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 Sent:
 Monday, May 4, 2020 10:03 AM

 To:
 [REDACTED]

 Cc:
 [REDACTED]

 Subject:
 RE: Fwd: Joint State-CDC-CBP Briefing Request

Follow Up Flag: Flag for follow up Flag Status: Flagged

Hi [REDACTED] - here are State's responses. This

<u>QUESTION</u>: Please state your understanding of any screening China conducted, between January 17, 2020 and February 2, 2020, for high temperature or other symptoms before boarding for flights from China to the U.S. Please describe State's efforts to coordinate such screening with China.

<u>ANSWER</u>: During that time period, the Department organized one charter flight, which departed Wuhan on January 28 (subsequent flights departed after 2/2). For that flight, Department staff worked with PRC authorities to screen the passengers before boarding the plane. There was one infant child who had a fever, so he was not allowed to board and therefore, his father did not board either. However, the two individuals were re-boarded on a subsequent flight and were repatriated. With respect to commercial flights, media reported that temperature checks were put in place at the Wuhan airport on January 15. This type of exit screening procedure was scaled up to other airports in China shortly thereafter; it appears that temperature checks were in place for all major airports on/around the end of January. For instance, by January 30, Daxing Airport (Beijing's new airport) announced that it would begin requiring all departing passengers to undergo temperature checks.

<u>QUESTION</u>: On March 3, the Vice President announced that "we are now screening 100 percent of all travelers taking direct flights from all airports in Italy and South Korea." He described "multiple-layered screening in those countries, in cooperation and coordination with us." He also said "all passengers on all direct flights from all airports in Italy and South Korea are now being screened on multiple occasions before they board." Please describe State's involvement in arranging and overseeing these screenings in Italy and South Korea.

<u>ANSWER:</u> Throughout February, the State Department – including our U.S. Embassy in the ROK - conveyed to ROK authorities at various relevant agencies our growing concern for imported COVID-19 cases and the need for increased screening measures on individuals flying from the ROK to the United States. As a result, on February 28, Korean Air and Asiana Airlines began implementing their own temperature screening based on ROK government recommendations. The ROK Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (MOLIT) issued a letter on March 2 to both ROK and U.S. airlines operating direct flights to the United States requesting they cooperate with temperature screening for all passengers on these flights. This mandatory screening applied to U.S.-bound flights from Incheon and Busan international airports and included transit passengers. Delta, American and United began participating after the directive

In addition to temperature screening at the gate by airline companies (which targets transiting passengers), Incheon International Airport Corporation (IIAC) began implementing separate temperature screening for all passengers (not just those on U.S.-bound flights) at three additional points on March 5. The additional points at the airports where temperature screenings were instituted included: (1) when entering the departure hall and (2) before entering the security check point (with thermal cameras / when detected with higher body temperature, with non-contact thermometers for more accurate results), and (3) at the boarding gate (with non-contact thermometers). When confirmed to have a fever of 37.5°C or higher, passengers are escorted to the National Quarantine Office for further inspection and may not be allowed to board.

On March 11, the ROK launched a fifth layer of U.S.-bound passengerthe form of a health questionnaire conducted by Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (KCDC) quarantine officials. All passengers on direct flights to the United States from international airports in Incheon and Busan were required to go through this screening in addition to three other medical checks at the terminal entrance, security checkpoint, and the boarding gate. This KCDC health screening, which took place prior to passenger check-in, was designed to prevent potentially high-risk passengers from ever making it to the

As the COVID-19 outbreak unfolded in Italy with alarming speed, Italian authorities worked tirelessly on containment efforts, even as the county's healthcare system quickly became overwhelmed and morbidity rates surged. Realizing the need to move quickly to slow the spread beyond their national borders, Italian officials were in constant communication with Embassy Rome officials, providing timely updates and actively seeking advice on international best practices that other countries, including South Korea, were implementing to mitigate the virus's deadly impact. Embassy Rome Officials discussed outbound flight screening with Italian officials on March 1, including working with airport officials on how to implement the logistics of the medical screening. On March 2, the Charge d'Affairs delivered a letter from the State Department to the Italian Minister of Health and the Chief of Civil Protection formally requesting that Italy institute screening of all passengers on U.S.-bound flights in accordance with CDC guidelines. On March 3, Italy began screening passengers bound for the United States and officials from Embassy Rome and Consulate General Milan visited the airports operating flights to the United States to observe the implementation of the screening. On subsequent days, Embassy and Consulate General officials performed multiple follow-up visits and verified screening was proceeding comprehensively and efficiently.

<u>OUESTION</u>: The Embassy in Italy said that quote: "As of March 3, all passengers on U.S.-bound fights whose temperature is higher than 99.5 degrees Fahrenheit are not being permitted to board." The U.S. Embassy in South Korea made a similar statement, but with a 100.4 degree cut-off.

Did State have a mechanism for enforcing that?

<u>ANSWER</u>: The U.S. government issued a TSA security directive/emergency amendment that became effective on March 4, 2020 requiring all airlines flying from South require passengers to fill out a health survey document to screen for COVID-19 symptoms. Before the issuance of this TSA directive, alliance relationship, as well as the ROK beingresponsible state actor, helped expedite implementation of protective measures. Initially, the burden of enforcingthese measureswas put on U.S. and ROKairline companies. When airline companies expressed concerns aboutlack of expertise/equipment and the legal ramifications from potentially barring paying customers from flights, the ROK government stepped in by providing official policy and separate screening measures. Point of clarification: ROKG policy dictated th passengers that registered a temperature higher than 99.5 degrees Fahrenheit (37.5 degrees Celsius) would be tested twice more at five-minute intervals. When a passenger tested higher than 99.5 degrees three times they were not permitted to board, and their baggage was removed from the aircraft. NOTE: The ROKG temperature limit was initially 99.5 degrees Fahrenheit, but later shifted to 100.4; 37.5 Celsius was the real cut off under ROKG regulation.

The Italian government welcomed passenger-screening guidelines provided by the United States and voluntarily performed the screening, keeping Embassy Rome and Consulate General Milan officials updated. Embassy Rome and Consulate General Milan officials observed the establishment of the screening, remained in close contact with airport authorities to ensure screening took place, and reported back to the Department of State their satisfaction the screening was being properly undertaken in strict accordance with the guidelines.

QUESTION: How many people were barred from boarding?

<u>ANSWER</u>: Per ROK government figures, as of March 10, across carriers with direct U.S. flights, a total of 56 passengers were denied boarding. United and Delta denied boarding to five and 16 passengers, respectively. Korean Air took the strictest approach to passenger screening, highlighting that the airline had denied boarding to 25 passengers (a combination of ROK and U.S. citizens) since implementing health screening on February 28.

Italian officials barred 13 passengers from boarding flights to the United States due to the screening program. On March 5, four passengers were barred from boarding a flight from Rome Fiumicino airport bound for the United States. On March 9, nine passengers were barred from boarding flights from Rome Fiumicino airport bound for the United States. No passengers were barred boarding flights from Milan Malpensa airport bound for the United States due to the screening.

<u>QUESTION</u>: Did State receive documented evidence from Italian or South Korean authorities that thermal screening occurred between March 3rd and March 13th? For all U.S.-bound flights? Please provide all such evidence of screening.

<u>ANSWER</u>: While we generally find ROK authorities credible on matters such as this, our U.S. Embassy in the ROK repeatedly sent staff to Incheon International Airport in Seoul to physically inspect the measures ROKG authorities had implemented. Ambassador Harry Harris also visited Incheon International Airport to inspect the measures on March 11. ROK screenings measures were also widely reported on via credible ROK media sources.

Embassy Rome and Consulate General Milan officials maintained close observation of the Italian screening program, both via in-person visits to the airports and by way of telephone conversations with airport officials after ensuring the program was properly initiated on March 3. Embassy Rome and Consulate General Milan reported their observations back to the department.

<u>QUESTION</u>: Why was U.S. policy on screening those traveling from Italy and South Korea between March 3rd and March 13th only applicable to direct flights? <u>ANSWER</u>: We defer to CBP who ultimately made the determination on whether screening should apply to direct and indirect flights. Until March 11, Italy only imposed screening requirements on direct flights to the United States. Beginning March 12, Italy screened passengers on all flights to destinations outside the Schengen area.