

WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

09/03/2020

CORONAVIRUS DIARY

History Is A Mirror

Today is the date we commemorate the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II. This is also the date we can never forget because the war brought so much tragedy to mankind.

On November 7, 2015, Southern News Group joined with hundreds of community associations to host the "Commemoration of WWII 70th Anniversary And Celebration of Diversity & World Peace" event at Minute Maid Park in Houston. The event featured

"listening to the voice of the world Multi-Ethnic community and peaceful overture." This was a first of its kind, large-scale commemorative event that brought together 25,000 people from all walks of life who gathered together to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the victory of the anti-fascist and anti Japanese war.

As the event host, when I gave remembrances to more than thirty war veterans they were so moved. I saw their



tears fall down their cheeks. Millions of lives were lost because the war. This great event and show was directed by the famous producer, Ms. Bao Ning, and hundreds of performers came from around the world to participate. This was the biggest event we ever sponsored. We were so honored and proud that President Obama issued a citizen service award to us and through Congressman Al Green, the event was recorded in the historical journals of the U.S. Congress.

Times are changing. The world is suffering because of the coronavirus pandemic and many politicians are taking advantage of this unusual situation to build their political capital.

All of us need to remember that the war brought only a destructive result. We don't need the war -- we need the peace.



Southern News Group Chairman / CEO
Chairman of International Trade & Culture Center
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Stay Home!

BUSINESS

Wear Mask!

Vice President Pence Claims Coronavirus Vaccine Will Arrive Soon In RNC Speech

'Urgent' Request Sent To States To Push For Coronavirus Vaccine Delivery By Nov. 1



In a speech on the third night of the RNC, Vice President Mike Pence addressed the coronavirus pandemic in the U.S. Pence claimed Americans can expect a coronavirus vaccine to arrive soon. (Photo/Republican National Convention)

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

Dr. Robert Redfield, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, sent a letter last week to the nation's governors with an urgent request. The Trump administration wanted them to do everything in their power to eliminate hurdles for vaccine distribution sites to be fully operational by Nov. 1. The Aug. 27 letter, obtained by McClatchy, asked governors to fast-track permits and licenses for new distribution sites. "The normal time required to obtain these permits presents a significant barrier to the success of this urgent public health program," Redfield wrote. "CDC urgently requests your assistance in expediting applications for these distribution facilities," he continued, "and, if necessary, asks that you consider waiving requirements that would prevent these facilities from becoming fully operational by November 1, 2020."

"The requirements you may be asked to waive in order to expedite vaccine distribution will not compromise the safety or integrity of the products being distributed," he added.

It was the latest hurried federal request of state governments to prepare for the arrival of a vaccine for COVID-19, the pandemic disease that has killed roughly 185,000 Americans.



The push is on with drug companies and delivery

services to get the vaccine to the people by November 1.

Last month, Dr. Nancy Messonnier, a top CDC official working on the federal coronavirus response, warned that state public health departments are "running out of time" to draft plans for the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines - and requested states submit proposals by Oct. 1. Delivery firms have received guidance from Trump administration officials to prepare freezer farms in the heartland and get ready to load vaccines onto trucks no later than Nov. 1. The rush is putting pressure on state health systems already strapped for resources - and appears out of sync with the progress of ongoing clinical trials for coronavirus vaccines, which are still recruiting volunteers who will test the safety and effectiveness of the drugs. Some supply chain experts are expressing concern that Trump administration officials with "Operation Warp Speed," the federal program accelerating vaccine development, have failed to adequately communicate the responsibilities that state and local governments will take on once the logistically demanding task of distributing a COVID-19 vaccine is upon them.

"At this point, we should know much more about what the intended distribution system looks like, and what the plan is," said Dr. Julie Swann, head of the Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering at North Carolina State University and an adviser to the CDC during its response to the H1N1 pandemic in 2009.



The first vaccines most likely to emerge from Phase III clinical trials will pose exceptional challenges to public health officials, requiring storage in sub-zero temperatures and two doses per individual spread weeks apart. Others have expressed concern that the timeline set out by Operation Warp Speed - setting a deadline that would offer the first vaccines to Americans just days before the presidential election - is motivated by politics over science.

Warp Speed officials have told reporters to expect an "overwhelming" public messaging campaign come November. And at the Republican National Convention last week, President Donald Trump, Vice President Mike Pence, and White House senior adviser and the president's daughter Ivanka Trump all touted the Warp Speed program, claiming a vaccine could be approved before the end of the year. Wes Wheeler, president of UPS Healthcare, said in an interview that guidance from the administration is to be ready to put the vaccine on trucks by Nov. 1. "It will be preceded by a practice run - we're talking about having early discussions in September and October about how this will actually work," he said. "I think we'll all be given instructions on how it will work - we haven't seen that yet," Wheeler said. "They're talking about ten million doses in November."

Dr. Larry Corey, who is co-leading the coronavirus vaccine clinical trials for the COVID-19 Prevention Network under the National Institutes of Health, told McClatchy this week that he does not expect results from the trials to be ready for approval or delivery by that time.



Truck companies nationwide are adjusting their schedules to meet the vaccine delivery date of November 1.

"All the trials are designed, if everything goes well, to get an answer about seven months from the time that the trial starts," Corey said. "Vaccines with 90% efficacy

will give a readout sooner than with 50% efficacy, but I would still say that it would require probably the difference between five months and seven months."

The first Phase III trial began in mid-July, making it extremely unlikely his team could fully enroll the volunteers, provide each volunteer with two doses, track their progress and reach conclusions by November, Corey said.

"It's incredibly important for our country and the world to know which vaccine works, how well it works," said Corey, a virologist at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center. "They look like they're going terrifically well, and what we need is to let science take over, because without that, we have no public policy."

PILOT PROGRAMS COMPLETE

CDC coordination with states picked up over the last month. The CDC's vaccine working group met weekly throughout August to review potential scenarios for the initial distribution of a vaccine. They modeled allocation strategies, weighed how to prioritize who gets the vaccine first, and reviewed data from the initial clinical trial phases of the leading vaccine candidates. Weekly calls with state health officials began on Aug. 17, and last week, the CDC completed pilot programs with five jurisdictions - California, Florida, North Dakota, Minnesota and the city of Philadelphia - that will serve as models for operations across the country. CDC officials have told state public health officials to expect a "state operations guide" within days that is over 100 pages long. The document will help them begin preparing their own plans, and will outline a phased approach to vaccine distribution. State health officials have been waiting for more detailed federal guidance for weeks.

But the CDC will begin "microplanning" with states this week, asking them to survey local facilities that already have the capacity to store vaccines in ultracold settings, and issuing reporting guidance more strict than what was required during the 2009 H1N1 pandemic.

"I haven't seen anything so far that's given me a lot of confidence," said Dr. Eric Toner, senior scholar at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security whose framework for distributing COVID-19 vaccines was cited as a resource by the National Academy of Medicine. "It is concerning to me." "If we are doing this as a mass vaccination campaign, in the parking lots of hospitals, then you're seeing the person who is giving you the vaccine for the first time in your life," said Prashant Yadav, a supply chain expert at the Center for Global Development and former supply chain strategy leader at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. "Then for the second dose, you would have a reminder from

the county public health department or some other agency to go back, and would you go back to the same location? Or a different location?"

"Those are information and logistical questions that remain unanswered, and they're unanswered because there is no plan," Yadav said. "So many of the details are missing that many state officials are still struggling to say, yes, the CDC is asking us to do these things - but we don't know how much will be given to us, on what schedule, so what are we planning for?"



Only two of six vaccine candidates that have the backing of the federal government - from Moderna and Pfizer - are currently in active Phase III clinical trials, and both require individuals to take two doses, three to four weeks apart. Both also require complex cold shipment and storage conditions. Pfizer said it is producing its own shipping containers for the vaccine. McKesson, the company that will serve as the central vaccine distributor, is preparing its own low temperature shipping equipment for the Moderna vaccine.

Operation Warp Speed officials have told distributors to expect the elderly - including those homebound, in nursing homes and in senior living facilities - as well as health care workers, frontline essential workers, national security workers and communities of color, to be among the priority groups for the first vaccine doses. But how those groups will be ranked remains a critical open question. "Nobody seems to know where and what order these people will be vaccinated," Wheeler said. Highly targeted deliveries could work in the initial phase of vaccine distribution, when there are extremely limited quantities of vaccine shipped in a targeted manner to those deemed most in need. "Nobody seems to know where and what order these people will be vaccinated," Wheeler said. Highly targeted deliveries could work in the initial phase of vaccine distribution, when there are extremely limited quantities of vaccine shipped in a targeted manner to those deemed most in need. Some experts are concerned that the Trump administration's approach, which has frequently been in conflict with scientists and regulators, has sown distrust in whatever vaccine emerges.

"I think there will be a lot of hesitancy," Toner added. "I think it's completely tone deaf." (Courtesy https://www.centredaily.com/)

Editor's Choice



The New Diamond, a very large crude carrier chartered by Indian Oil Corp, that was carrying the equivalent of about 2 million barrels of oil, is seen after a fire broke out off east coast of Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan Airforce/via REUTERS



A police officer is hit by an egg during a scuffle with protesters during an anti-government demonstration in Sofia, Bulgaria. REUTERS/Stoyan Nenov



Extinction Rebellion activists participate in a "peaceful disruption" of the British Parliament as lawmakers return from summer recess, in London, Britain. REUTERS/Toby Melville



Tilda Swinton poses at the 77th Venice Film Festival. REUTERS/Yara Nardi



Extreme performer David Blaine hangs with a parachute under a cluster of balloons during a stunt to fly thousands of feet into the air over Page, Arizona. David Blaine/via REUTERS



Extinction Rebellion activists participate in a "peaceful disruption" of the British Parliament as lawmakers return from summer recess, in London, Britain. REUTERS/Toby Melville



A T-72 B3 tank operated by a crew from Russia jumps during the Tank Biathlon competition at the International Army Games 2020 in Alabino, outside Moscow. REUTERS/Maxim Shemetov



People take part in an anti-government demonstration in Sofia, Bulgaria. REUTERS/Stoyan Nenov

Conspiracy Theories Have Flourished During The Pandemic – But They Can Be Stopped



Conspiracies can polarize societies and fuel extremism.

KEY POINTS

The pandemic has given rise to many new conspiracy theories – and UNESCO wants to educate people to identify and debunk them.

Certain groups are more prone to being targeted, including particular religions and people with different sexual orientation.

Counter-actions include calling out false information, contacting the author, and taking care not to spread it further.

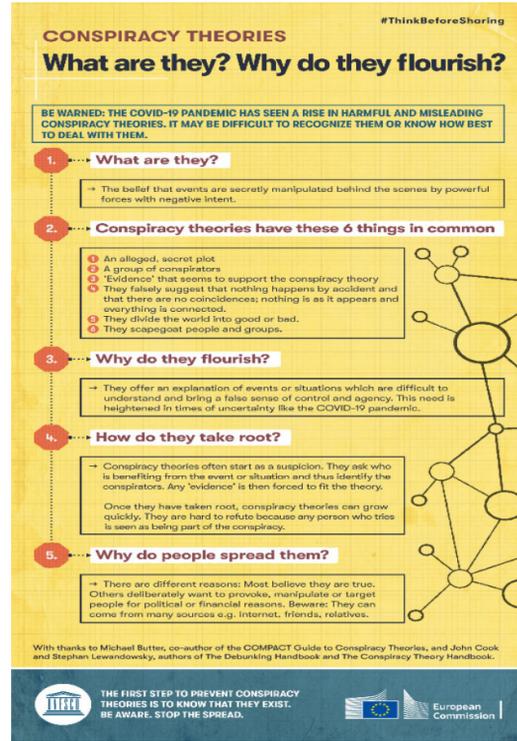
Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

From those that question the moon landings to theories about JFK’s assassination, you don’t have to look far to find a conspiracy theory. And while we may find some of the most out-there theories laughable, the problem is, they’re not always easy to recognize. The internet is the perfect breeding ground for them, and the uncertainty created by the coronavirus outbreak is allowing them to flourish. So UNESCO, the UN agency that supports education, the sciences, and culture, has launched a campaign to help people identify, debunk and report conspiracy theories to prevent their spread. UNESCO is working with the European Commission, Twitter and the World Jewish Congress and has created a series of

infographics to help people become better informed. **How conspiracy theories flourish** Conspiracy theories often start as a suspicion based on someone benefiting from an event or situation. ‘Evidence’ is then forced to fit around the theory. It can be hard to refute them because the person doing so is often seen as part of the conspiracy.  The theories can spread rapidly, particularly over social media, where people

are easily taken in by them. Others spread them because they want to deliberately provoke or manipulate. Conspiracy theories can often target or discriminate against an entire group which are perceived to benefit. Some groups are particularly prone to being targeted, including people of particular religions or sexual orientation. For example, various conspiracies have falsely accused groups including people of assumed Asian origin, Jews and Muslims as spreading COVID-19 in Europe. As a result, conspiracies can polarize societies, worsen existing tensions and fuel violent extremism. **How to stop them spreading** Key to stopping the spread of conspiracy theories is educating people to be on the lookout for misleading information – and teaching them to be suspicious of certain sources. But there is no hard and fast rule as to how best to identify or react to potentially damaging and misleading information. It can be particularly difficult when the theories are being sent from friends and family. **The link to COVID-19** Uncertainty and worry create the perfect environment for conspiracies to be born. Although it is still not confirmed where or how COVID-19 originated, theories abound. They largely ignore scientific evidence and attempt to come up with reasons why the pandemic happened and who stands to benefit. • The spread of the Coronavirus has also given rise to conspiracy theories. • The WHO has set up a mythbusters page to tackle misinformation. • Conspiracy theories can undermine efforts to prevent the spread of the virus.

The novel coronavirus continues to spread around the world, with new cases being reported all the time. Spreading just as fast, it seems, are conspiracy theories that claim powerful actors are plotting something sinister to do with the virus. Our research into medical conspiracy theories shows that this has the potential to be just as dangerous for societies as the outbreak itself. One conspiracy theory proposes that the coronavirus is actually a bio-weapon engineered by the CIA as a way to wage war on China. Others are convinced that the UK and US governments introduced the coronavirus as a way to make money from a potential vaccine. Although many of these conspiracy theories seem far-fetched, the belief that evil powers are pursuing a secret plan is widespread in every society. Often these relate to health. A large 2019 YouGov poll found 16% of respondents in Spain believe that HIV was created and spread around the world on purpose by a secret group or organization. And 27% of French and 12% of British respondents were convinced that “the truth about the harmful effects of vaccines is being deliberately hidden from the public”. The spread of fake news and conspiracy theories around the coronavirus is such a significant problem that the World Health Organisation (WHO) has created a “myth busters” webpage to try and tackle them. [https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters] (Courtesy UNESCO)



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