



**United States Department of State**

*Washington, D.C. 20520*

December 30, 2021

Case No. FL-2021-00524

James Peterson  
Judicial Watch, Inc.  
425 Third Street, SW  
Suite 800  
Washington, District of Columbia 20024

Dear Mr. Peterson:

We refer you to our letter dated November 29, 2021, under the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”), 5 U.S.C. § 552. Thus far, the Department of State has located an additional five responsive records subject to the FOIA. Upon review, we have determined that all five records may be released in part. 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 record. 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 Paul Cirino, Assistant United State Attorney, at [paul.cirino@usdoj.gov](mailto:paul.cirino@usdoj.gov) or (202) 252-2529. Please refer to the case number, FL-2021-00524, and the civil action number, 21-cv-02111, in all correspondence about this case.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeanne Miller". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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

<b>From:</b>	(b)(6)
<b>To:</b>	(b)(6)
<b>Subject:</b>	RE: No Anal swabs for Diplomats
<b>Date:</b>	Fri, 22 Jan 2021 10:41:01 +0000

Was not expecting this email on a Friday evening.

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE Device

----- Original message -----

From: (b)(6)

Date: 1/22/21 5:38 PM (GMT+08:00)

To: (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: No Anal swabs for Diplomats

(b)(6) FAO is telling the Embassy that it was a mistake to ask for anal swabs and that it didn't apply to diplomats. TBD how (b)(6) will play it, but for now we'll have to tell people they don't have to do it. Reportedly you do it yourself in private so not as bad as I envisioned.



(b)(6)

Management Officer 行政官  
U.S. Consulate General Shenyang  
美国驻沈阳总领事馆

(b)(6)

<b>Sender:</b>	(b)(6)
<b>Recipient:</b>	

<b>From:</b>	(b)(6)
<b>To:</b>	(b)(6)
<b>CC:</b>	(b)(6)
<b>Subject:</b>	RE: New Testing Method?
<b>Date:</b>	Fri, 22 Jan 2021 07:26:47 +0000

Thanks. We will pass this up immediately.

SBU -PRIVACY OR PII

**From:** (b)(6)  
**Sent:** Friday, January 22, 2021 3:20 PM  
**To:** (b)(6)  
**Cc:** (b)(6)  
**Subject:** RE: New Testing Method?

- Beijing
- He is in his apartment as part of the +7 (from my understanding)
- No notice or options as I can tell
- He had to do both a nose and anal swab.

SBU -PRIVACY OR PII

**From:** (b)(6)  
**Sent:** Friday, January 22, 2021 3:17 PM  
**To:** (b)(6)  
(b)(6)  
**Cc:** (b)(6)  
**Subject:** RE: New Testing Method?

In what city did this occur? And what number test? And did he say if they gave any notice beforehand that the test would be conducted in this manner? And was he presented with options?

SBU -PRIVACY OR PII

**From:** (b)(6)  
**Sent:** Friday, January 22, 2021 3:13 PM  
**To:** (b)(6)  
**Cc:** (b)(6)  
**Subject:** New Testing Method?

So, a colleague from (b)(6) telling our group (b)(6) that he was given an anal COVID swab at his apartment.

Just a heads up, as I am sure it is going to blow up soon... if you aren't already dealing with it.

Employee's name is (b)(6)

Just getting ahead before the word of mouth starts spreading

(b)(6)

General Services Officer (总务官)

U.S. Consulate General Shenyang (美国驻沈阳总领事馆)

(b)(6)

SBU -PRIVACY OR PII

<b>Sender:</b>	(b)(6)
<b>Recipient:</b>	

<b>From:</b>	(b)(6)
<b>To:</b>	(b)(6)
<b>Subject:</b>	RE: COVID TEST 21ST DAY (b)(6)
<b>Date:</b>	Wed, 27 Jan 2021 04:22:18 +0000

(b)(6)

Please contact the (b)(6)

(b)(6) turned off the anal swab, and indicated that we are fine with and oral or nasal swab. He also turned off the inside the apartment environmental testing as I protested both of those items.

Thank you,

(b)(6)

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

-----Original Message-----

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Wednesday, January 27, 2021 12:19 PM

To: (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: RE: COVID TEST 21ST DAY (b)(6)

Thanks (b)(6)

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

-----Original Message-----

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Wednesday, January 27, 2021 12:13 PM

To: (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: RE: COVID TEST 21ST DAY (b)(6)

I have asked (b)(6) to contact (b)(6) immediately regarding the anal swab and environmental testing. He is calling them now.

Thank you,

(b)(6)

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

-----Original Message-----

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Wednesday, January 27, 2021 11:54 AM

To: (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: FW: COVID TEST 21ST DAY Hedeliza and Efren Balisi

Importance: High

Team - FYI. (b)(6) being asked for anal swab and environmental test.

Can Housing contact (b)(6) I'll have VIP contact FAO ASAP.

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

-----Original Message-----

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Wednesday, January 27, 2021 11:49 AM

To: (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: COVID TEST 21ST DAY (b)(6)

AT this point, if they will insist the anal test, (b)(5)

-----Original Message-----

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Tuesday, January 26, 2021 10:39 PM

To: (b)(6)

Subject: FW: Test

(b)(6)

(b)(5)

I hope the GSO and VIP Beijing visits can do something about this. (b)(5)

(b)(6)

-----Original Message-----

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Tuesday, January 26, 2021 10:34 PM

To: (b)(6)

Subject: Test

(b)(6) please call me at your convenient time (b)(6)

Below text message came from (b)(6)! This is not good!

(b)(6)

<b>Sender:</b>	(b)(6)
<b>Recipient:</b>	

(b)(6)



<b>From:</b>	(b)(6)
<b>To:</b>	(b)(6)
<b>CC:</b>	(b)(6)
<b>Subject:</b>	Re: New Testing Method?
<b>Date:</b>	Fri, 22 Jan 2021 07:15:51 +0000

Just heard as well  
 Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone.

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**From:** (b)(6)  
**Sent:** Friday, January 22, 2021 3:12 PM  
**To:** (b)(6)  
**Cc:** (b)(6)  
**Subject:** New Testing Method?

So, a colleague (b)(6) was telling our group (b)(6) that he was given an anal COVID swab at his apartment.

Just a heads up, as I am sure it is going to blow up soon... if you aren't already dealing with it.

Employee's name is (b)(6)

Just getting ahead before the word of mouth starts spreading

(b)(6)

General Services Officer (总务官)  
 U.S. Consulate General Shenyang (美国驻沈阳总领事馆)  
 Tel: (b)(6)

SBU -PRIVACY OR PII

<b>Sender:</b>	(b)(6)
<b>Recipient:</b>	(b)(6)

<b>From:</b>	(b)(6)
<b>To:</b>	(b)(6) Beijing VIP Visits <BeijingVIPVisits@state.gov>
<b>CC:</b>	(b)(6)
<b>Subject:</b>	RE: Beijing PCS Arrival and Quarantine Questions
<b>Date:</b>	Wed, 5 May 2021 06:33:27 +0000

(b)(6)

Thank you so much for your email. I can't say these are the answers we were hoping for, but we appreciate the honest and direct response. I only wish we had received this information sooner.

Kind Regards,

(b)(6)

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**From:** (b)(6)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 5, 2021 4:35 AM  
**To:** (b)(6); Beijing VIP Visits  
<BeijingVIPVisits@state.gov>  
**Cc:** (b)(6)  
(b)(6)  
**Subject:** RE: Beijing PCS Arrival and Quarantine Questions

Good morning (b)(6)

Thanks for reaching out. I and the team here certainly understand your concerns and will try to address them to the best of our ability. Please note that Chinese travel, COVID testing, quarantine, and other regulations are tightly controlled by the PRC and there is little flexibility in the process. The U.S. Embassy Beijing and China Desk in Washington have continually been engaged with our Chinese counterparts in all facets of the process. The VIP and Travel teams here at the embassy continually monitor the regulations and provide the best guidance to our travelers possible while supporting a large volume of diplomatic personnel and their families as they navigate the process. I've attached our Beijing travel handbook for general reference.

The following talking points are designed to try to address your questions below:

- We have successfully brought back 140 diplomatic staff and families to Beijing on commercial air travel since October 2020 with many more in the pipeline. Over 1,200 people returned to Mission China after evacuation in 2020 amidst uncertain circumstances. I can't directly respond to the "horror stories" you are referring to, but would encourage you to take social media posts and information from non-official channels with a grain of salt. We have had many families successfully navigate the testing and quarantine procedures with safe travel to Beijing. If you

want to "preview" the hotel commonly used for quarantine in Shanghai, (b)(6)  
I've attached a Word document with some basic information on that hotel.

- There are no direct international flights to Beijing from the U.S. at this time. Those flights were shuttered at the onset of the pandemic and have not resumed. We are in continual talks with the U.S. carriers and unfortunately there are no indications this will change anytime soon. 95% of our travelers come in through Shanghai as they maintain 10 flights per week on U.S. Fly America Act-compliant carriers.
- The quarantine hotel policies in China are strict and not flexible: under the current regulations, unfortunately, children ages 14 and up will need to quarantine in a separate hotel room for the initial 14 days of quarantine in Shanghai. Upon final arrival in Beijing, the goal is for the family to do the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of quarantine together in your diplomatic residence. If you have medical concerns about this process or have special family needs, I highly encourage you to contact the Beijing Health Unit for guidance and consultation.
- For children under 14, each child can share a room with a parent in likely a double or queen sized bed at the (b)(6) I am unfamiliar with the twin bed concerns and we have not seen that with the hotels in Shanghai or Beijing.
- Given (b)(6) we can request certain quarantine hotel room assignments be given according to your preference. No guarantees, but generally they try to accommodate. According to the current regulations, (b)(6)  
(b)(6)
- While in quarantine, most travelers don't have a need to contact the Embassy directly other than to schedule the onward travel from Shanghai. That said, if there is a medical or other emergency, the U.S. Consulate Shanghai is well aware of travelers in quarantine and able to assist should a crisis arise.
- There are no means for U.S. government or any non-PRC CDC or Customs personnel to have contact with you at the airport or hotel. Until you have completed the testing and quarantine regimen, regrettably there are no means for interpersonal interaction with USG representatives. Both the airport and hotel have successfully brought in thousands of expatriate personnel in the pandemic era and the processes are well known by all parties and relatively smooth.
- Anal swabs and "environmental testing" inside USG residences are not permitted for diplomatic staff. This acknowledgement of diplomatic rights has been confirmed repeatedly by MFA and FAO. If there is an attempt to conduct such a test, the traveler is fully within their rights to refuse testing and contact the Embassy.

I understand some of these answers may not be what you were hoping for, but I wanted to provide direct, honest guidance based on the PRC policies and situation here. If you have continued concerns, I highly recommend discussing with your gaining office management and/or appropriate personnel in Washington.

Please note that the PRC travel, quarantine, hotel, and testing policies can and do change regularly with no warning and immediate effect. The guidance above is designed to give you an idea of the current landscape, but this is always subject to change as we've seen many times before. Please remain in contact with the Beijing VIP team on the latest guidance and we look forward to welcoming you and your family to Beijing in the future.

Regards,

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

General Services Officer | 总务官

U.S. Embassy Beijing | 美国驻北京大使馆

**From:** (b)(6)

**Sent:** Wednesday, May 5, 2021 3:27 AM

**To:** Beijing VIP Visits <BeijingVIPVisits@state.gov>

**Cc:** (b)(6)

**Subject:** Beijing PCS Arrival and Quarantine Questions

Hi, (b)(6) I'm planning to arrive in country in early August. What do we need to be aware of for planning purposes? Are we able to fly in to Beijing directly? Someone mentioned that we have to fly into another city. We currently have reservations for Beijing, so we wanted to check before having the tickets issued.

We've been hearing a lot of horror stories about the quarantine in China. Unfortunately, the monthly newcomers call (b)(6) and the calls aren't recorded, so we can't even hear the answers to others questions via a recording of the calls. So I hope you don't mind us asking our questions to you directly. We've had some conversations with the CLO and their office referred us to you for more specifics.

We have been talking with a number of (b)(6) in China or those that recently left. We've heard a lot of horror stories about the quarantine upon arrival. We've heard about older children being separate from families during the quarantine, anal swab testing and real violations of diplomatic norms. Others have reported they were crammed in rooms with inadequate bedding—i.e. two twin beds for a family of four—and sub-par conditions bordering on detention center level living. It seems like diplomats and their families are not being treated according to acceptable norms. The escalation of the PRC's violations of diplomatic protections seems particularly concerning.

(b)(6) (b)(6)  
(b)(6) The CLO mentioned that  
(b)(6)  
(b)(6)  
(b)(6)

(b)(6) Although we also understand that stories can be exaggerated and taken out of context.

What is the reality of the conditions in the quarantine hotels? Will (b)(6) have contact with the Embassy during our quarantine? Will (b)(6) be met by Embassy personnel at the airport? Will (b)(6) have an Embassy representative at the quarantine hotel to make sure we get settled in properly? (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Any insights or updates you can give (b)(6) would be greatly appreciated. If we've missed anything, please feel free to give (b)(6) as much information as you can.

Thanks,

(b)(6)

<b>Sender:</b>	(b)(6)
<b>Recipient:</b>	(b)(6)