



**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION DIVISION  
1155 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1155**

Ref: 24-F-1204  
DODOIG-2024-000319  
September 18, 2024

Lt. Col. Joseph Murphy  
[REDACTED]

Dear Lt. Col. Murphy:

This is a final response to your March 4, 2024 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to the Department of Defense Office of Inspector General (DODOIG), a copy of which is enclosed for your convenience. We received your request and three pages of responsive records from DODOIG on May 7, 2024, and assigned it FOIA case number 24-F-1204. We ask that you use this number when referring to your request.

The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), a component of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, reviewed the three pages referred to this office by the DODOIG in response to your FOIA request. Mr. Donald Canterbury, Program Analyst, Mission Services Office, in his capacity as an Initial Denial Authority, has determined that portions of the three responsive pages are exempt from release pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552 (b)(6), information which, if disclosed, would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of the personal privacy of individuals. Please note that we have considered the foreseeable harm standard when reviewing records and applying exemptions under the FOIA in the processing of this request.

In this instance, fees for processing your request were below the threshold for requiring payment. Please note that fees may be assessed on future requests.

If you have any questions or concerns about the foregoing or about the processing of your request, please do not hesitate to contact the Action Officer assigned to your request, Rose Cartwright, at [REDACTED]@mail.mil or [REDACTED]. Additionally, if you have concerns about service received by our office, please contact a member of our Leadership Team at 571-372-0498 or Toll Free at 866-574-4970.

Should you wish to inquire about mediation services, you may contact the OSD/JS FOIA Public Liaison, Toni Fuentes, at 571-372-0462, or by email at OSD.FOIALiaison@mail.mil. You may also contact the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) at the National Archives and Records Administration to inquire about the FOIA mediation services they offer. The contact information for OGIS is as follows:

Office of Government Information Services  
National Archives and Records Administration  
8601 Adelphi Road-OGIS  
College Park, MD 20740  
E-mail: ogis@nara.gov  
Telephone: 202-741-5770  
Fax: 202-741-5769  
Toll-free: 1-877-684-6448

You have the right to appeal to the appellate authority, Ms. Joo Chung, Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Privacy, Civil Liberties, and Transparency (PCLT), Office of the Secretary of Defense, at the following address: 4800 Mark Center Drive, ATTN: PCLFD, FOIA Appeals, Mailbox #24, Alexandria, VA 22350-1700.

Your appeal must be postmarked within 90 calendar days of the date of this response. Alternatively, you may email your appeal to [osd.foia-appeal@mail.mil](mailto:osd.foia-appeal@mail.mil). If you use email, please include the words "FOIA Appeal" in the subject of the email. Please also reference FOIA case number 24-F-1204 in any appeal correspondence.

We appreciate your patience in the processing of your request. As stated previously, please contact the Action Officer assigned to your request, Rose Cartwright, and reference FOIA case number 24-F-1204, if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

*For Charles C. Marye*

Stephanie L. Carr  
Chief

Enclosures:  
As stated

CUI

CUI-Controlled Unclassified Information

## DODIG Hotline Report

- a. (U) DoD Hotline case number. 20210921-073444-CASE-01
- b. (U) DoD Component case number. 20210921-073444-CASE-01
- c. ~~(CUI)~~ Allegation. COMPLAINANT emerged as a SUBJECT after reporting additional information to MC IG. MCIG advised there is concern from Marine Corps COVID Data Cell that material (documents) Maj Murphy has distributed on an classified networks regarding this subject is likely collaterally classified. Subject alleged the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), (NIH and Dr. Fauci) worked a number of pandemic innovations and much of its team was familiar with biodefense. Case 02 referred to USMC IG for Information and Case03 to NAVINSGEN for Information.
- (1) ~~(CUI)~~ Name, rank, and organization of the subject. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).
  - (2) (U) Description of the violation. Not founded.
  - (3) (U) Date when the violation occurred. Not founded.
  - (4) (U) Where the violation occurred. Not founded.
  - (5) ~~(U)~~ Law, rule, or regulation violated. No law, rule, or regulation was violated.
  - (6) ~~(CUI)~~ Findings. State "substantiated" or "not substantiated" only. Not-Substantiated.

~~Controlled by: DoD OIG~~~~Controlled by: Administrative Investigations, DoD Hotline~~~~CUI Category: PRIG//INV//WHSTL~~~~Distribution/Dissemination Controls: FEDCON~~~~POC: 1-800-424-9098~~

~~WARNING: INSPECTOR GENERAL SENSITIVE INFORMATION. CUI. The information contained in this record and any accompanying attachments may contain sensitive information which is protected from mandatory disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552. This record, including any attachments, is for the sole use of the intended recipient(s) and should not be released to unauthorized persons. If you are not the intended recipient please contact the sender by e-mail and destroy all copies of the original message and attachments.~~

~~CUI~~

CUI

## CUI-Controlled Unclassified Information

(7) (U) Analysis. Describe how the evidence supports the findings. The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) received an unclassified proposal, Proposal Identifier HR001118S0017-PREEMPT-FP-019 “DEFUSE: Defusing the Threat of Bat-borne Coronaviruses”, through an unclassified solicitation portal, grants.gov, on March 27, 2018 in response to a DARPA open solicitation, DARPA Solicitation Number HR001118S0017 “PREventing Emerging Pathogenic Threats (PREEMPT).” The proposal was evaluated by the DARPA Biological Technologies Office (BTO), but the proposal was not selected for funding and no deliverables were provided to DARPA.

(~~CUI~~) DARPA provided a copy of the proposal to the Intelligence Community (IC) as a part of the ongoing effort to determine the origin of the COVID-19 virus. The DARPA Program Security Representative (PSR) uploaded it to JWICS to be sent to the IC, which is the only reason proposal was on a classified network. The proposal was never classified by an Original Classification Authority (OCA) and remains unclassified, but is Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) due to it being proprietary EcoHealth Alliance information and source selection sensitive.

(8) (U) Corrective actions. Include disciplinary actions, judicial actions, recoveries, regulatory or procedural changes, and management actions taken, as applicable. No corrective actions warranted or taken.

d. (U) Security clearance actions. Report whether the subject of a substantiated allegation has a security clearance. If so, report actions taken to notify the Central Adjudication Facility of the substantiated allegation. No security clearance actions warranted.

e. (U) Location of report of inquiry or working papers. DARPA MSO/SID and DARPA MSO/BPD on the DARPA DMSS Unclassified/CUI network.

f. (U) Investigating officer identification data. Name, rank, organization, duty location telephone number, and email address. (b)(6) at (b)(6) or by email at

(b)(6)@darpa.mil.

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CUI

CUI-Controlled Unclassified Information

g. (U) Investigator's statement. This inquiry complied with the Quality Standards for Hotline Inquiries in DoD Instruction 7050.01.

h. (U) DoD Hotline Coordinator's identification data, to include name, rank, organization, duty location, telephone number, and email address. (b)(6) Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, 675 North Randolph Street, Arlington, VA 22203, (b)(6) (office) (b)(6) (cell), (b)(6)@darpa.mil.

i. Information security requirements

(1) Mark unclassified HCRs "For Official Use Only," in accordance with Volume 4 of DoD Manual. So marked CUI/Controlled Unclassified Information.

(2) Mark classified HCRs in accordance with Volume 2 of DoD Manual. Not applicable.

Controlled by: DARPA/SID  
CUI Category: Law Enforcement  
Distribution/Dissemination Controls: FEDCON  
POC: (b)(6)@darpa.mil

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CUI



RESEARCH  
AND ENGINEERING

~~CUI~~  
OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
3030 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-3030

FOR: Joseph Morici, Acting Director, Business Operations

FROM: Jessica Appler, Director, Maintaining Technology Advantage

SUBJECT: ~~(CUI)~~ Hotline Completion Report for Department of Defense Hotline Case  
20210820-072840-CASE-02

- ~~(CUI)~~ **Allegation:** Major Joseph Patrick Murphy, US Marine Corps, alleged that the Defense Advanced Research Project Agency (DARPA) concealed/covered-up their funding of and involvement with an EcoHealth Alliance project proposed to their PREEMPT Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) HR00118S0017 in March of 2018. He supports this allegation with the discovery of eight (8) unclassified documents addressing the EcoHealth Alliance BAA proposal housed in a folder on DARPA's JWICS sharedrive that appeared in the folder in July 2021 (Exhibits 1-8). He alleges that the files did not contain any classification or distribution marking, which is a violation of DARPA policy. Furthermore, Major Murphy alleges that DARPA withheld the information about this project from the intelligence community, which caused their reports related to the COVID 19 pandemic to be produced "in a vacuum, absent the context the proposal provides" and from the broader COVID-19 pandemic response community.
- **Findings:** NOT SUBSTANTIATED
- ~~(CUI)~~ **Analysis:** The transfer and storage of files related to the March 2018 EcoHealth Alliance submission to the DARPA BAA to JWICS took place to support interagency sharing of the information contained within the files and was conducted in accordance with DARPA policies, procedures, and senior leadership guidance. The specified files (Exhibits 1-8) were located in the JWICS folder as indicated by Major Murphy. However, the original copy of these files continues to be maintained in the access controlled PREEMPT BAA file on the unclassified DARPA Biological Technology Office (BTO) sharedrive (Exhibits 10-12), and will remain in that folder until after the last effort funded on that BAA has concluded, in accordance with DARPA's source selection record retention policies (Exhibit 9). The files in question were placed in the JWICS folder in July 2021 by the (b)(6) corroborating the timeline of file appearance stated by Major Murphy (Exhibit 10). The (b)(6) moved the files up to JWICS using iSAFE, the intelligence community approved file transfer system, to support the DARPA BTO Director. The files were not manipulated or changed in any way to support this transfer, including not adding any additional markings or updating the markings to current DoD standards (Exhibit 10). The files in question submitted by EcoHealth Alliance contained all their original markings (Exhibits 1-7). The files produced by DARPA indicated that the documents were source selection sensitive, and were marked in accordance with DARPA's policies at time of document creation

Controlled by: OUSD(R&E)  
Controlled by: D, MTA  
~~CUI~~ Category: PRIVACY, INTEL  
Distribution/Dissemination Controls: FEDCON  
POC: Jessica Appler,

(b)(6)

~~CUI~~

in 2018 (Exhibit 8). The files were transferred to JWICS to support sharing with intelligence community partners who do not routinely maintain unclassified email addresses (Exhibits 10-12). Although the BAA proposal was NOT ever funded by DARPA – as documented in the files (Exhibit 8), and corroborated by the BAA selection and funding processes (Exhibit 9), the BTO Director (Exhibit 11), and the current (b)(6) (b)(6) (Exhibit 12) – DARPA BTO received a request from intelligence community partners in the July 2021 timeframe to share what they knew of EcoHealth Alliance’s intentions to conduct coronavirus research in China (Exhibits 10-12). The DARPA BTO Director consulted with the (b)(6) and the (b)(6) (b)(6) to determine if it was appropriate to support this request for information and received approval to share the source selection sensitive documents with the intelligence community partners over JWICS (Exhibit 11). The documentation, interviews, and external events that occurred during the summer 2021 timeframe are consistent to support explanation for the appearance of the files on JWICS detailed in Major Murphy’s allegation but do NOT support the allegation of concealment/cover-up or withholding information from interagency partners with a legitimate need to know. Furthermore, the storage, handling, and marking of the documents in question is consistent with DARPA and DoD policies and procedures concurrent with the origination of the files.

• **List of Supporting Evidence:**

- Exhibit 1- Document- PREEMPT Volume 1 no ESS HR00118S0017 EcoHealth Alliance DEFUSE
- Exhibit 2- Document- PREEMPT Volume 2 EHA Final HR00118S0017 EcoHealth Alliance DEFUSE
- Exhibit 3- Document- WIV Budget packet HR001118S0017 EcoHealth Alliance DEFUSE
- Exhibit 4- Document- SF424\_2\_0-V2.0 HR00118S0017 EcoHealth Alliance DEFUSE
- Exhibit 5- Document- WS00094394-RR\_PersonalData\_1\_2-V1.2 HR001118S0017
- Exhibit 6- Document- WS00094394-RR\_KeyPersonExpanded\_2\_0-V2.0
- Exhibit 7- Document- Executive Slide HR00118S0017 EcoHealth Alliance DEFUSE
- Exhibit 8- Document- HR00118S0017-PREEMPT-FP-019-PM Summary (Selectable – Not Recommended)
- Exhibit 9- Interview- (b)(6)
- Exhibit 10- Interview- (b)(6) (b)(6)
- Exhibit 11- Interview- Kerri Dugan, Director of BTO, DARPA
- Exhibit 12- (b)(6) (b)(6)

- **Investigating Officer:** Dr. Jessica Appler, SES, Director, Maintaining Technology Advantage, Pentagon, (b)(6) All working papers and case files for this hotline inquiry are maintained with Dr. Appler and submitted to the R&E DoD Hotline Coordinator for records retention per DoD Instruction 7050.01.
- **R&E Appointing Official:** Dr. Robert Irie, SES, Deputy Director, Strategic Technology Protection & Exploitation, (b)(6)
- **R&E DoD Hotline Coordinator:** Mr. Joseph Morici, NH-IV, Acting Director of Business Operations, (b)(6)

I certify that I complied with the Quality Standards for Hotline Inquiries in DoD Instruction 7050.01.

(b)(6)

Dr. Jessica Appler  
February 23, 2022

I affirm that I reviewed this Draft DoD HCR and in my role as the R&E Appointing Authority, I approve and mark this document as Final.

(b)(6)

February 23, 2022

Dr. Robert Irie

Date

Prepared by: Jessica Appler, Director, MTA, (b)(6)





**DEFENSE ADVANCED RESEARCH PROJECTS AGENCY**  
675 NORTH RANDOLPH STREET  
ARLINGTON, VA 22203-2114

**PM SUMMARY SHEET**  
**SOURCE SELECTION SENSITIVE**

Solicitation Number: HR001118S0017  
Solicitation Title: PREventing EMerging Pathogenic Threats (PREEMPT)  
PM Name: James Gimlett  
Proposer: EcoHealth Alliance  
Proposal Title: Project DEFUSE: Defusing the Threat of Bat-borne Coronaviruses  
Proposal Identifier: HR001118S0017-PREEMPT-FP-019

I have reviewed the attached proposal and Evaluation Reports and find that this proposal is selectable based on the evaluation criteria included in the BAA. However, I am not recommending funding at this time based on the rationale provided below.

Funding Requested (by proposer):

<b>Phase I</b>	<b>Phase II</b>	<b>Total</b>
\$8,411,546	\$5,797,699	<b>\$14,209,245</b>

This proposal aims to identify and model spillover risk of novel, pandemic-potential SARS-related coronaviruses (SARSr-CoVs) in Asia, focusing specifically on known hotspot bat caves in China. In prior work under USAID Predict, the team identified high risk of SARSr-CoVs in specific caves in Asia. The project has a good running start since the hotspot caves already test positive, with high prevalence, for several SARSr viruses so the team won't be looking for needles in haystacks. The team will build on past surveillance work as well as some impressive work in developing geo-based risk maps of zoonotic hotspots based on past spillovers and ecological data. Two approaches are proposed to preempt zoonotic spillover through reduction of viral shedding in the bat caves: 1) innate immune boosting to downregulate viral regulation; 2) targeted immune boosting via vaccine inoculations using chimeric polyvalent recombinant spike proteins to protect against specific high risk viruses.

Two of three reviewers marked this proposal as Selectable. Key strengths are the experienced team and the selected coronavirus hotspot caves that show high prevalence for novel bat coronaviruses. Experimental in vivo and in vitro work is logically thought out and will be used to validate molecular and evolutionary models. Proposed preemption approaches, while somewhat conventional, have the advantage of a fast timeline for validation on bat or "batenized" mouse models. Multiple vaccine delivery mechanisms are proposed, including aerosolized spray, transdermal nanoparticle application, and edible adhesive gels. However, several weaknesses to the proposal were also noted. These include a lack of detail regarding data, statistical analyses and model development and how prior work will be leveraged and extended. Proposal also lacks clear decision points to assess the deployment and validation of TA2 preemption methods in the

wild. Regulatory and ELSI issues are not discussed. Variability of vaccine dose due to variability in delivery mechanisms is also not discussed. In addition, there is concern that vaccine approaches may lack sufficient epitope coverage to effectively protect against the diverse and evolving quasispecies of the many coronaviruses found in the bat caves.

For the above reasons I am not currently recommending funding of this effort. However, there are several components of great interest in this proposed effort that are potentially fundable should additional funding become available.

The team discusses risk mitigation strategies to address potential risks of the research to public health and animal safety but does not mention or assess potential risks of Gain of Function (GoF) research and DURC. Given the team's approach does potentially involve GoF/DURC research (they aim to synthesize spike glycoproteins that may bind to human cell receptors and insert them into SARS-CoV backbones to assess capacity to cause SARS-like disease), if selected for funding an appropriate DURC risk mitigation plan should be incorporated into contracting language that includes a responsible communications plan.

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James Gimlett, Ph.D.  
Program Manager  
Biological Technologies Office