also urged the correction of some inappropriate practices, such as blocking roads in some villages, townships and counties.

69. (U) Xinhua reported that the BRICS New Development Bank (NDB) would provide an unspecified amount of emergency financing to Hubei, Guangdong, and Henan Provinces.

70. (U) A PRC-government-affiliated think tank contact told EmbOffs the outbreak was likely to delay China's imports from the United States since many enterprises still had not resumed operations. The contact also warned about the impact to U.S. tourism industry revenues given flight cancellations and quarantine requirements on travelers from China.

71. (U) A Securities Times report said online advertising revenue had grown during the outbreak as consumers engaged in video gaming, short videos, and online education. Industry experts said they expected the "internet television industry" to benefit, as well.

72. (U) Industry insiders told Global Times that foreign business like KFC and Starbucks were likely to report profit declines of 50 percent or more.

73. (U) Apple said the outbreak would prevent it from reaching its first quarter revenue target. The company said that while its operations throughout China outside of Hubei had resumed, albeit at a reduced pace, global iPhone supply would be "temporarily restricted." Caixin Global reported that iPhone manufacturer Foxconn was having difficulty staffing its factory floor as workers returning to Beijing had to quarantine at home for 14 days. A survey of U.S. companies revealed 41 percent saw staffing as their top concern for resuming operations, while 30 percent said logistics was their main worry.

74. (U) The Ministry of Public Security reported that some illicit supply chains were still operating, as officials confiscated 16.3 million counterfeit and inferior masks. Officials were dealing with hundreds of cases of counterfeit and inferior products, drugs, medical devices, and PPE.

75. (U) DOMOTEX Asia/CHINAFLOOR (the leading flooring exhibition in the Asian-Pacific region and the second largest flooring show worldwide) became the latest in a series of expos to postpone or cancel because of the COVID-19 outbreak. The International Trademark Association (INTA) confirmed that its upcoming 2020 Annual Meeting, the world's largest gathering of IP practitioners with over 10,000 delegates annually and set to take place at the end of April in Singapore, would be relocated to the United States take place in either May or June.

76. (U) A Tsinghua University report said delays in production were among the most prominent concerns of companies. From February 15, less than 27 percent of these companies said they could survive more than a month if they did not resume production quickly, with 26 percent of companies able to last even a week. Companies reported that they needed a week to a month to resume full operations, further weighing on their operation costs. About 23 percent of interviewed companies still say their cash flows would be drained within three months.

77. (U) National Energy Administration (NEA) statistics showed 996 of China's coal mines were

in operation as of February 13, up 138 percent from the number open on February 1. The NEA said China's coal stockpile for power plants could cover 24 days, while Hubei's coal stockpile could cover 41 days.

Chengdu

Chongqing

78. (U) In Chongqing's Liangjiang New Area, 175 large industrial companies have resumed production, with nearly 60 percent of employees back at work, according to official statistics. An additional 388 companies in the area implementing strict epidemic prevention and control measures are also allowed to operate.

79. (U) From February 11-14, Chongqing's Municipal Epidemic Prevention and Control Working Group undertook a round of unannounced "inspection and supervision" visits of private enterprises in the city to ensure strict compliance with the cities' epidemic response measures. Inspection teams also followed up on any issues found during previous rounds of inspections.

Yunnan

80. (U) In a February 17 press release, the Yunnan government announced major infrastructure projects in the project have resumed work, including those aimed at improving connectivity with Southeast Asian countries. The Yunnan Construction Investment Group has reportedly resumed work on 30 projects, including three highway projects and two citizen relocation projects (likely tied to poverty alleviation initiatives).

Guangzhou

81. (U) The first post-holiday China-Europe "block train" (中欧班列, a scheme under which three freight lines connect China and Europe via Russia, Mongolia, and Kazakhstan) departed Dongguan, Guangdong February 14, carrying made-in-Guangdong circuits, telecom equipment, ATMs, and vacuum cleaners, according to press reports. The shipment was due to reach Kaluga in western Russia in 15 days. Resumption of block train service – delayed amid the outbreak – represents a return of rail trade under the One Belt, One Road umbrella.

82. ~~(SBU)~~ Shenzhen-based real estate developer Evergrande said February 16 it would discount residential sales prices across China by 25 percent through February 29, with the discount continuing at lower rates after that. The company announced additional discounts for buyers paying more cash up front, and – perhaps in a sign that people are hesitant to move into full buildings amid outbreak fears – discounts for units in buildings with high ownership rates.

83. ~~(SBU)~~ South China agricultural activity resumed haltingly during the week of February 10-14, contacts told ConGen staff. Distributors and retailers are struggling with logistic slowdowns and depressed customer foot traffic. For bulk agricultural commodities, domestic logistic networks are not fully online and only 30 percent of flour mills had resumed processing. While livestock feed companies had resumed production, they are increasing sales prices to their customers given higher input and transport costs, according to contacts. In an effort to boost

farm level poultry prices and overall supply chain operation, on February 10 the Guangdong Department of Agriculture began issuing transport certificates to large broiler producers and other agricultural players to help them bypass road blockages and make "last mile" deliveries.

84. (U) As of February 15, Guangzhou travel agencies had cancelled 12,466 domestic and overseas tours involving 214,500 people. At least 59 mid-range and luxury hotels in Guangzhou had suspended business amid low demand, and eight major domestic and international sporting events in the city had been cancelled, according to [press reports](#).

85. (U) The Guangzhou branch of the People's Bank of China, along with other Guangdong financial authorities, directed banks January 30 to stabilize critical financial infrastructure and provide liquidity to companies, according to press reports. Industrial and Commercial Bank's Guangdong branches, for example, increased cash inventory to meet emergency customer needs, dispatched personnel to monitor ATMs for banknote shortages and equipment failures, supplied ATMs with RMB 3 billion in banknotes via 15,000 operations between January 24 and February 5, and ensured that cash reached hospitals and other key entities. Financial institutions ramped up digital services, with Guangzhou-based Nanyue Bank and others developing new online platforms and directing branches to serve customers remotely.

86. (U) Guangdong authorities directed banks to help companies resume operations via loan restructuring and extension, non-repayment of some principal and interest, and exemption from interest penalties, according to press reports. The government also directed banks to streamline credit approval. Agricultural Development Bank's Guangdong branch, for example, identified 118 companies to assist, and fast-tracked RMB 355 million to five of them within two days. Construction Bank's Guangdong branch took just one day to issue a RMB 55 million loan for the Sun Yat-sen University-linked Daan Genome Company to produce virus testing kits. For its part, Agricultural Bank's Guangdong branch unveiled 10 support measures for SMEs, including preferential interest rates and faster access to credit.

Shanghai

87. ~~(SBU)~~ **Many Shanghai businesses remain closed or have office employees working from home.** Governments in many cities, including Shanghai, Hangzhou, and Suzhou, require businesses to implement epidemic control measures, to file two to three days in advance for approval to reopen, and to certify that returnees from impacted areas self-quarantine for 14 days.

88. ~~(SBU)~~ **The auto sector has been particularly hard hit by supply chain disruptions.** General Motors resumed limited production at its Shanghai plant on February 16, while its plant in Hubei Province remains closed. A contact from Fiat Chrysler Automobiles told CongenOff that its plants in Hangzhou and Guangzhou reopened on February 17, but that it has not yet received approval to reopen its production facility in Changsha, Hunan Province. Hangzhou-based Geely Auto Group is gradually reopening its production facilities from February 15 through February 25, but does not expect its plant in Taizhou to open until March 1, according to a contact from Geely.

89. ~~(SBU)~~ **Contacts from U.S. and European healthcare companies have reported that the lack of cargo flights to and from China is negatively affecting their supply chain,** raising

both the cost and time associated with importing materials used in their production facilities.

90. (U) The government of Jiashan, a county-level district of Jiaxing in Zhejiang Province, paid two-thirds of the cost of a chartered flight to bring back 154 workers from Sichuan so local companies can resume operations.

Shenyang

91. ~~(SBU)~~ **Contact says Neusoft sales dipped:** Contact at Neusoft, a company that manufactures CT scans, told ConGenOff February 18 that supply chains have not yet had an impact on their operations, since most of their orders were received prior to the virus outbreak and the company still had ample stock of backup inventories in the city. However, contact said that their sales department had suspended their operation. Though it is still too soon to know exact figures, contact noted that sales have certainly dipped since the virus outbreak, not because their production capacity had reduced, but many of their clients and customers have not yet resumed operations and placed new orders.

~~(SBU)~~ SUPPORT FOR U.S. CITIZENS

Chengdu

92. ~~(SBU)~~ As of February 18, Chengdu ACS has been informed that an AmCit who had been ordered to quarantine in Yunnan was released. The AmCit has not tested positive for COVID-19. Post has seen an overall decline in passport applications since the outbreak. Chengdu's ACS unit remains open and able to serve the American community at large.

Guangzhou

93. ~~(SBU)~~ There are no known COVID-19 cases of American citizens in Guangdong, Fujian, Guangxi, or Hainan. Since the State Department issued a travel advisory related to coronavirus, Guangzhou ACS has received six inquiries about repatriation assistance. One American received a repatriation loan and has returned to the United States, one self-funded his repatriation, and four cases remain active. Passport demand remains low, with far fewer appointments for minor passport renewals, likely due to AmCits and their guardians hoping to avoid exposure to strangers on planes, trains and in the ACS waiting room.

Shanghai

94. ~~(SBU)~~ Over the weekend ACS received no new reports from the Foreign Affairs Office (FAO) of American's being ordered to quarantine. To date, ACS has been informed of a total of 26 cases of American citizens who have been ordered to self-quarantine or sent to a controlled quarantine facility (24 in Shanghai, two in Zhejiang). None of the American citizens currently or previously under orders to self-quarantine have tested positive for COVID-19.

Shenyang

95. ~~(SBU)~~ U.S. citizens in northeast China continue to inquire about travel restrictions, flight status and other routine ACS related issues. One U.S. citizen in Songyuan, Jilin reported difficulty leaving her home because she was unable to read the Chinese writing on the information card which is required by every resident to submit prior to exiting the compound (Note: Songyuan announced during the early stage of the virus outbreak that only person from

each family is allowed to leave their home to purchase daily necessities. End Note).

~~(SBU)~~ POST OPERATIONS

96. ~~(SBU)~~ There has been no change in post operations for the Embassy or Consulates.

Guangzhou

97. ~~(SBU)~~ No changes to staffing numbers or post security posture. Essential LE staff reported to work February 18, with others on administrative leave. At least one LE staff with travel outside Guangzhou in past seven days was told by the Diplomatic Services Bureau to home-isolate for seven days following return. All LE staff are still required to file daily reports to Diplomatic Services Bureau on their health and work status.

98. ~~(SBU)~~ Supermarkets, public transportation, hospital services, bank, and ride hailing services in Guangzhou are all operating without indications of significant disruption. Staple goods are continuously stocked, including fresh produce, meat, and eggs. ConGenOff has observed inconsistent inventory of some dry goods and frozen prepared foods. Residential water delivery is currently not available for standard delivery, but Post has made arrangements with the vendor to ensure availability. Dine-in restaurant service has been suspended throughout the city since February 13. Delivery and take-out options are abundant. DPO disruptions have been resolved through alternate routing. Automobile traffic in the vicinity of the Consulate is noticeably up the week of February 17 compared to the prior week, with Guangzhou residents opting to drive in order to avoid public transportation.

Shanghai

99. ~~(SBU)~~ Most grocery stores and wet (produce) markets throughout Shanghai appear well stocked and grocery and food delivery services continue to operate. No USDH or LES has reported any difficulty in obtaining fresh/sufficient food. The Shanghai government continues prioritizing a stable food supply.

Shenyang

100. ~~(SBU)~~ No changes to CG Shenyang staffing numbers, operation or posture. While many businesses still remain closed, more small shops and stores returned to work on February 17. Traffic on the road also increased notably compared to last week. Citizen Liaison Volunteers throughout the region reported that markets are orderly and well-stocked.

MEDIA ROUNDUP

Guangzhou

101. ~~(SBU)~~ South China PAS media contacts have complained on social media that local officials are exceeding their authority in the anti-epidemic campaign and are impinging on people's rights. Others have continued to criticize Hubei for their response to the epidemic, noting that many patients are suffering from a lack of medical resources and adequate medical care.

102. (U) Guangzhou netizens continued to welcome the Guangdong Education Department's

notice that schools will not open before the end of February, hailing this as a way to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. They also discussed: 1) Residents of Baiyun District, Guangzhou will need to fill out health information in the WeChat app “Safe and Healthy Baiyun” including their temperature and whether they have traveled to Hubei. This app will serve as a database of health information which can be used to track suspected cases of COVID. [Note: One LE Staff living in Baiyun was told by their local neighborhood committee that they will not be allowed to leave their residence if they have not submitted information to this program. End Note] and 2) Nanning, Guangxi has started to implement real name registration for passengers of buses and taxis, which sparked concern from netizens about their personal information security.

Shenyang

103. (U) On February 17, Heilongjiang Provincial COVID-19 Leading Workgroup issued a notice to implement new control measures in key epidemic areas in the province. The notice applied to 12 counties in Heilongjiang with 10 or more confirmed COVID-19 cases and mandated new regulations including entry and exit checkpoints, closed management enforcement, bans on family gatherings and 14-day quarantine requirements for outsiders. News about the notice quickly went viral on social media platforms in Northeast China under the hashtag #Heilongjiang Epidemic Implementation of 9 Strict Articles#. By February 18, it had become a top trending topic on Weibo with a viewership of over 43 million and more than 1,400 comments. At the same time, another related topic began trending under the hashtag #Focus on COVID19 situation in Heilongjiang# that allowed netizens to post updates and news items about Heilongjiang’s epidemic crisis. By February 18, it had received more than 110 million views and 14,000 comments. Most netizens expressed mixed opinions on the issues. Some comments conveyed skepticism or critical views on the local government’s ability to control the situation, while others supported the government’s response and called for unity. Many netizens also voiced deep concerns about the epidemic situation in Heilongjiang and called for stricter implementation of measures in rural areas. The following additional topics were also trending on social media sites in Northeast China: 1) Jilin donates 600 boxes of ginseng to assist with Wuhan relief efforts, 2) Police Officer Wang Chuntian honored with hero award, and 3) COVID-19 research indicates 4.95 days from onset to diagnosis.

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

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Vital Surveillances

The Epidemiological Characteristics of an Outbreak of 2019 Novel Coronavirus Diseases (COVID-19) — China, 2020

The Novel Coronavirus Pneumonia Emergency Response Epidemiology Team

Abstract

Background: An outbreak of 2019 novel coronavirus diseases (COVID-19) in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China has spread quickly nationwide. Here, we report results of a descriptive, exploratory analysis of all cases diagnosed as of February 11, 2020.

Methods: All COVID-19 cases reported through February 11, 2020 were extracted from China's Infectious Disease Information System. Analyses included the following: 1) summary of patient characteristics; 2) examination of age distributions and sex ratios; 3) calculation of case fatality and mortality rates; 4) geo-temporal analysis of viral spread; 5) epidemiological curve construction; and 6) subgroup analysis.

Results: A total of 72,314 patient records—44,672 (61.8%) confirmed cases, 16,186 (22.4%) suspected cases, 10,567 (14.6%) clinically diagnosed cases (Hubei Province only), and 889 asymptomatic cases (1.2%)—contributed data for the analysis. Among confirmed cases, most were aged 30–79 years (86.6%), diagnosed in Hubei (74.7%), and considered mild (80.9%). A total of 1,023 deaths occurred among confirmed cases for an overall case fatality rate of 2.3%. The COVID-19 spread outward from Hubei Province sometime after December 2019, and by February 11, 2020, 1,386 counties across all 31 provinces were affected. The epidemic curve of onset of symptoms peaked around January 23–26, then began to decline leading up to February 11. A total of 1,716 health workers have become infected and 5 have died (0.3%).

Conclusions: COVID-19 epidemic has spread very quickly taking only 30 days to expand from Hubei to the rest of Mainland China. With many people returning from a long holiday, China needs to prepare for the possible rebound of the epidemic.

Introduction

A cluster of pneumonia cases of unknown origin in Wuhan, China caused concern among health officials

in late December 2019. On December 31, an alert was issued by the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission, a rapid response team was sent to Wuhan by the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC), and a notification was made to the World Health Organization (WHO) (1–4). Likely potential causes including influenza, avian influenza, adenovirus, severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV), and Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) were ruled out. Epidemiological investigation implicated Wuhan's Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market, which was shut down and disinfected, and active case finding was initiated and vigorously pursued (2,4–5).

On January 7, 2020, the causative pathogen was identified as a novel coronavirus, and genomic characterization and test method development ensued (2–6). Now named 2019-nCoV, the virus is distinct from both SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV, yet closely related (5,7). Early cases suggested that COVID-19 (i.e. the new name for disease caused by the novel coronavirus) may be less severe than SARS and MERS. However, illness onset among rapidly increasing numbers of people and mounting evidence of human-to-human transmission suggests that 2019-nCoV is more contagious than both SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV (3,8–11).

On January 20, China's "National Infectious Diseases Law" was amended to make 2019-novel coronavirus diseases (COVID-19) a Class B notifiable disease and its "Frontier Health and Quarantine Law" was amended to support the COVID-19 outbreak response effort. Then, on January 23, the Chinese Government began to limit movement of people in and out of Wuhan, and two days later, it announced its highest-level commitment and mobilized all sectors to respond to the epidemic and prevent further spread of COVID-19. Characterization of the epidemiological features of COVID-19 is crucial for the development and implementation of effective control strategies. Here, we report the results of a descriptive, exploratory analysis of all cases found through February 11, 2020.

Method

Study Design

This study was a descriptive, exploratory analysis of all cases of COVID-19 diagnosed nationwide in China as of the end of February 11, 2020. As such, it in some respects uses a cross-sectional study design and hence, we have used the STROBE Guidelines (www.equator-network.org) to aid our thorough reporting of this observational study.

A public health emergency was declared, and a formal investigation began on December 31, 2019, supported by city (Wuhan Municipal Health Commission and Wuhan CDC), provincial (Health Commission of Hubei Province and Hubei Provincial CDC), and national (National Health Commission and China CDC) authorities and resources. This study was reviewed by the China CDC Institutional Review Board via a fast-track mechanism. Although individual informed consent was not required for this study, all data were handled as a deidentified set to protect patient privacy and confidentiality.

Data Source

By categorizing COVID-19 as a Class B notifiable disease, Chinese law required all cases to be immediately reported to China's Infectious Disease Information System. Entry of each case into the system was performed by local epidemiologists and public health workers who investigated and collected information on possible exposures. All case records contain national identification numbers, and therefore, all cases have records in the system and no records are duplicated. All data contained in all COVID-19 case records in the Infectious Disease Information System through the end of February 11, 2020 were extracted from the system as a single dataset and were then stripped of all personal identifying information. No sampling was done to achieve a predetermined study size and no eligibility criteria were used—all cases were included.

Variables

Patient characteristics were collected at baseline, meaning the time of diagnosis, epidemiological investigation, and entry into the Infectious Disease Information System. Patients were categorized as health workers for the occupation variable if they had active employment of any kind in a health facility (i.e. this category did not just include physicians and

nurses). Patients were categorized as having a Wuhan-related exposure if they had recently resided in or visited Wuhan or if they had close contact with someone who had. The comorbid conditions variable was determined upon epidemiological investigation by patient self-reported medical history, which was not independently verified using medical records for all cases. The severity of symptoms variable was categorized as mild, severe, or critical. Mild included non-pneumonia and mild pneumonia cases. Severe was characterized by dyspnea, respiratory frequency ≥ 30 /minute, blood oxygen saturation $\leq 93\%$, $\text{PaO}_2/\text{FiO}_2$ ratio < 300 , and/or lung infiltrates $> 50\%$ within 24–48 hours. Critical cases were those that exhibited respiratory failure, septic shock, and/or multiple organ dysfunction/failure.

As some variables of interest (i.e., Wuhan-related exposure, comorbid condition, and case severity) are not required fields when creating records in the Infectious Disease Information System, some records have missing data for these variables.

For construction of epidemiological curves, date of onset was defined as the date on which patients self-reported the start of either fever or cough during epidemiological investigation. Cases were categorized as confirmed, suspected, clinically diagnosed (Hubei Province only), or asymptomatic. Confirmed cases were diagnosed based on positive viral nucleic acid test results on throat swab samples (some samples were tested retrospectively). Suspected cases were diagnosed clinically based on symptoms and exposures. Clinically diagnosed cases were suspected cases with lung imaging features consistent with coronavirus pneumonia. Asymptomatic cases were diagnosed based on positive viral nucleic acid test results but without any COVID-19 symptoms (e.g., fever, dry cough). The date of positive viral nucleic acid test result is used as onset date for asymptomatic cases

Analysis

For confirmed cases, demographic and clinical characteristics were summarized using descriptive statistics. Age distribution graphs were constructed using patient age at baseline for confirmed cases diagnosed in Wuhan, Hubei Province (including Wuhan), and China (including Hubei Province). Sex ratio (i.e., male:female [M:F] ratio) was also calculated. Case fatality rates were calculated as the total number of deaths (numerator) divided by the total number of cases (denominator), expressed as a percent. Observed time was summarized using person-days (PD) and

mortality was calculated as the number of deaths (numerator) divided by the total observed time (denominator), expressed per 10 PD.

For geo-temporal analysis, the county-level location of each case at time of diagnosis was used to build color-coded maps of China to indicate the numbers of cases in each province on December 31, 2019; January 10, 2020; January 31, 2020; and February 11, 2020. This analysis was performed using ArcGIS Desktop software (version 10.6; Esri; Redlands, California, USA).

The epidemiological curve for all cases was constructed by plotting the number of cases (y-axis) versus self-reported date of symptom onset (x-axis). Date of symptom onset for confirmed, suspected, clinically diagnosed, and asymptomatic cases were stacked to show total cases over time. The epidemiological curve for confirmed cases was also overlaid with the number of cases versus date of diagnosis to show the delay between onset of symptoms and diagnosis of disease.

Two subgroups were also analyzed separately using epidemiological curves: confirmed cases diagnosed outside of Hubei Province (with and without Wuhan-

related exposure) and all cases diagnosed among health workers (confirmed, suspected, clinically diagnosed, and asymptomatic).

Results

Patients

A total of 72,314 unique records were extracted and data from all records were included in the analysis. Thus, all 72,314 individuals diagnosed with COVID-19 as of February 11, 2020, were included in the analysis. Among them, 44,672 cases (61.8%) were confirmed, 16,186 cases (22.4%) were suspected, 10,567 cases (14.6%) were clinically diagnosed, and 889 cases (1.2%) were asymptomatic.

Baseline characteristics of confirmed cases (n=44,672) are presented in Table 1. A majority were aged 30–69 years (77.8%), male (51.4%), farmers or laborers (22.0%), and diagnosed in Hubei Province (74.7%). Most patients reported Wuhan-related exposures (85.8%) and were classified as mild cases (80.9%).

TABLE 1. Patients, deaths, and case fatality rates, as well as observed time and mortality for n=44,672 confirmed COVID-19 cases in Mainland China as of February 11, 2020.

Baseline Characteristics	Confirmed Cases, N (%)	Deaths, N (%)	Case Fatality Rate, %	Observed Time, PD	Mortality, per 10 PD
Overall	44,672	1,023	2.3	661,609	0.015
Age, years					
0–9	416 (0.9)	–	–	4,383	–
10–19	549 (1.2)	1 (0.1)	0.2	6,625	0.002
20–29	3,619 (8.1)	7 (0.7)	0.2	53,953	0.001
30–39	7,600 (17.0)	18 (1.8)	0.2	114,550	0.002
40–49	8,571 (19.2)	38 (3.7)	0.4	128,448	0.003
50–59	10,008 (22.4)	130 (12.7)	1.3	151,059	0.009
60–69	8,583 (19.2)	309 (30.2)	3.6	128,088	0.024
70–79	3,918 (8.8)	312 (30.5)	8.0	55,832	0.056
≥80	1,408 (3.2)	208 (20.3)	14.8	18,671	0.111
Sex					
Male	22,981 (51.4)	653 (63.8)	2.8	342,063	0.019
Female	21,691 (48.6)	370 (36.2)	1.7	319,546	0.012
Occupation					
Service industry	3,449 (7.7)	23 (2.2)	0.7	54,484	0.004
Farmer/laborer	9,811 (22.0)	139 (13.6)	1.4	137,992	0.010
Health worker	1,716 (3.8)	5 (0.5)	0.3	28,069	0.002
Retiree	9,193 (20.6)	472 (46.1)	5.1	137,118	0.034
Other/none	20,503 (45.9)	384 (37.5)	1.9	303,946	0.013

TABLE 1. (continued)

Baseline Characteristics	Confirmed Cases, N (%)	Deaths, N (%)	Case Fatality Rate, %	Observed Time, PD	Mortality, per 10 PD
Province					
Hubei	33,367 (74.7)	979 (95.7)	2.9	496,523	0.020
Other	11,305 (25.3)	44 (4.3)	0.4	165,086	0.003
Wuhan-related exposure*					
Yes	31,974 (85.8)	853 (92.8)	2.7	486,612	0.018
No	5,295 (14.2)	66 (7.2)	1.2	71,201	0.009
Missing	7,403	104	2.8	103,796	0.010
Comorbid condition†					
Hypertension	2,683 (12.8)	161 (39.7)	6.0	42,603	0.038
Diabetes	1,102 (5.3)	80 (19.7)	7.3	17,940	0.045
Cardiovascular disease	873 (4.2)	92 (22.7)	10.5	13,533	0.068
Chronic respiratory disease	511 (2.4)	32 (7.9)	6.3	8,083	0.040
Cancer (any)	107 (0.5)	6 (1.5)	5.6	1,690	0.036
None	15,536 (74.0)	133 (32.8)	0.9	242,948	0.005
Missing	23,690 (53.0)	617 (60.3)	2.6	331,843	0.019
Case severity‡					
Mild	36,160 (80.9)	–	–	–	–
Severe	6,168 (13.8)	–	–	–	–
Critical	2,087 (4.7)	1,023 (100)	49.0	31,456	0.325
Missing	257 (0.6)	–	–	–	–
Period (by date of onset)					
Before Dec 31, 2019	104 (0.2)	15 (1.5)	14.4	5,142	0.029
Jan 1–10, 2020	653 (1.5)	102 (10.0)	15.6	21,687	0.047
Jan 11–20, 2020	5,417 (12.1)	310 (30.3)	5.7	130,972	0.024
Jan 21–31, 2020	26,468 (59.2)	494 (48.3)	1.9	416,009	0.012
After Feb 1, 2020	12,030 (26.9)	102 (10.0)	0.8	87,799	0.012

Abbreviation: PD, person-days.

* The Wuhan-related exposure variable, only includes a total of 37,269 patients and 919 deaths and these values were used to calculate percentages in the confirmed cases and deaths columns.

† The comorbid condition variable, only includes a total of 20,812 patients and 504 deaths and these values were used to calculate percentages in the confirmed cases and deaths columns.

‡ The case severity variable, only includes a total of 44,415 patients and 1,023 deaths and these values were used to calculate percentages in the confirmed cases and deaths columns.

Deaths, Case Fatality Rates, and Mortality

As shown in Table 1, a total of 1,023 deaths have occurred among 44,672 confirmed cases for an overall case fatality rate of 2.3%. Additionally, these 1,023 deaths occurred during 661,609 person-days (PD) of observed time, for a mortality rate of 0.015/10 PD.

The ≥80 age group had the highest case fatality rate of all age groups at 14.8%. Case fatality rate for males was 2.8% and for females was 1.7%. By occupation, patients who reported being retirees had the highest case fatality rate at 5.1%, and patients in Hubei Province had a >7-fold higher case fatality rate at 2.9%

compared to patients in other provinces (0.4%). While patients who reported no comorbid conditions had a case fatality rate of 0.9%, patients with comorbid conditions had much higher rates—10.5% for those with cardiovascular disease, 7.3% for diabetes, 6.3% for chronic respiratory disease, 6.0% for hypertension, and 5.6% for cancer. Case fatality rate was also very high for cases categorized as critical at 49.0%.

Age Distribution and Sex Ratio

The age distribution of cases in Wuhan only, in Hubei Province overall, and in China overall are

presented in Figure 1. The proportion of confirmed cases 30–79 years of age at baseline (i.e., date of diagnosis) was 89.8% for cases in Wuhan city versus 88.6% in Hubei overall (which includes Wuhan) and 86.6% in China overall (which includes Hubei Province and all 30 other provincial-level administrative divisions, or PLADs). The male-to-female ratio was 0.99:1 in Wuhan, 1.04:1 in Hubei, and 1.06:1 in China overall.

Geo-Temporal Findings

On January 19, 2020, National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China confirmed that Guangdong Provincial CDC reported first imported cases of COVID-19, via the Chinese Infectious Diseases Reporting System. This was the first time COVID-19 had been reported outside of Hubei Province via the System. As of January 22, 2020, a total of 301 confirmed COVID-19 cases were reported from 83 counties in 23 provinces. On January 30, 2020, Xizang Autonomous Region (Tibet) reported its first confirmed COVID-19 case coming from Hubei Province. Thus, COVID-19 cases have been reported from all 31 PLADs (Figure 2).

As of February 11, 2020, a total 44,672 confirmed cases were reported from 1,386 counties of 31 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities and Hubei Province accounted for 74.7% (Figure 2E). Among them, 0.2% of cases had onset of illness before December 31, 2019 and all were from Hubei Province (Figure 2A); 1.7% had onset of illness during January 1–10, 2020, distributed in 113 counties of 22 PLADs

and Hubei Province accounted for 88.5% (Figure 2B); 13.8% had onset of illness during January 11–20, 2020, distributed in 627 counties of 30 PLADs and Hubei Province accounted for 77.6% (Figure 2C); 73.1% had onset of illness during January 21–31, 2020, distributed in 1310 counties of 31 PLADs and Hubei Province accounted for 74.7% (Figure 2D).

Epidemiological Curve

Figure 3A shows the COVID-19 epidemic curve with number of cases plotted by date of patient onset of symptoms from December 8, 2019 to February 11, 2020. Confirmed, suspected, clinically diagnosed, and asymptomatic cases are stacked to show total daily cases by date of symptom onset. The inset shows that in December 2019 only 0–22 cases/day began to experience symptoms. The peak onset of symptoms for all cases overall occurred on February 1, 2020. Since then, onset of illness has declined.

Figure 3B shows the same COVID-19 epidemic curve for confirmed cases only with number of cases plotted by date of patients' onset of symptoms from December 8, 2019 to February 11, 2020. These data are overlaid with confirmed cases plotted by date of diagnosis to show the lag between the time patients fall ill and the time they actually are diagnosed and are reported to the Infectious Disease Information System. Although for confirmed cases onset of illness peaked around January 23–27, diagnosis of infection by nucleic acid testing of throat swabs did not peak until February 4.

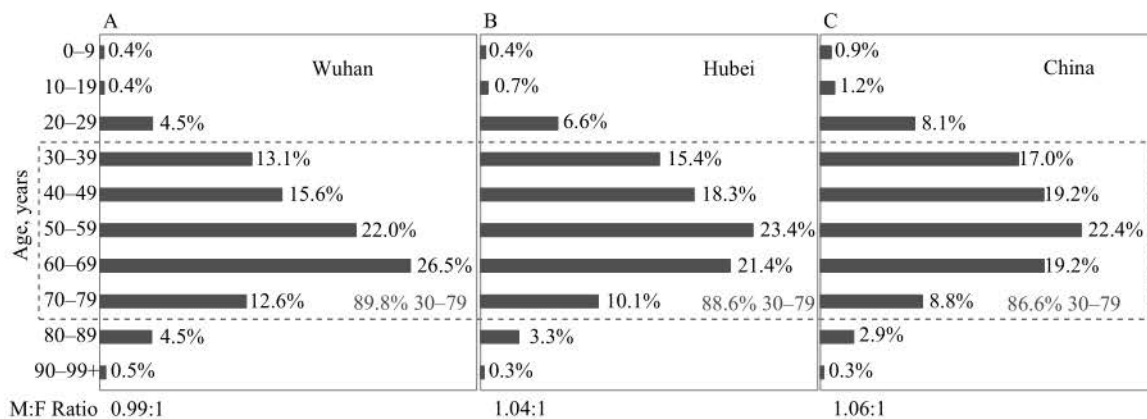


FIGURE 1. Age distribution and sex ratio of all confirmed COVID-19 cases in China through February 11, 2020. (A) patients diagnosed in the city of Wuhan only; (B) patients diagnosed in Hubei Province, which includes Wuhan as its capital city; and (C) patients diagnosed in China overall, including Hubei Province and all 30 other provincial-level administrative divisions (PLADs). Dashed red line highlights the proportion of patients in the 30–79 years age range. Sex ratio (i.e. male-to-female [M:F] ratio) is shown below each graph.

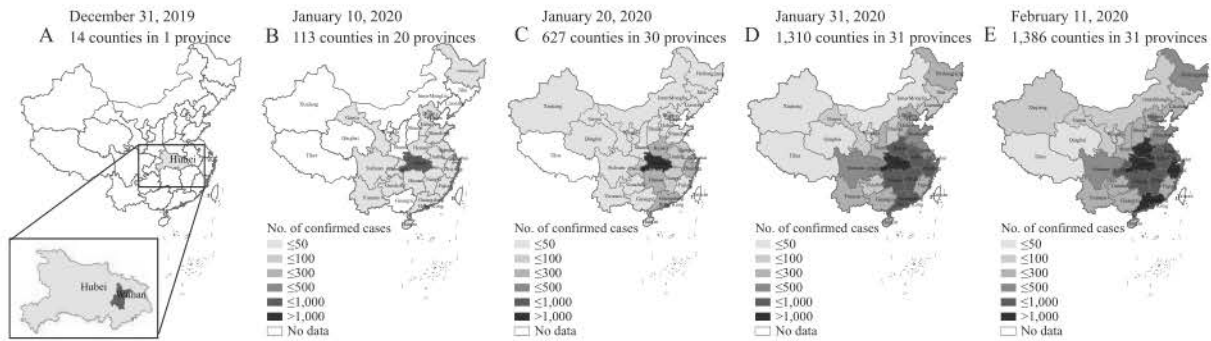


FIGURE 2. Geo-temporal spread of COVID-19 in China through February 11, 2020. (A) a total of 14 county-level administrative areas (hereafter counties) in Hubei Province only (inset) had reported cases as of December 31, 2019; (B) by January 10, 2020, 113 counties in 20 PLADs had reported cases with the highest prevalence still in Hubei Province; (C) nine days later, on January 20, 627 counties in 30 PLADs had reported cases and PLADs neighboring Hubei Province observed increasing prevalence; (D) by the end of January 31, 1310 counties across all 31 PLADs were affected and prevalence in the central, south, and south-central regions had risen dramatically; (E) by the end of February 11, 1,386 counties nationwide were affected and prevalence in the south-central PLADs had risen to the level of Hubei.

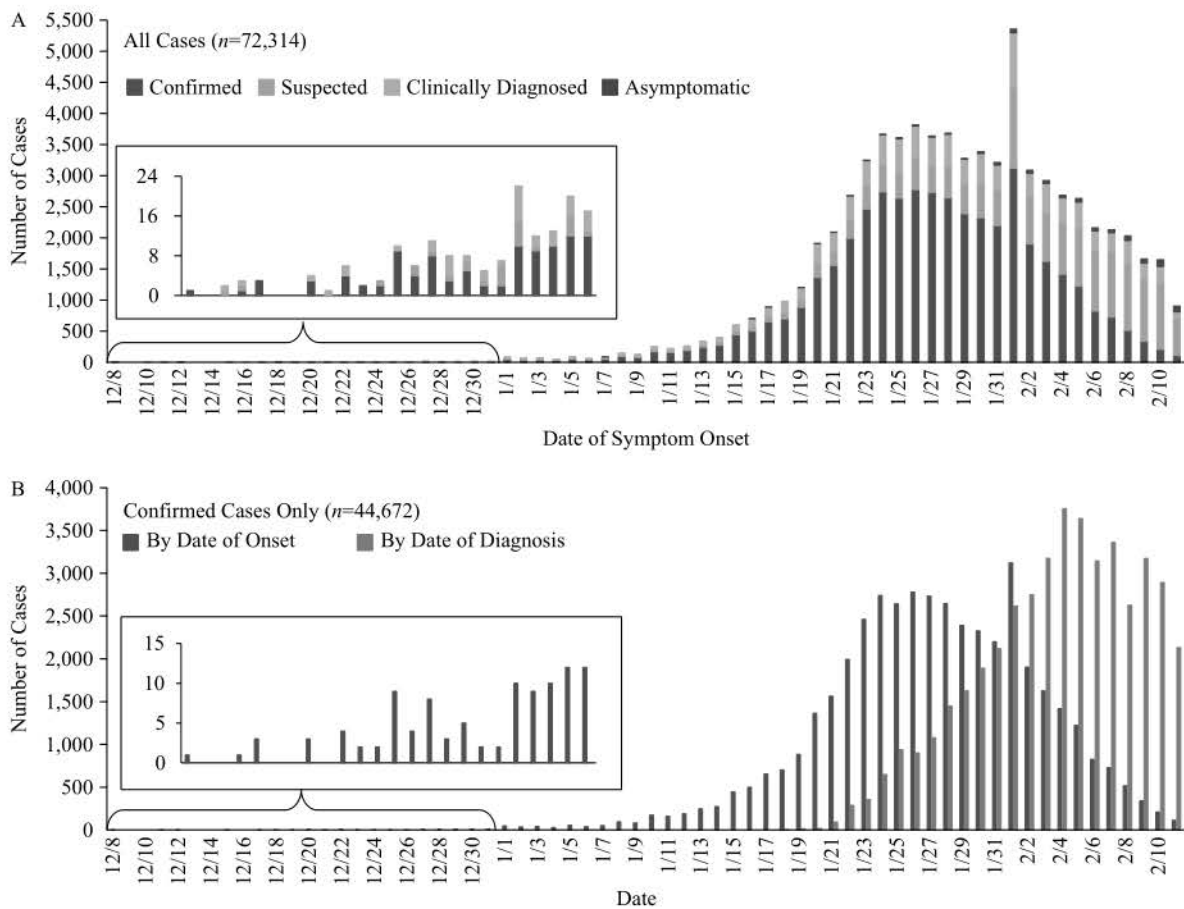


FIGURE 3. Epidemiological curves of COVID-19 in China through February 11, 2020. (A) the epidemiological curve shows the progression of illness in the outbreak over time from December 8, 2019 to February 11, 2020. A total of 72,314 cases are shown and confirmed cases (blue) are compared to suspected cases (green), clinically diagnosed cases (yellow), and asymptomatic cases (red). The inset shows a zoomed-in view of all days in December, when total daily count remained below 24 cases; (B) the epidemiological curve shows the progression of illness in the outbreak over time from December 8, 2019 to February 11, 2020 for confirmed cases only (blue). The number of cases diagnosed each day is also shown for confirmed cases only (orange). The inset shows a zoomed-in view of all days in December, when total daily count remained below 15 cases.

Subgroup Findings

Figure 4 shows the COVID-19 epidemic curve with the number of cases plotted by date of onset of symptoms from December 18, 2019 to February 11, 2020 for two subgroups—confirmed cases found outside of Hubei Province (Figure 4A) and all cases among health workers nationwide (Figure 4B). Peak timing of onset of symptoms among cases outside of Hubei Province occurred on January 27. Most of these cases (85.8%) reported having recently resided in or visited Wuhan or having had close contact with an

infected individual from Wuhan. Peak timing of onset of symptoms among health worker cases occurred on February 1. In the 422 medical facilities serving COVID-19 patients, a total of 3,019 health workers have been infected (1,716 confirmed cases), and 5 have died.

Confirmed cases, case severity, and case fatality rates among health workers in different areas of China and different time periods are presented in Table 2. A total of 1,080 confirmed cases among health workers have been found in Wuhan, accounting for 64.0% of

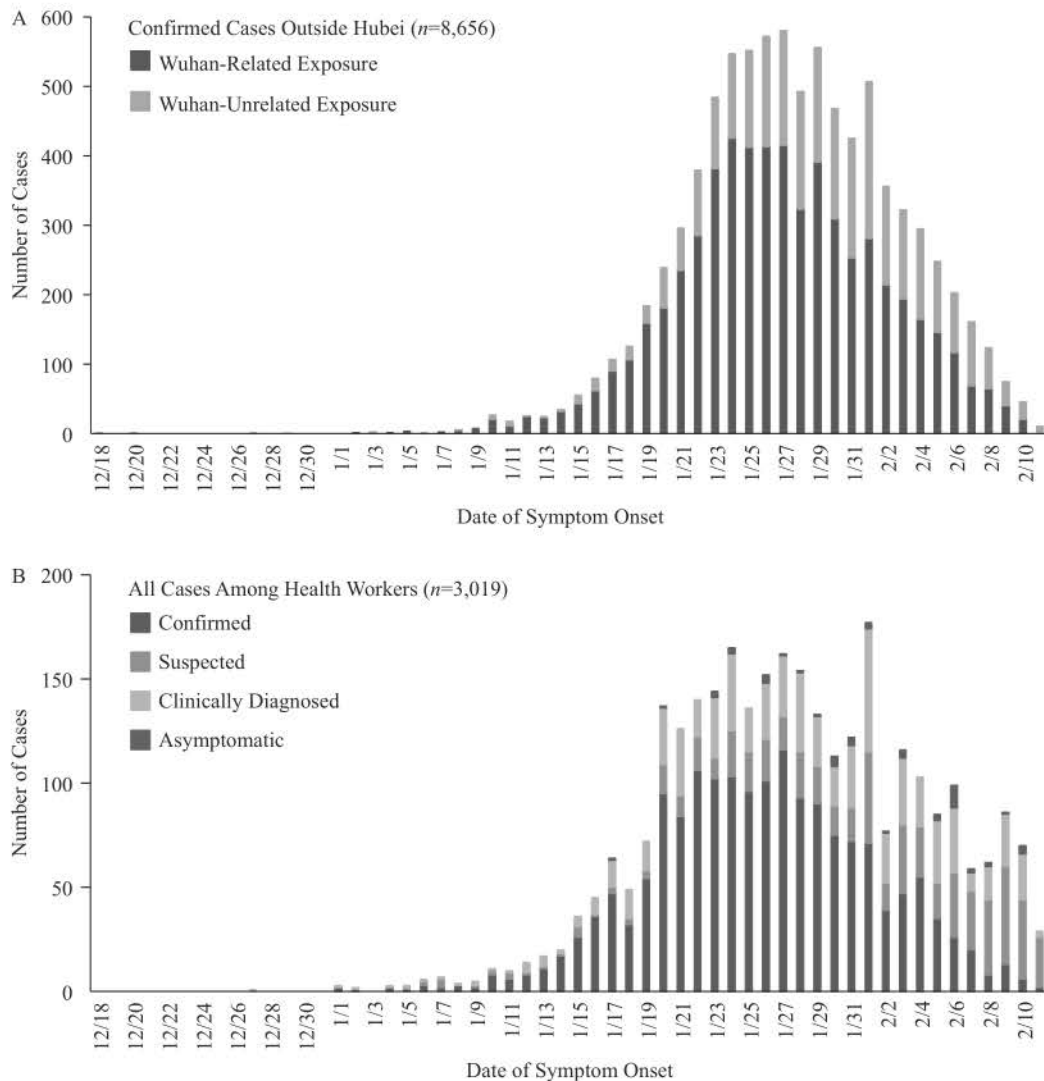


FIGURE 4. Subgroup epidemiological curves of COVID-19 in China through February 11, 2020. (A) subgroup analysis of confirmed cases discovered outside of Hubei Province only. The epidemiological curve shows the progression of illness in the outbreak over time from the onset of symptoms of the first case outside Hubei Province on December 18, 2019 through the end of February 11, 2020. Total confirmed cases outside Hubei Province, and Wuhan-related exposure (dark purple) versus Wuhan-unrelated exposure (light purple), are shown; (B) subgroup analysis of all cases among health workers only. The epidemiological curve shows the progression of illness in the outbreak over time from the onset of symptoms of the first health worker case on December 27, 2019 through the end of February 11, 2020. Total cases among health workers and confirmed (blue) versus suspected (green), clinically diagnosed (yellow), and asymptomatic (red) cases are shown.

national total. An additional 394 health worker cases (23.3%) were found in Hubei Province (excluding Wuhan), and 214 cases (12.7%) were found in the other 30 PLADs. The proportion of health worker cases that were severe or critical was 17.7% in Wuhan, 10.4% in Hubei Province, 7.0% in the remaining 30 PLADs, and 14.6% overall. The proportion of health worker cases in Wuhan classified as severe or critical declined from 38.9% in early January to 12.7% in early February. In China overall, the severe or critical cases among health workers also declined—from 45.0% in early January to 8.7% in early February.

Discussion

A main finding of this characterization and exploratory analysis of the first 72,314 cases of COVID-19 found in China in the 40 days between first recognition of the outbreak of pneumonia with unknown etiology on December 31, 2019 to the end of the study period on February 11, 2020 is that this novel coronavirus is highly contagious. It has spread extremely rapidly from a single city to the entire country within only about 30 days. Moreover, it has achieved such far-reaching effects even in the face of extreme response measures including the complete shutdown and isolation of whole cities, cancellation of Chinese New Year celebrations, prohibition of attendance at school and work, massive mobilization of health and public health personnel as well as military medical units, and rapid construction of entire hospitals.

In light of this rapid spread, it is fortunate that COVID-19 has been mild for 81% of patients and has a very low overall case fatality rate of 2.3%. Among the

1,023 deaths, a majority have been ≥ 60 years of age and/or have had pre-existing, comorbid conditions such as hypertension, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes. Moreover, the case fatality rate is unsurprisingly highest among critical cases at 49%, and no deaths have occurred among those with mild or even severe symptoms (Table 1).

A major contribution of our study is a first description of the COVID-19 epidemic curves. We interpret the overall curve (Figure 3A) as having a mixed outbreak pattern—the data appear to indicate a continuous common source pattern of spread in December and then from early January through February 11, 2020, the data appear to have a propagated source pattern. This mixed outbreak time trend is consistent with the working theory that perhaps several zoonotic events occurred at Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market in Wuhan allowed 2019-nCoV to be transmitted from a still-unknown animal into humans and, due to its high mutation and recombination rates, it adapted to become capable of and then increasingly efficient at human-to-human transmission (3,8).

The early days of the outbreak have been reminiscent of SARS and MERS, and indeed, the discovery that the causative agent was a closely-related, never-before-described coronavirus predicted potential for nosocomial transmission and so-called “super-spreader” events (8). Unfortunately, 2019-nCoV did indeed infect health workers in China via nosocomial transmission. Here we offer a first description of the 1,716 confirmed cases among health workers. Overall, they also display a likely mixed outbreak pattern—perhaps the data are characterized by a point source curve beginning in late December 2019, which

TABLE 2. Confirmed cases, case severity, and case fatality rates among health workers in different areas of China by time period.

Period (by date of onset)	Wuhan			Hubei (outside Wuhan)			China (outside Hubei)			China (overall)		
	Confirmed Cases, N	Severe + Critical, N (%)	Deaths, N (CFR*, %)	Confirmed Cases, N	Severe + Critical, N (%)	Deaths, N (CFR*, %)	Confirmed Cases, N	Severe + Critical, N (%)	Deaths, N (CFR*, %)	Confirmed Cases, N	Severe + Critical, N (%)	Deaths, N (CFR*, %)
Before Dec 31, 2019	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jan 1–10, 2020	18	7 (38.9)	1 (5.6)	1	1 (100)	0	1	1 (100)	0	20	9 (45.0)	1 (5.0)
Jan 11–20, 2020	233	52 (22.3)	1 (0.4)	48	8 (16.7)	0	29	1 (3.4)	0	310	61 (19.7)	1 (0.3)
Jan 21–31, 2020	656	110 (16.8)	0	250	29 (11.6)	2 (0.8)	130	10 (7.7)	0	1,036	149 (14.4)	2 (0.2)
After Feb 1, 2020	173	22 (12.7)	1 (0.6)	95	3 (3.2)	0	54	3 (5.6)	0	322	28 (8.7)	1 (0.3)
Total	1,080	191 (17.7)	3 (0.3)	394	41 (10.4)	2 (0.5)	214	15 (7.0)	0	1,688	247 (14.6)	5 (0.3)

Abbreviation: CFR, case-fatality rate.

* CFR presented here was calculated as number of deaths (numerator) divided by total number of confirmed cases in the row (denominator), expressed as a percent.

was eclipsed by a higher magnitude continuous source curve beginning on January 20, 2020. To date, there is no evidence of a super-spreader event occurring in any of the Chinese health facilities serving COVID-19 patients. However, we do not know whether this is due to the nature of the virus itself or whether these events have been successfully prevented.

It is these authors' sincere hope and intent that this new analysis, on what has become a "public health emergency of international concern," (12) helps to inform health and public health workers preparing for or perhaps already experiencing COVID-19 in their populations. This study provides important insight into several crucial open questions on this epidemic and how to design strategies to effectively control it (3). For instance, the downward trend in the overall epidemic curve suggests that perhaps isolation of whole cities, broadcast of critical information (e.g., promoting hand washing, mask wearing, and care seeking) with high frequency through multiple channels, and mobilization of a multi-sector rapid response teams is helping to curb the epidemic.

China's response is certainly an echo of lessons learned during SARS and is a tribute to the work China and other low- and middle-income countries have been doing, with the much-needed help of international partners, over the past few decades to build infectious disease surveillance systems and public health infrastructure capable of catching outbreaks early and responding swiftly using evidence-based best practices. The 2019-nCoV and other coronaviruses may continue to adapt over time to become more virulent (3), and zoonosis is not going to stop. We must remain vigilant, hone our skills, fund our defenses, and practice our responses, and we must help our neighbors to do the same.

The very large number of cases included in our study was a major strength. Nevertheless, our study did have some important limitations. Firstly, a large proportion of cases included in our analysis (37%) were not confirmed by nucleic acid testing since this process is slow, labor intensive, and requires specialized equipment and skilled technicians. Yet all 72,314 cases were at least diagnosed clinically and investigated by trained epidemiologists. Secondly, some records did have missing data for a few important variables of interest—Wuhan-related exposure, comorbid conditions, and case severity—which limits our ability to draw conclusions from the data.

In conclusion, the present descriptive, exploratory

analysis of the first 72,314 cases of COVID-19 reported through February 11, 2020 offers important new information to the international community on the epidemic in China. In particular, this analysis chronicles the extremely rapid spread of the novel coronavirus despite extreme efforts to contain it. However, important questions remain including identification of the animal reservoir, determination of infectiousness period, identification of transmission routes, and effective treatment and prevention methods including further test development, drug development, and vaccine development (3–4,8–9). As an international community, we must all be responsible partners in surveillance, communication, response, research, and implementation of evidence-based public health and clinical practice. The massive vigorous actions taken by the Chinese government have slowed down the epidemic in China and curbed spread to the rest of the world. Although the epidemic appears to be in decline in the lead up to February 11, 2020, we may yet face more challenges. Huge numbers of people will soon be returning to work and school after the extended New Year holiday. We need to prepare for a possible rebound of the COVID-19 epidemic in the coming weeks and months.

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In order to share the results of epidemiological characteristics of COVID-19 domestically and internationally, the Chinese Version is jointly published on the *Chinese Journal of Epidemiology*.

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