Overview: Driving coverage was news on the progress being made in vaccine development, alongside examinations of transmission risk, and reports on cases increasing in the south and west. There was little defense-related reporting today, with a few items reporting that the USS *Theodore Roosevelt* is pier-side in Guam to pick up its crew before resuming its post-COVID deployment.

In addition to the *Roosevelt* update, a few other defense-related items covered on Pres. Trump’s signed order to extend the authorization for National Guard troops to deploy through Aug. 21 with federal funding in support of coronavirus missions. The news prompted a response from retired Brig. Gen. Roy Robinson, president of the advocacy group National Guard Association, who said he was “very pleased with the time frame” that the president has extended the orders to. In addition, *AP* reported that more than 15 members of West Point's graduating class tested positive for the virus upon their return to the U.S. Military Academy, which will host Pres. Trump on June 13. Those who tested positive will be isolated for 10 days, then undergo four more days of slightly less strict quarantine. The rest of the class has been divided into four groups and are being monitored.

On progress in vaccine development, *Defense One* cited Dr. Kayvon Modjarrad, director of emerging infectious diseases at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, who told reporters the service is on track to produce a vaccine against multiple coronavirus strains by the end of the year - as some reports indicate several strains are circulating. The vaccine candidate is currently being tested on mice, while the Army is also working to evaluate candidates being produced by AstraZeneca and other companies under the “Operation Warp Speed” program.

In news about virus transmission, outlets cited the WHO today saying there is no evidence that the virus circulating worldwide has mutated in ways that would make it more easily transmissible. Separately, in discussion about the increase in cases, the *New York Times* suggested that the tear gas used in the George Floyd protests may increase the transmission risk. It cited research conducted by the U.S. Army finding that personnel in basic training were more at risk of having an acute respiratory illness in the days following tear gas exposure than the days before.

Other relevant/global news:

- Coverage of Dr. Anthony Fauci’s interview with JAMA included *CNBC* noting his concern about the “durability” of a potential virus vaccine, saying there’s a chance it may not provide immunity beyond one year. He also said that by early 2021 “we hope to have” hundreds of millions of doses of a vaccine.
- A spike in new U.S. cases was led by Arkansas and Arizona, which saw the highest single-day numbers.
- Cases in Europe dropped to their lowest level since March 22, though India reported its biggest single-day rise, and cases and deaths in Central and South America continued to increase, according to the WHO (*WSJ*).
- The Trump administration has selected five companies as the most likely candidates to produce a vaccine, senior officials said, in what the *New York Times* called “a critical step” in the White House goal to begin vaccinating Americans this year. The announcement will be made at the White House in the next few weeks, government officials said. Two of the vaccine candidates — developed by Moderna and scientists at Oxford — are already in Phase II trials and being tested on human subjects, and will likely move to large-scale human trials for Phase III by July.
A pandemic of the novel coronavirus has now killed more than 381,000 people worldwide.

Over 6.4 million people across the globe have been diagnosed with COVID-19, the disease caused by the new respiratory virus, according to data compiled by the Center for Systems Science and Engineering at Johns Hopkins University. The actual numbers are believed to be much higher due to testing shortages, many unreported cases and suspicions that some governments are hiding the scope of their nations’ outbreaks.

Since the first cases were detected in China in December, the United States has become the worst-affected country, with more than 1.8 million diagnosed cases and at least 106,553 deaths.

**2. West Point Preps for Graduation, Some in Class Test Positive - 6/3**

Associated Press | Michael Hill

More than 15 members of West Point’s graduating class tested positive for the coronavirus upon their return to the U.S. Military Academy, which is preparing to host President Donald Trump for an unusual graduation ceremony that has been criticized as too risky during a pandemic.
Trump's announcement in April that he would give the commencement address at the historic academy was criticized as a political move. But Army officials said graduates needed to return before beginning their careers as officers anyway, so the logistically daunting task of preparing for the June 13 ceremony is underway. “At some point, they had to come back to campus,” academy spokesman Lt. Col. Christopher Ophardt said Wednesday. “And it was like, ‘If they have to come back, how do we protect the campus and the surrounding community and protect them?’”

The roughly 1,100 class members preparing to graduate returned to campus over five days last week, with most of them driving and others flying commercially. Arrivals were immediately tested for the virus.

Ophardt said 1.5% tested positive, which works out to about 17 people, and none showed symptoms. Those who tested positive are going through 10 days of isolation in a designated barracks, before four more days of slightly less strict quarantine. They have internet access in their rooms and can go outside in set areas to read or perform physical training, Ophardt said.

The rest of the class has been divided into four groups of roughly 275, and their health is being monitored. The groups do not intermingle with each other. For instance, the mess hall takes in two groups at a time, and they eat in different parts of the hall, Ophardt said.

“They had to turn in their military equipment, which they’re still doing now. They’ve been doing P.T. (physical training), they’ve been turning in library books, all the stuff a normal college kid would do right before they were going to leave,” he said. “And they’re getting all the medical appointments done, blood draws, all that type of stuff that needs to get done.”

The graduation ceremony this year is being moved from the on-campus football stadium to the expansive parade field known as the Plain. Cadets will march on to the Plain in socially distant formations and take seats 6 feet (2 meters) apart. In a dramatic departure from past years, there will be no guests. Family members can watch the ceremony via livestream.

Presidents routinely speak at West Point commencements. But Trump’s announcement during the pandemic has been dismissed as a way get him on stage at the academy, which is 40 miles (65 kilometers) up the Hudson River from New York City, the epicenter of the U.S. outbreak. U.S. Sen. Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill., a member of West Point’s Board of Visitors, said in April: “Trump’s reckless decision to gather 1,000 Cadets at West Point for a speech puts our future military leaders at increased risk — all to stroke his own ego.”

An email seeking comment was sent to the White House.

Army officials say graduating cadets must return for medical and other required tasks. Gen. James McConville, the chief of staff of the Army, told Pentagon reporters: “We can't telecommute to combat.”

West Point’s ceremony will be similar to the U.S. Air Force Academy's scaled-down ceremony in April. Vice President Mike Pence addressed hundreds of graduates sitting in chairs spaced out on the school’s parade field, instead of its stadium.

In contrast, the U.S. Naval Academy opted to hold its first-ever virtual graduation ceremony last month. West Point plans to bring the other three classes back for summer training in July and to welcome members of the class of 2024 that same month.

Dr. Anthony Fauci says there's a chance coronavirus vaccine may not provide immunity for very long

CNBC | Not Attributed

White House health advisor Dr. Anthony Fauci said he worries about the “durability” of a potential coronavirus vaccine, saying there’s a chance it may not provide long-term immunity.
If Covid-19 acts like other coronaviruses, "it likely isn't going to be a long duration of immunity," Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said during an interview Tuesday evening with JAMA Editor Howard Bauchner.

"When you look at the history of coronaviruses, the common coronaviruses that cause the common cold, the reports in the literature are that the durability of immunity that's protective ranges from three to six months to almost always less than a year," he said. "That's not a lot of durability and protection."

The National Institutes of Health has been fast-tracking work with biotech firm Moderna on a potential vaccine to prevent Covid-19, which has infected more than 6.28 million people worldwide and killed at least 375,987, according to data compiled by Johns Hopkins University.

Fauci said Tuesday that the biotech company expects to enroll about 30,000 individuals when it begins a phase 3 trial in July. He said there are at least four trials for potential vaccines that he is either directly or indirectly involved in.

Fauci said that by the beginning of 2021 "we hope to have" hundreds of millions of doses.

When asked whether scientists will be able to find an effective vaccine, Fauci said he's "cautiously optimistic," adding that "there's never a guarantee." He cautioned "it could take months and months and months to get an answer" before scientists discover whether the vaccine works.

U.S. officials and scientists are hopeful a vaccine to prevent Covid-19 will be ready in the first half of 2021 — 12 to 18 months since Chinese scientists first identified the coronavirus and mapped its genetic sequence.

It's a record-breaking time frame for a process that normally takes about a decade for an effective and safe vaccine. The fastest-ever vaccine development, mumps, took more than four years and was licensed in 1967.

However, scientists still don't fully understand key aspects of the virus, including how immune systems respond once a person is exposed. The answers, they say, may have large implications for vaccine development, including how quickly it can be deployed to the public.

Fauci, the nation's leading infectious disease expert, said in congressional testimony last month that he is hopeful scientists would find a workable candidate but warned of potential pitfalls in developing any vaccine.

"You can have everything you think that's in place and you don't induce the kind of immune response that turns out to be protective and durably protective," Fauci said of a vaccine. "So one of the big unknowns is, will it be effective? Given the way the body responds to viruses of this type, I'm cautiously optimistic that we will with one of the candidates get an efficacy signal."

4. Coronavirus cases rise in US south and west as crowded protests spark worries - 6/3
CNN | Eric Levenson

Coronavirus cases continued to spread in parts of the American south and west in the past week as experts warn that packed protests could exacerbate the pandemic.

The early parts of the American coronavirus outbreak struck hardest in the dense metropolitan areas on the coasts, such as New York, New Jersey, Boston, and California. But the last few weeks have seen wider spread in inland states, including Arkansas, Texas and Arizona.
In Arkansas on Tuesday, Gov. Asa Hutchinson said there were 375 new positive coronavirus tests, the highest single-day number of new community cases. There are currently more people hospitalized with Covid-19 there than at any prior point.

"We continue to trend upward in the number of cases," Hutchinson said.

Arizona added 1,127 new positive Covid-19 cases on Tuesday, the state's highest single-day total in the pandemic. Texas, too, has seen over 1,000 new positive coronavirus cases in six out of the last seven days. In total, the US has over 1.8 million cases and over 106,000 deaths, both by far the most of any country in the world.

In addition, health officials have expressed concern about a renewed outbreak stemming from the nationwide protests against the police killing of George Floyd.

CNN chief medical correspondent Dr. Sanjay Gupta said that the coronavirus could spread at protests depending on factors like mask-wearing, how closely people gathered, and how long people stayed in close contact.

"I think it's fair to say that there is going to be an impact," Gupta said Wednesday.

"It is a contagious virus. People being outside, people wearing masks, people moving by each other more quickly may reduce the likelihood of significant exponential growth. But that's still the concern."

For example, Oklahoma State football player Amen Ogbongbemiga said in a tweet on Tuesday that he tested positive for Covid-19 after attending a protest.

"After attending a protest in Tulsa AND being well protective of myself, I have tested positive for COVID-19," Ogbongbemiga tweeted. "Please, if you are going to protest, take care of yourself and stay safe."

The virus has particularly impacted African-Americans, who make up a disproportionate percentage of Covid-19 cases and deaths.

Worldwide, Covid-19 cases are increasing most rapidly in parts of Latin America. Brazil now has the second-most cases of any country in the world, and Peru, Chile and Mexico all among the top 15 countries with the most cases, according to data compiled by Johns Hopkins University.

What will stop the virus -- and what won't

Entering the sixth month of the virus, public health officials are more clearly seeing what stops the virus from spreading and what doesn't.

For one, the textbook combination of identification, isolation and quarantine for contacts helped stop the potential spread of coronavirus an Air Force basic training camp. Military doctors said their approach kept the case count to just five among 10,000 recruits at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland in Texas in March and April.

The base used techniques including quarantine, social distancing, early trainee screening, rapid isolation and monitored re-entry to slow the transmission, the researchers said in a report published by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Tuesday.

"Beginning March 17, all new recruits were segregated upon arrival for a two-week arrival quarantine on an area of the base separated from the main cohort of trainees," Dr. Joseph Marcus of the Brooke Army Medical Center and colleagues wrote in their report. "In addition, all trainees were instructed to maintain a distance of at least 6 feet between one another to ensure social distancing."
In April, the use of face coverings was made mandatory. The strategies put into place at the base meant that the rate of infection was significantly lower than that of other communal living environments, such as homeless shelters.

On the other hand, warmer weather is unlikely to stop the spread of coronavirus, Dr. Francis Collins, the director of the National Institutes of Health, said in a blog post Tuesday.

"Climate only would become an important seasonal factor in controlling COVID-19 once a large proportion of people within a given community are immune or resistant to infection," Collins wrote, citing experts in infectious disease transmission and climate modeling.

"We'll obviously have to wait a few months to get the data. But for now, many researchers have their doubts that the COVID-19 pandemic will enter a needed summertime lull," he added.

Collins is just the latest expert to throw cold water on the theory, boosted by President Donald Trump, that speculated heat would lessen the spread and possibly kill the virus altogether.

Dr. Fauci optimistic about vaccine

The US should have 100 million doses of one candidate Covid-19 vaccine by the end of the year, Dr. Anthony Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) and a member of the White House coronavirus task force, said Tuesday.

US should have a 'couple hundred million' doses of a Covid-19 vaccine by the start of 2021, Fauci says "Then, by the beginning of 2021, we hope to have a couple hundred million doses," Fauci said during a live question and answer session with the Journal of the American Medical Association.

It's still not clear whether the vaccine will be effective against the novel coronavirus. Still, Fauci expressed optimism that one of the many vaccine trials would be successful.

"I'm cautiously optimistic that with the multiple candidates we have with different platforms, that we are going to have a vaccine that will make it deployable," Fauci said.

5. Trump said he took hydroxychloroquine to prevent coronavirus — but new study shows that doesn’t work - 6/3

CNN Live Updates | CNN's Elizabeth Cohen

On the heels of several studies showing hydroxychloroquine doesn’t help patients in the hospital with Covid-19, a new study – the first of its kind – shows the drug doesn’t work to prevent infection with the virus, either.

The study of 821 people is a randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial, considered the gold standard in medicine. The study was expected to be published Wednesday in the New England Journal of Medicine.

The researchers assigned about half the study subjects to take hydroxychloroquine and half to take a placebo, or a pill that does nothing. Neither the researchers nor the study subjects knew who was taking hydroxychloroquine and who was taking a placebo. They found the drug didn’t make a difference – over the next two weeks, the study subjects came down with Covid symptoms in equal amounts.

The study’s senior author, Dr. David Boulware, says that on May 9, the White House physician sent him an email asking his opinion of hydroxychloroquine as a preventive measure against Covid-19.

Boulware, an infectious disease expert at the University of Minnesota, says he advised Trump’s physician that there was no published research showing hydroxychloroquine worked preventatively and shared that people in
his study who took hydroxychloroquine had higher rates of side effects, mostly gastrointestinal problems such as nausea and vomiting.

On May 18, Trump announced that he’d been taking the medicine for a week and a half.

“I knew they were probably going to ignore what I said because the White House had been talking about hydroxychloroquine for weeks and weeks and weeks,” Boulware said.

6. Army Scientists: All Strains of COVID-19 Can Be Covered by One Vaccine - 6/3
Defense One | Patrick Tucker

The service is on track to produce a vaccine against multiple coronavirus strains by the end of the year. But making it available is the CDC’s job.

Army scientists say that they are “very optimistic” that they will have a vaccine by the end of the year that will be effective against any COVID-19 strain.

The vaccine candidate, currently being tested in hundreds of mice, was developed by Army scientists. The Army is also working to accelerate and evaluate candidates being produced by AstraZeneca and other pharmaceutical companies under the White House’s “Operation Warp Speed” program, which aims to have a vaccine ready by year’s end.

A vaccine that could handle multiple strains is important because some reports suggest that there may be as many as eight strains circulating around the globe, but, scientists don’t know enough yet to be sure of that. Other reports have surfaced appearing to show re-infection, which is contradicted by other findings. There are also, of course, a wide variety of health outcomes for the infected, based on exposure and other factors.

“We’ve done a lot of work that you’ll hear about in the near future showing that all the [COVID-19-linked] viruses circulating in the world can be covered by a single vaccine,” Dr. Kayvon Modjarrad, director of emerging infectious diseases at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, told reporters on a call on Tuesday.

Modjarrad described the Army vaccine candidate as a “platform” that can target multiple strains of coronavirus, due, in part, to the unique shape of the vaccine particle. “It’s like a soccer ball. It has all of these different faces. Each face has the spiked protein pointing out.” Those multiple faces, each with a spike to insert the protein into the target surface, allow for multiple opportunities to spur the development of antibodies.

It’s too early, however, to tell exactly how long the vaccine will work in the patients that receive it, also called durability. “We don’t even know how long it lasts from people who get naturally infected,” said Modjarrad.

Once the vaccine is developed, the CDC has authority to execute a “vaccine campaign” : an effort to deploy it. But not all vaccine candidates are appropriate for all potential patients. “The U.S. FDA will have a very strong hand in deciding who gets those vaccines,” said Dr. Nelson Michael, director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research.

Officials said that the Army’s vaccine has to meet various criteria before researchers consider it useful. It has to be shown to be safe and effective and it must be accessible.

“It is reasonable to expect that there will be some form of a vaccine that could be available at some level to a certain population by the end of the year,” said Col. Wendy Sammons-Jackson, director of the Military Infectious Disease Research Program in the U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command.

But “accessible” is a somewhat subjective matter, since what is accessible to the U.S. military may not be accessible to everyone else. The CDC would make determinations about how to get the vaccine out based on considerations like: “Who needs it the most in terms of saving and what risk they face,” said Nelson.
WHO: No evidence coronavirus is mutating - 6/3
The Hill | Reid Wilson

Senior officials at the World Health Organization (WHO) said Wednesday there is no evidence that the coronavirus circulating around the globe has mutated in ways that would make it more virulent or more easily transmissible.

Maria Van Kerkhove, who leads the WHO team tasked with synthesizing the science behind the virus, told reporters that virologists around the world had sequenced more than 40,000 full genomes of SARS-CoV-2. Those sequences show small and normal mutations, though nothing that suggests the virus is becoming more or less dangerous.

"The virus itself is stable, is relatively stable," Van Kerkhove said. "They aren't mutating in a way that makes the virus more transmissible or more severe."

Much is still unknown about the coronavirus, which has infected at least 6.4 million people around the world and 1.8 million in the United States. Several different strains, or clades, have been identified as it has traveled the globe, though there are no indications that viruses traveling from one region are any more or less deadly than from another.

Mike Ryan, who leads the WHO's emergency program, said mutations that make a virus more deadly are unlikely, because of the virus's own biological self interest.

"It's not in the virus's interest to do too much damage in the host. It wants to survive," Ryan said. "We haven't seen any particular signal in the virus's behavior or its sequence that would leads us to believe it has changed in its nature."

If anything has changed about the virus, it may be the level of vigilance that people around the world are maintaining. As governments begin to ease lockdowns meant to stop the spread of the virus, Van Kerkhove urged people to maintain the non-medical interventions like physical distancing, wearing masks and staying home if ill.

"People grow tired. It's very difficult to keep up all of these measures, and we must remain strong and vigilant," Van Kerkhove said. "That in a sense could make the virus more dangerous because people could become complacent."

Corrosive Effects of Tear Gas Could Intensify Coronavirus Pandemic - 6/3
New York Times | Mike Baker

Tear gas brings temporary misery by stinging eyes and throats. There's also evidence that it may increase the risk of respiratory illness.

SEATTLE — The billowing clouds of tear gas that the authorities are sending through protest crowds across the United States may increase the risk that the coronavirus could spread through the gatherings.

Along with the immediate pain that can cause watering eyes and burning throats, tear gas may cause damage to people's lungs and make them more susceptible to getting a respiratory illness, according to studies on the risks of exposure. The gas can also incite coughing, which can further spread the virus from an infected person.

Sven-Eric Jordt, a researcher at Duke University who has studied the effects of tear gas agents, said he had been shocked to watch how much the authorities had turned to the control method in recent days.
“I’m really concerned that this might catalyze a new wave of Covid-19,” Mr. Jordt said. The virus has been linked to more than 106,000 deaths in the United States.

The protests after the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis have already raised alarm among health experts who have watched as protesters gathered by the thousands in cities around the country. While some demonstrators have worn masks and gloves, the crowds have often involved shouting and chanting in close quarters — a risky activity for a virus spread by respiratory droplets.

But the addition of wafting gases, which have been used widely by police forces in recent nights, has added an uncertain new element of risk to the scene.

In research conducted by the U.S. Army, examiners looked at the impacts of exposure that thousands of Army recruits had to the common riot-control agent known as CS gas or tear gas. The study conducted in the summer of 2012 found that the personnel in a basic training cohort had a substantially high risk of being found to have an acute respiratory illness in the days after exposure than the days before.

The risk increased the more people were exposed, the researchers said.

The miserable initial effects of tear gas — including stinging in the eyes and throat — typically lasts for only 15 to 30 minutes after a person who has been exposed gets to an area with cleaner air. But many of the illnesses in the Army research surfaced days after exposure. Researchers cautioned that illnesses were not lab-checked, and could have been caused by damage to the respiratory tract rather than infection, or could have been prompted by other factors.

A study in Turkey examining the long-term effects of tear gas found that people who had been exposed had a higher risk for chronic bronchitis.

Tear gas has been around for decades, used around the world as a riot-control tool, including in Hong Kong during recent uprisings there. Treaties prohibit its use during war.

Mr. Jordt said he worried that the effects on healthy, young military recruits may also not fully capture the risks to people who are older or have underlying conditions. He said more research was needed on tear gas generally, since much of the research was decades old, but that it had been difficult to get funding to examine the issue.

The protests after Mr. Floyd’s death have focused on the disproportionate impacts of police killings on black Americans, with protests led by groups such as Black Lives Matter. People of color have also been hit particularly hard by the coronavirus pandemic, with higher rates of hospitalizations and deaths than white people.

Researchers have long found that smoking can cause damage to upper airways and increase the risk of lung infections. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has said that conditions such as asthma and chronic lung disease can increase the risk of someone getting a severe coronavirus illness.

The C.D.C. has said that prolonged exposure to riot-control agents may lead to long-term effects to eyes and breathing problems such as asthma.

The use of tear gas to disperse protesters has been the subject of criticism from organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union.

Jamil Dakwar, the director of the A.C.L.U.’s Human Rights Program, said tear gas had become an overused tactic that could actually increase the volatility of a situation. He said the weapons that were so indiscriminate should not be used for dispersing people or in protests.

“It has become a first-resort weapon rather than a last resort,” Mr. Dakwar said.
Mr. Dakwar said he would like to see state and federal legislation that would restrict the use of those techniques. While the A.C.L.U. was not advocating an outright ban, he said the priority should be on de-escalation techniques.

Mr. Dakwar said the gas was so indiscriminate that he also worried about the health effects on police officers.

9. Trump Administration Selects Five Coronavirus Vaccine Candidates as Finalists - 6/3

The White House is eager to project progress, but the public-private partnership it has created still faces scientific hurdles, internal tensions and questions from Congress.

New York Times | Noah Weiland and David E. Sanger

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration has selected five companies as the most likely candidates to produce a vaccine for the coronavirus, senior officials said, a critical step in the White House’s effort to deliver on its promise of being able to start widespread inoculation of Americans by the end of the year.

By winnowing the field in a matter of weeks from a pool of around a dozen companies, the federal government is betting that it can identify the most promising vaccine projects at an early stage, speed along the process of determining which will work and ensure that the winner or winners can be quickly manufactured in huge quantities and distributed across the country.

The announcement of the decision will be made at the White House in the next few weeks, government officials said. Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, the federal government’s top epidemiologist and director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, hinted at the coming action on Tuesday when he told a medical seminar that “by the beginning of 2021 we hope to have a couple of hundred million doses.”

The five companies are Moderna, a Massachusetts-based biotechnology firm, which Dr. Fauci said he expected would enter into the final phase of clinical trials next month; the combination of Oxford University and AstraZeneca, on a similar schedule; and three large pharmaceutical companies: Johnson & Johnson, Merck and Pfizer. Each is taking a somewhat different approach.

President Trump has been eager to show rapid progress as the nation slowly emerges from lockdown, and as he faces the growing challenge of winning re-election in the midst of national upheaval: more than 106,000 Americans dead from the virus, unemployment at record levels and now discord and violence in the streets.

Despite promising early results and the administration’s strong interest in nurturing a government-industry partnership, substantial hurdles remain, and many scientists consider Mr. Trump’s goal of having a vaccine widely available by early next year to be optimistic, if not unrealistic. Vaccine development is notoriously difficult and time-consuming; the record is four years, and a decade is not unusual.

Moderna, Johnson & Johnson and the Oxford-AstraZeneca group have already received a total of $2.2 billion in federal funding to support their vaccine programs. Their selection as finalists, along with Merck and Pfizer, will give all five companies access to additional government money, help in running clinical trials and financial and logistical support for a manufacturing base that is being built even before it is clear which if any of the vaccines in development will work.

More funding is likely to be announced soon, officials said. Earlier this week, the Department of Health and Human Services added $628 million to a contract with Emergent BioSolutions, a Maryland firm, to expand development of vaccine manufacturing capacity.

Dr. Fauci, who had been sounding cautionary notes, now sounds more optimistic: Among his concerns, he said during the session run by The Journal of the American Medical Association, is how long immunity triggered by a vaccine might last.
“Vaccines are coming along really well,” Mr. Trump wrote on Twitter on Tuesday, hours before he was scheduled to meet with Alex M. Azar II, the health and human services secretary. “Moving faster than anticipated. Good news ahead.”

The project — called Operation Warp Speed — amounts to a sprawling, on-the-fly experiment in industrial policy by a Republican administration that has been otherwise dedicated to giving private industry a free hand.

Democrats in Congress are already seeking details about the contracts with the companies, many of which are still wrapped in secrecy. They are asking how much Americans will have to pay to be vaccinated and whether the firms, or American taxpayers, will retain the profits and intellectual property.

Other countries, including China, are also rushing their own efforts to produce a vaccine, raising concerns that nationalism rather than need could drive decisions about who first gets inoculated.

Two of the vaccine candidates selected by the Trump administration — developed by Moderna and scientists at Oxford — are already in Phase II trials, meaning their effectiveness is being tested on scores of human subjects.

They will likely shift to large-scale human trials, called Phase III, as early as July, two senior administration officials said.

While Johnson & Johnson has said it would begin Phase I trials by September at the latest, that now appears likely to be sped up considerably, officials said. Phase I focuses on testing for safety, a particularly important factor for vaccines since they are administered widely to healthy people.

Several of the companies said that they did not want to speak ahead of any announcement by the White House, and the others did not respond to requests for a comment. Along with Moderna, Merck, Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson are based in the United States. AstraZeneca is based in Britain.

Under the administration plan, according to officials, around 30,000 people will take part in Phase III trials for each vaccine when they reach that stage. If all five companies reach Phase III trials, around 150,000 people, mostly Americans, would ultimately become the test subjects for a vaccine.

All age groups will be covered, including older people and those with underlying health conditions.

It is possible, officials and corporate executives in several of the firms said, that some of the Phase III trials will be conducted outside of the United States, and may be focused on coronavirus hot spots, where a greater possibility of infection could speed the process of determining the effectiveness of a potential vaccine. The other alternative — deliberately exposing inoculated volunteers to the disease — is fraught with ethical issues and officials seem reluctant to take that route, even if it might speed results.

The plans are being assembled in an office suite on the seventh floor of the Health and Human Services Department’s headquarters, where two newly appointed leaders of the project, Dr. Moncef Slaoui and Gen. Gustave F. Perna, have set up temporary offices.

Dr. Slaoui comes from the pharmaceutical and venture capital worlds. General Perna heads the Army Materiel Command and is an expert in complex logistics but not medicine.

Their work is monitored by Mr. Azar, Defense Secretary Mark T. Esper and Jared Kushner, the president’s son-in-law. They are coordinating with the senior infectious disease experts on the White House’s coronavirus task force, Dr. Fauci and Dr. Deborah L. Birx, who is overseeing the task force’s day-to-day operations.

Weeks ago, Mr. Trump compared the Warp Speed effort to the Manhattan Project, the government-led program during World War II to develop the atomic bomb. There are superficial similarities: Lives at stake, crushing deadlines, and a combination of civilian and military leadership. (The Manhattan Project was headed by J. Robert
Oppenheimer, a theoretical physicist, and Gen. Leslie R. Groves, who oversaw the project to deliver the bomb to its targets in Japan.)

But even some of the president’s top aides say the analogy goes only so far: This effort is an amalgamation of private-industry vaccine projects, with an overlay of military coordination.

One senior administration official said the more appropriate comparison would be Lockheed Martin’s “Skunk Works” program in California, where the company’s most sensitive aircraft projects have been developed and built. Many never left the design stage.

Much of the work at the Warp Speed project involves making sure no surprises slow development.

But Dr. Amesh Adalja, an infectious disease physician and senior scholar at the Johns Hopkins University Center for Health Security, said that the administration should “be prepared for things to slow down once we get further along.”

“All of the timelines are optimistic,” he said. “Vaccine development doesn’t always go as predicted. There are a lot of hiccups in the production process.”

Democratic lawmakers on Tuesday wrote to Mr. Azar with concerns about how his department was awarding contracts to the pharmaceutical companies.

Representative James E. Clyburn, Democrat of South Carolina and the chairman of the House’s select committee on the coronavirus, and Representative Carolyn B. Maloney, Democrat of New York and the chairwoman of the Committee on Oversight and Reform, said that they were “seeking to determine whether these contracts include provisions to ensure affordability and prevent profiteering.”

Agreements have included promises from pharmaceutical companies related to intellectual property, the number of doses that will be produced if a candidate is successful and the price of a vaccine, one senior administration official said. But few details have been made public.

Contracts are being awarded through the department’s Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority. Congress allocated billions of dollars for vaccine development in various components of the $2 trillion coronavirus relief package.

Senior administration officials said that between new congressional funds and money that can be drawn from appropriations for the federal health agencies, the project will have plenty of funding.

Behind the scenes, the project has undergone upheaval in its leadership.

Dr. Peter Marks, the federal scientist who devised and initially oversaw the project at the Food and Drug Administration, stepped aside from his role as its lead vaccine specialist, in part because he believed Dr. Slaoui had potential conflicts of interest, according to senior administration officials.

Dr. Slaoui, a venture capitalist and a former executive at the pharmaceutical firm GlaxoSmithKline, sat on the board of Moderna before accepting his current role last month. The value of his stock holdings in Moderna jumped significantly when the company released preliminary data from an early phase of its candidate vaccine trial. He sold his $12 million in shares afterward, and the administration said he would donate the increased value to cancer research.

Dr. Slaoui also joined the project on a contract rather than as a government employee, leaving him exempt from federal disclosure rules that would require him to list his outside positions, stock holdings and other potential conflicts. The arrangement is not subject to the same conflict-of-interest laws and regulations that executive branch employees must follow.

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In a May 20 meeting, according to one official, Dr. Marks, the director of the F.D.A.’s Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research, informed Dr. Stephen M. Hahn, the agency’s commissioner, that he wanted to exit the vaccine program.

He also departed the White House’s coronavirus task force, a group he had been named to five days earlier.

Two senior officials said that Col. Matthew Hepburn, who is also a physician, has stepped in for Dr. Marks on the vaccine program.

10. Exclusive: Trump administration to bar Chinese passenger carriers from flying to U.S., sources say

WASHINGTON - President Donald Trump’s administration plans to bar Chinese passenger carriers from flying to the United States starting in mid-June as it pressures Beijing to allow U.S. air carriers to resume flights, three U.S. and airline officials briefed on the matter told Reuters.

The move, set to be announced on Wednesday, penalizes China after Beijing failed to comply with an existing agreement on flights between the world’s two largest economies. Relations between the two countries have also soured in recent months amid escalating tensions surrounding the coronavirus pandemic.

The restrictions are expected to take effect on June 16 but the date could be moved up by Trump, the people briefed on the matter said, speaking on condition of anonymity. Delta Air Lines and United Airlines have asked to resume flights to China this month, even as Chinese carriers have continued U.S. flights during the pandemic.

The order applies to Air China, China Eastern Airlines Corp, China Southern Airlines Co and Hainan Airlines Holding Co, the sources said.

The White House and Transportation Department declined to comment on the matter. The Chinese embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Trump’s administration on May 22 accused the Chinese government of making it impossible for U.S. airlines to resume service to China and ordered four Chinese carriers to file flight schedules with the U.S. government.

The administration is also cracking down on Chinese passenger airline charter flights and will warn carriers not to expect approvals. Administration officials have suggested charter flights have been used to circumvent Chinese government limits on flights.

On Jan. 31, the U.S. government barred from entry most non-U.S. citizens who had been in China within the previous 14 days due to the coronavirus crisis but did not impose any restrictions on Chinese flights. Major U.S. carriers voluntarily decided to halt all passenger flights to China in February.

11. Trump signs order to extend federal deployments for National Guard on coronavirus missions - 6/3

President Donald Trump signed an order Tuesday night to extend the authorization for National Guard troops to deploy through Aug. 21 with federal funding in support of coronavirus missions.

The extension, which Trump said he would approve in a tweet last week, allows for states to continue to receive funding to employ National Guard troops for missions approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency beyond the previously approved deadline of June 24. About 45,000 National Guard members are deployed in the fight against coronavirus in all 50 states, three territories and Washington D.C., according to the National Guard Bureau.
Nearly all of those troops are working within a federal status known as Title 32, which keeps troops under the command of their state’s governor but with funding from the federal government. Service members receive greater benefits and pay under federal status, and those benefits increase the longer troops are deployed.

“Honestly, I’m very pleased with the time frame that the president has extended the orders to,” said retired Brig. Gen. Roy Robinson, president of the National Guard Association, an advocacy group for the service.

The extended time allows state governments the ability to prepare to close out missions based on demand, not deadlines, he said. It also helps prepare troops to return safely to their families and civilian life, including time to quarantine if they might have been in a job that potentially exposed them to the virus.

With the support of a bipartisan group of more than 125 lawmakers, the association has pushed various efforts to protect National Guard members deployed against the virus and ensure they get access to benefits. The previous June deadline would have left many Guard members just one day short of receiving 90-day benefits related to education and early retirement.

Gen. Joseph Lengyel, chief of the National Guard Bureau, said he supported the extension of federal orders during an event last week with the Atlantic Council, a think tank in Washington, D.C.

“Initially there was a thought that this is a state issue and we don’t want to use training funds or federal dollars,” he said. “We can clearly look at this event [now] and say it has national implications.”

The initial hesitation, Lengyel said, came from concerns of setting a “precedent that might show that a federal fund was going to be used to put National Guard on federal funding for what was perceived to be a state event.”

**12. USS Theodore Roosevelt Back in Guam Picking up Remaining Sailors Before Resuming Deployment**

*USNI News | Sam LaGrone*

USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN-71) and its embarked air wing are ready to go back on deployment after completing carrier qualifications, following a two-month fight against a COVID-19 outbreak on the carrier, U.S. 7th Fleet announced.

Theodore Roosevelt is now pier-side in Guam to pick up the remainder of its crew before rejoining its escorts and resuming the deployment that was interrupted by the outbreak, a Navy official confirmed to USNI News on Wednesday. Last month, the carrier left for the qualifications with a partial crew while the remainder was still dealing with the aftermath of the quarantine.

As part of the effort to rid the crew of the virus, sailors had to test negative twice for COVID-19 before being allowed back on the ship. Over the next day, Theodore Roosevelt sailors who were left on Guam during carrier qualifications who have met all health requirements will board the carrier for the deployment, a Navy official told USNI News.

Sailors who have not met those health requirements yet will remain on Guam until they are able to rejoin the carrier or return to their homeports, a Navy official confirmed to USNI News.

“Completing carrier qualification was the last milestone in returning Theodore Roosevelt to sea,” reads the statement from 7th Fleet. “Carrier qualifications are a time for naval aviators to refine their skills practiced during field carrier landing practice (FCLP) for sustained operations at sea aboard the aircraft carrier.”

Carrier Air Wing 11 worked up at nearby Andersen Air Force Base on Guam before qualifying on the carrier.

The carrier pulled into Guam on March 27 and began the process of purging the virus from the crew and the ship by moving most of the crew ashore into quarantine while the ship was disinfected and maintained by a small
contingent of sailors. The outbreak infected more than 1,000 sailors of the 4,800 sailors aboard and resulted in the death of Aviation Ordnanceman Chief Petty Officer Charles Robert Thacker Jr. Since late April, the Navy has begun to move sailors back aboard the carrier after the outbreak.

While Theodore Roosevelt was at the pier, escorts from the strike group were re-tasked and sent to different missions across the Pacific. Some of the guided-missile destroyers took on Coast Guard law enforcement detachments for anti-drug trafficking missions. The guided-missile cruiser, USS Bunker Hill (CG-52), was part of the operations in the South China Sea.

Once the carrier gets back underway later this week, it’s unclear if it will resume operations with the carrier strike group in the Western Pacific or head back to San Diego, Calif.

The strike group left on Jan. 17 for an anticipated six-month deployment into the Western Pacific. It was deployed 70 days before it pulled into Guam to mitigate the outbreak.

As of today, the carrier has been out for a little more than four and a half months. If the Defense Department decides to extend the deployment past seven months, it needs Secretary of Defense approval.

The return on deployment comes in the midst of the Navy’s investigation into the circumstances of the outbreak that led to the removal of former TR commander Capt. Brett Crozier. The service investigated the command climate in the Pacific and how it could have contributed to the handling of the outbreak. Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday received the investigation last week and is reviewing it ahead of releasing the results.

13. Coronavirus Cases in Europe Drop to Fewest Since March - 6/3

*India Sees Surge; As reopening’s first phase nears, New York City plans distribution of one million face coverings, which will be mandatory for transit riders*

*Wall Street Journal | Talal Ansari*

• The U.S. coronavirus death toll rose to more than 106,000 while reported cases surpassed 1.8 million, according to data compiled by Johns Hopkins University. Globally, cases passed 6.4 million; deaths stood at more than 380,000.

• Cases in Europe dropped to their lowest level since March 22, according to World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

• New York's daily death toll fell below 50.

• India reported 8,909 new coronavirus cases, its biggest single-day rise as the total number of infections rose above 200,000.

U.S.

North Carolina: Gov. Roy Cooper told the Republican National Committee that uncertainty around the pandemic made it impossible to guarantee the state could hold a "full" convention in Charlotte in August, prompting President Trump to again threaten to move the gathering to another state. An RNC official later said the president's formal acceptance of the nomination would be moved elsewhere.

New York: Daily deaths in New York continued their decline, dropping below 50 after hovering near 60 for several days. According to data Gov. Andrew Cuomo presented in his daily press briefing, there were 49 deaths on Tuesday.

Mr. Cuomo said outdoor dining could resume Thursday in upstate areas that have entered the second phase of reopening. Tables must be spaced 6 feet apart, and staff must wear masks at all times. Customers must wear masks when not seated.
As New York City prepares to enter Phase 1 of reopening June 8, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced changes to mass transit aimed at limiting the spread of the new coronavirus. The city, which is working to increase service during rush hour, plans to distribute one million face coverings, which will be mandatory for riders. Hand sanitizer will be available at stations throughout the boroughs. To promote social distancing, Mr. de Blasio also said that every other seat would be blocked off on buses in the city.

Nevada: Some of Las Vegas's biggest resorts and convention centers are poised to open their doors Thursday as Nevada seeks to recover from the biggest hit to the workforce of any U.S. state. Questions linger about how willing Americans will be to fly, grab a pair of dice from a stranger and dance in a nightclub.

New Jersey: The state's Department of Health plans to use roughly $10 million of Coronavirus relief funds to implement recommendations stemming from an external review of outbreak protocols for New Jersey's hard-hit long-term-care facilities. The recommendations include creating a new centralized long-term care emergency operations center, better paid sick leave for staff and increased transparency in the industry to share data.

Coronavirus has taken a heavy toll at nursing homes and long-term care facilities across the U.S. A recent survey of nursing homes showed 25,923 resident deaths tied to Covid-19, and 449 deaths among the facilities' staff. In New Jersey, there were 5,232 deaths in long-term care facilities between April 11 and June 2.

Besides detailing the nursing-home report, Gov. Phil Murphy said that as part of the next steps in New Jersey's reopening he would sign an executive order allowing bars and restaurants to begin in-person and outdoor dining on June 15.

Vaccines and Treatments: Novartis AG has agreed to manufacture a gene-based coronavirus vaccine being developed by scientists at Massachusetts Eye and Ear hospital, Massachusetts General and the University of Pennsylvania, paving the way for human testing to begin later this year. Anthony Fauci, a leading expert in the U.S. government's pandemic response, expressed cautious optimism on Tuesday that several successful vaccine candidates would prove effective "within a reasonable period of time" to fight the pathogen.

Researchers are investigating whether drugs approved to treat heart disease can also prevent or reduce complications from Covid-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus, and help hospitalized patients recover sooner.

Economy: Friday's U.S. jobs report from the Labor Department is expected to show U.S. employers shed nearly 30 million positions this spring as a result of the pandemic and shutdowns. Other data suggest layoffs might have topped 40 million, while another count shows only about 20 million are tapping unemployment benefits. Fraud is also surfacing among the surge in unemployment claims, potentially costing states billions of dollars.

Stocks rose Wednesday as investors bet economic activity will improve with additional government spending to shore up a recovery.

World

World Health Organization: "Yesterday saw the fewest cases reported in Europe since the 22nd of March," Dr. Tedros said Wednesday. Despite the good news in Europe, Dr. Tedros said he was especially concerned about the rise in cases and deaths in Central and South America. "For several weeks, the number of cases reported each day in the Americas has been more than the rest of the world put together," Dr. Tedros said.

Experts say official totals likely understate the extent of the pandemic, in part because of limited testing capabilities and varying reporting standards around the world.

India: The total number of infections rose above 200,000, as the country loosened restrictions further. India reported 8,909 new coronavirus cases Wednesday, its biggest single-day rise, bringing the total number of cases
to 207,615, according to data from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. It was the fourth consecutive day the country recorded more than 8,000 new infections. The number of dead rose by 217, pushing the overall death toll to 5,815.

Afghanistan: The provincial police chief and a district governor in embattled Kunduz province died of Covid-19, Afghan officials said Tuesday. The police chief's death, the first of a senior Afghan official from the disease, raised concerns that infection might spread among security forces fighting Taliban insurgents in Kunduz. Afghan security officials say they are taking measures to protect their troops from the virus. Afghanistan has registered more than 76,000 cases of Covid-19 and nearly 300 deaths.

Iran: The health ministry reported 3,134 new infections on Wednesday, raising the daily toll to the same level as when the infection rate peaked in March. Iran also reported 70 deaths overnight, bringing the total to 8,012 deaths among 160,696 people infected. The health ministry said a recent jump in cases is a result of the "necessary" reopening of many workplaces and businesses.

STAY INFORMED

Get a coronavirus briefing six days a week, and a weekly Health newsletter once the crisis abates: Sign up here.

China: The country reported one new imported case, bringing the total to 83,021, according to the National Health Commission. The death toll stood at 4,634.

China's services sector emerged from a three-month slump to record strong growth in May but continued to cut jobs.

Europe: Unemployment in European Union countries rose by 211,000 in April, held in check by government programs that cover the wages of workers put on paid leave. During the same month U.S. jobless numbers rose by almost 16 million.

Italy: The government lifted an inter-regional travel ban, freeing Italians to travel anywhere in the country and reach distant summer homes, beaches and mountain resorts. On Tuesday, Italy recorded 55 deaths from Covid-19, one of the lowest daily tolls since early March. Total deaths from the disease reached more than 33,500; known infections exceed 230,000.

Education: School closures this spring left more than 1.5 billion children around the world out of the classroom. Now, authorities in Western countries are working to keep children from dropping out entirely.