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Pandemic Cancels Texas African Business Summit



Inside C2

Tuesday, December 22 2020

## 'Better than nothing'- the U.S. \$900 billion COVID-19 stimulus helps but underwhelms



FILE PHOTO: Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, D-CA.. speaks to reporters on an agreement of a coronavirus disease (COVID-19) aid package on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., U.S., December 20, 2020. REUTERS/Ken

The \$900 billion pandemic aid package expected to win Congressional approval on Monday will deliver support to a recession-ravaged economy slowing under a deadly coronavirus surge, and set it up for a stronger recovery next year as vaccines become more widely available, economists

But it comes months after the last big fiscal aid package was passed and lacks direct help to struggling states and cities, as millions remain unemployed and businesses suffer anew from fresh restrictions to slow spread of the virus.

"While the deal is months late and will likely fall short of what is needed to prevent a rough winter, it's better than nothing," said Gregory Daco, the chief U.S. economist for Oxford Economics.

Even before it is signed, there is fierce debate over whether more aid will be needed, and if it will reach the neediest Americans.

Still, San Francisco Federal Reserve President Mary Daly called the aid "unequivocally beneficial" in an

interview on Sunday on CBS' "Face the Nation."

BRIDGE TO BETTER TIMES The U.S. economy is roughly \$1 trillion smaller than what it would have been without the pandemic and resulting recession.

That estimate is based on the gap between where economic output was headed this year before onset of the health crisis - it started 2020 at about \$21.7 trillion - and where it is now

GRAPHIC: Trump's economy -

Reuters Graphic

The new bill, at roughly the size of that gap, contains \$166 billion for checks to most Americans, \$120 billion in extra payments to the unemployed, and nearly \$300 billion in new "payroll protection" loans for companies that keep employees on the books, among other things.

To Carl Tannenbaum, chief economist at Northern Trust in Chicago, the package's correlation with U.S. economic gap is one indication "they've sized (it) almost properly."

The economy is expected to rebound strongly next year once vaccines make it safer to be out and about, he said, so there's less of a need for the \$2 trillion or more that some economists, like those at the Economic Policy Institute here, have called for.

Kathryn Anne Edwards, an economist at Rand who focuses on the labor market, said the lessons of recent history suggest that spending too little would be a mistake.

"In past recessions, we erred on the side of being fiscally conservative... and it was not enough and people were unemployed for a staggering amount of time," Edwards said.

TARGETED HELP FOR JOBLESS Of 22 million jobs shed since the start of the pandemic, about 12 million have come back, leaving a shortfall of nearly 10 million, Labor Department data

GRAPHIC: Jump in jobs, but still far to go Jump in jobs, but still far to go -

The package will add \$300 per week to regular unemployment benefits through mid-March, and extend benefits to

gig workers who otherwise would not qualify, that were set to expire this week. It also extends an eviction moratorium through January.

Taking care of the unemployed, whose benefits were going to expire is "the most urgent thing that needs to be done right now," said Wendy Edelberg, director of the Hamilton Project and senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, Still, she worries more help will be needed soon.

"My main concern is that the support for unemployment insurance but also the in part by giving Americans who made eviction moratorium – doesn't last nearly long enough, she said. "The economic weakness could come pretty fast in the first quarter."

Targeting funds to people who have lost their jobs is an extremely effective use of government aid, economists say, because it helps the neediest and because it is likely to be spent quickly and fully, delivering a boost to the economy.

At the end of November, 20.6 million Americans were receiving some form of unemployment benefit, Labor Department figures show.

**BROADER SUPPORT WITH \$600** 

Official unemployment numbers do not adequately reflect the total need in the United States, economists say.

"How many people are hungry right now, how many people are behind on rent, how many children are behind in school - these measures of hardship are not collected the way unemployment rates are," says Rand's Edwards.

The stimulus attempts to address that \$75,000 or less last year one-time checks of \$600, providing an immediate boost. Other Americans may not need to use the money right away, said Arindrajit Dube, an economics professor at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. U.S. households have built up more than \$1 trillion in savings during the pandemic, data from the Federal Reserve show

That, along with any money saved from stimulus checks, is ammunition that will deliver "super-charged stimulus," Dube predicted, once vaccinations become more widespread and people spend extra cash on summer travel or vacation rentals. "That will potentially speed our



## WEALEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

12/21/2020

### **CORONAVIRUS DIARY** Wealee@scdaily.com

# **Sending Our Love To The Community**



Last Saturday early in the morning I walked into my office. Suddenly the heavy triangle came down from the sky, then became dark and only the bright sun was still shining on the LED screen.

Since February of this year, the coronavirus has attacked our community. Many of our brothers and sisters are suffering from this pandemic. Even in this very difficult time, my colleagues are still working on the front line to report the news on TV and in the daily newspaper because this is our social responsibility.

We were so happy and honored to team

up with our congressman Al Green and the Houston Food Bank who came to the International Trade Center and presented Free Drive-Thru COVID Testing and Food Distribution last Saturday. Our efforts were focused on helping families in our community to fight against hunger this holiday season.

Early in the morning our volunteer team lead by Owen Wang, Shirley Qing, Lucy Dong and president of the Tianjin Association, Chairwoman Chen, all came to our compound but the weather was not cooperating. The rain was still coming down and all the volunteers had to work in the rain while protecting the food bags. They just put on their protective raincoats and tried to continue their mis-

I was so very moved and really regret all of them having to work in such bad

Every year before Christmas we try to

sponsor some kind of event to show our munity leaders who gave us their supappreciation to our community. Especially this year, Congressman Al Green, you came to sponsor this very meaningful event at such a difficult time in our community.

We also want to say many heartfelt need your continuing helping hands. thanks to all the dear friends and com-

port. Because of your caring, we were able to send the love to those suffering

Many have experienced horrible days and nights and our brothers and sisters









Southern News Group Chairman / CEO Chairman of International Trade & Culture Center **Chairman of International District Houston Texas** 



Stay Home!

## BUSINESS

Wear Mask!

### **Immunity To Coronavirus May** Last Years, New Data Reveals



A patient recovering from SARS in China in 2003. Survivors of that infection, also caused by a coronavirus, still carried immune cells 17 years later. (Photo/ Agence France-Presse — Getty Images )

### **KEY POINT**

How long might immunity to the coronavirus last? Years, maybe even decades, according to a new study - the most hopeful answer yet to a question that has shadowed plans for widespread vaccination.

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

Eight months after infection, most people who have recovered still have enough immune cells to fend off the virus and prevent illness, the new data show. A slow rate of decline in the short term suggests, happily, that these cells may persist in the body for a very, very long time to come. The research, published online, has not been peer-reviewed nor published in a scientific journal. But it is the most comprehensive and long-ranging study of immune memory to the coronavirus to date.

"That amount of memory would likely prevent the vast majority of people from getting hospitalized disease, severe disease, for many years," said Shane Crotty, a virologist at the La Jolla Institute of Immunology who co-led the new study.

The findings are likely to come as a relief to experts worried that immunity to the virus might be short-lived, and that vaccines might have to be administered repeatedly to keep the pandemic under control. And

the research squares with another recent finding: that survivors of SARS, caused by another coronavirus, still carry certain important immune cells 17 years after



Blood was drawn for a Covid-19 antibody test at the University of Arizona in Tucson earlier this year. (Photo/ Cheney Orr/Reuters)

The findings are consistent with encouraging evidence emerging from other labs. Researchers at the University of Washington, led by the immunologist Marion Pepper, had earlier shown that certain "memory" cells that were produced following infection with the coro-

navirus persist for at least three months in the body. A study published last week also found that people who have recovered from Covid-19 have powerful and protective killer immune cells even when antibodies are not detectable.

These studies "are all by and large painting the same picture, which is that once you get past those first few critical weeks, the rest of the response looks pretty conventional," said Deepta Bhattacharva, an immunologist at the University of Arizo-

Akiko Iwasaki, an immunologist at Yale University, said she was not surprised that the body mounts a long-lasting response because "that's what is supposed to happen." Still, she was heartened by the research: "This is exciting news."

A small number of infected people in the new study did not have long-lasting immunity after recovery, perhaps because of differences in the amounts of coronavirus they were exposed to. But vaccines can overcome that individual variability, said Jennifer Gommerman, an immunologist at the University of Toronto.



"That will help in focusing the response, so you don't get the same kind of heterogeneity that you would see in an infected population," she said.

In recent months, reports of waning antibody levels have created worry that immunity to the coronavirus may disappear in a few months, leaving people vulnerable to the virus again. But many immunologists have noted that it is natural for antibody levels to drop. Besides, antibodies are just one arm of the immune system. Although antibodies in the blood are needed to block the virus and forestall a second infection — a condition known as sterilizing immunity — immune cells that "remember" the virus more often are responsible for preventing serious illness. "Sterilizing immunity doesn't happen very often — that is not the norm," said Alessandro Sette, an immunologist at the La Jolla Institute of Immunology and co-leader of the study. More often, people become infected a second time with a particular pathogen, and the immune system recognizes the invader and quickly extinguishes the infection. The coronavirus in particular is slow to do harm, giving the immune system plenty of time to kick into

"It may be terminated fast enough that not only are you not experiencing any symptoms but you are not infectious," Dr. Sette said.



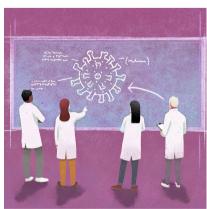
Dr. Sette and his colleagues recruited 185 men and women, aged 19 to 81, who had recovered from Covid-19. The majority had mild symptoms not requiring hospitalization; most provided just one blood sample, but 38 provided multiple samples over many months. The team tracked four components of the immune system: antibodies, B cells that make more antibodies as needed; and two types of T cells that kill other infected cells. The idea was to build a picture of the immune response over time by looking at its constituents.

"If you just look at only one, you can really be missing the full picture," Dr. Crotty

He and his colleagues found that antibodies were durable, with modest declines at six to eight months after infection, although there was a 200-fold difference in the levels among the participants. T cells showed only a slight, slow decay in the body, while B cells grew in number — an unexpected finding the researchers can't quite explain.

The study is the first to chart the immune response to a virus in such granular detail, experts said. "For sure, we have no priors here," Dr. Gommerman said. "We're learning, I think for the first time, about some of the dynamics of these populations through time." Worries over how long immunity to the coronavirus persists were sparked mainly by research into those viruses causing common colds. One frequently cited study, led by Jeffrey Shaman of Columbia University, suggested that immunity might fade quickly and that reinfections could occur within a year.

"What we need to be very mindful of is whether or not reinfection is going to be a concern," Dr. Shaman said. "And so seeing evidence that we have this kind of persistent, robust response, at least to these time scales, is very encouraging." So far, at least, he noted, reinfections with the coronavirus seem to be rare.



Exactly how long immunity lasts is hard to predict, because scientists don't yet know what levels of various immune cells are needed to protect from the virus. But studies so far have suggested that even small numbers of antibodies or T and B cells may be enough to shield those who have recovered. The participants in the study have been making those cells in robust amounts — so far. "There's no sign that memory cells are suddenly going to plummet, which would be kind of unusual," Dr. Iwasaki said. "Usually, there's a slow decay over years."

There is some emerging evidence that reinfections with common cold coronaviruses are a result of viral genetic variations, Dr. Bhattacharya noted, and so those concerns may not be relevant to the new coronavirus.

"I don't think it's an unreasonable prediction to think that these immune memory components would last for years," he said. (Courtesy ttps://www.msn.com)

Tuesday, December 22, 2020



## **Editor's Choice**



Confetti flies in the air as Jeanne Peters, 95, a rehab patient at The Reservoir, a nursing facility, gestures after she was given the first coronavirus vaccination as Mary Lou Galushko, left, looks on, in West Hartford, Connecticut, December 18, 2020. Stephen Dunn/Pool via REUTERS



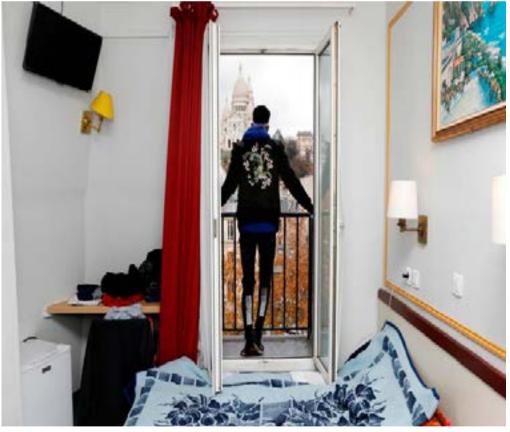
An Iraqi woman, dressed as Santa claus, rides her bicycle in the old city of Mosul, Iraq, December 18, 2020. REUTERS/Abdullah Rashid



A ripped Trump campaign flag flies in the air on the outskirts of Lamesa, Texas, December 18, 2020. REUTERS/Go Nakamura



Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson looks on during a news conference in response to the ongoing situation with the coronavirus pandemic, inside 10 Downing Street, London, Britain, December 19, 2020. REUTERS/Toby Melville/Pool



Asylum-seeker Ibrahim looks at the Sacre Coeur Cathedral from his room at the Hotel Avenir Montmartre in Paris, France. The hotel, deserted by tourists due to COVID-19 travel bans opened its 42 rooms to the city's homeless for 12 months with the help...MORE



Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi holds a portfolio as Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer (not pictured) speaks to reporters on an agreement of a coronavirus aid package on Capitol Hill in Washington, December 20, 2020. REUTERS/Ken Cedeno



Medical personnel prepare in the emergency room of the Maggiore di Lodi hospital as a second wave of the coronavirus hits the country, in Lodi, Italy, November 13, 2020. REUTERS/Flavio Lo Scalzo



The Lai family, who are emigrating to Scotland, look out over the city's skyline on a outing to Tsim Sha Tsui in Hong Kong, China, December 14, 2020. REUTERS/Tyrone Siu

Tuesday, December 22, 2020



## COMMUNITY

### What Is Hanukkah?

### Hanukkah/Chanukah --December 10 - December 18 2020



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

Chanukah is the Jewish eight-day, wintertime "festival of lights," celebrated with a nightly menorah lighting, special prayers and fried foods.

The Hebrew word Chanukah means "dedication," and is thus named because it celebrates the rededication of the Holy Temple (as you'll read below). Also spelled Hanukkah (or variations of that spelling), the Hebrew word is actually pronounced with a guttural, "kh" sound, kha-nu-kah, not tcha-new-kah.

In the second century BCE, the Holy Land was ruled by the Seleucids (Syrian-Greeks), who tried to force the people of Israel to accept Greek culture and beliefs instead of mitzvah observance and belief in G d. Against all odds, a small band of faithful but poorly armed Jews, led by Judah the Maccabee, defeated one of the mightiest armies on earth, drove the Greeks from the land, reclaimed the Holy Temple in Jerusalem and rededicated it to the service of G d.



Artist Dominic Alves captured this image of a snowy Chanukah in Brighton, UK.

When they sought to light the Temple's Menorah (the seven-branched candelabrum), they found only a single cruse of olive oil that had escaped contamination by the Greeks. Miraculously, they lit the menorah and the one-day supply of oil lasted for eight days, until new oil could be prepared under conditions of ritual

To commemorate and publicize these miracles, the sages instituted the festival of Chanukah.

How Chanukah Is Observed



At the heart of the festival is the nightly menorah lighting. The menorah holds nine flames, one of which is the shamash ("attendant"), which is used to kindle the other eight lights. On the first night, we light just one flame. On the second night, an additional flame is lit. By the eighth night of Chanukah, all eight lights are kindled.

Special blessings are recited, often to a traditional melody, before the menorah is lit, and traditional songs are sung afterward

A menorah is lit in every household (or even by each individual within the household) and placed in a doorway or window. The menorah is also lit in synagogues and other public places. In recent years, thousands of jumbo menorahs have cropped up in front of city halls and legislative buildings, and in malls and parks all over the world.

We recite the special Hallel prayer daily, and add V'Al HaNissim in our daily prayers and in the Grace After Meals. to offer praise and thanksgiving to G d for "delivering the strong into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few ... the wicked into the hands of the righteous."

#### When Is Chanukah?

Chanukah begins on the eve of Kislev 25 and continues for eight days. On the civil calendar, it generally coincides with the month of December. Chanukah 2019 runs from Dec. 22-30.

**Chanukah Foods** 



#### Photo credit: Miriam Szokovski

Since the Chanukah miracle involved oil, it is customary to eat foods fried in oil. The Eastern-European classic is the potato latke (pancake) garnished with applesauce or sour cream, and the reigning Israeli favorite is the jelly-filled sufganya (doughnut).

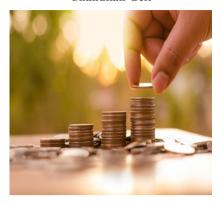
Dreidel: the Chanukah Game



On Chanukah, it is customary to play with a "dreidel" (a four-sided spinning top bearing the Hebrew letters, nun, gimmel, hei and shin, an acronym for nes gadol hayah sham, "a great miracle happened there"). The game is usually played for a pot of coins, nuts, or oth-

er stuff, which is won or lost based on which letter the dreidel lands when it is spun.

Chanukah Gelt



In today's consumer-driven society, people tend to place great importance on giving Chanukah gifts. However, the tradition is actually to give Chanukah gelt, gifts of money, to children. In addition to rewarding positive behavior and devotion to Torah study, the cash gifts give the children the opportunity to give tzedakah (charity). This has also spawned the phenomenon of foil-covered "chocolate gelt."

#### What It Means For You

Noting that one should spend time in close proximity to the Chanukah lights, the Previous Rebbe would say, "We must listen carefully to what the candles are saying." So what are the flickering flames telling us? Here are some messages:

a. Never be afraid to stand up for what's right. Judah Maccabee and his band faced daunting odds, but that didn't stop them. With a prayer on their lips and faith in their heart, they entered the battle of their lives-and won. We can do the same.

b. Always increase in matters of goodness and Torah-observance. Sure, a single flame was good enough for yesterday, but today needs to be even better.

c. A little light goes a long way. The Chanukah candles are lit when dusk is falling. Perched in the doorway, they serve as a beacon for the darkening streets. No matter how dark it is outside, a candle of G dly goodness can transform the darkness itself into light. (Courtesy https:// www.chabad.org/)





**美南大咖談(5:30-6:30)** 



