Overview: Driving coverage was the continued global spread of the virus, with the number of cases growing worldwide even as early hotspots begin to recover, and a warning from the CDC director that the nationwide protests could increase transmission. Leading defense reporting was a Washington Post story on DoD’s plan to allocate CARES Act funding.

The Washington Post followed up on previous reporting of the Pentagon’s plan to spend $10.5 billion in relief funding to address the pandemic, calling it “ambitious.” The article detailed the department’s plan to use billions in new defense spending for vaccine development, medical supplies, and financial assistance for defense contractors. The article also highlighted several programs slated to receive funding, such as submarine missile tubes, space launch facilities, and golf course staffing, which the paper said were “seemingly unrelated to the pandemic.” Additionally, the piece cited critics who said the department was “woefully unprepared for the crisis” and too slow to begin spending the money it had been given.

Other DoD-related News:
- Stars and Stripes reported that the USS Theodore Roosevelt has restarted its patrol after being “sidelined” for two months. The outlet cited Capt. Carlos Sardiello’s Facebook post in which he thanked the people of Guam for their support and highlighted how the crew manned the rails as a gesture of gratitude as they departed.
- Stars and Stripes also reported that the Air Force is “hoping” that its retention bonuses will convince more pilots to remain on active duty during a time when the service is about 2,000 pilots short of what is needed according to the 2018 NDS. The article noted that the impact on the commercial aviation industry is one reason some pilots have already decided to stay.
- USD(A&S) Ellen Lord is scheduled to appear before the HASC on June 10 to discuss challenges the pandemic poses for the U.S. defense industrial base, Inside Defense reported.

Other relevant/global news:
- The New York Times reported that although the virus appears to be subsiding in countries hit early, the “number of new cases is growing faster than ever worldwide, with more than 100,000 reported each day.”
- CDC director Dr. Robert Redfield appeared before the House Appropriations Committee today, where news outlets picked up his comments that the protests would likely be a “seeding event” for spreading the virus. He urged everyone who has been involved in the protests to get tested. (CNN)
- The Washington Post reported on how the race to find a vaccine is becoming a geopolitical competition in which the “winner” will be able to deliver to their own citizens first and with higher priority, thereby jumpstarting their economies. The paper noted the term “vaccine nationalism” has been used to describe the race, which it says has taken on dimensions of the space race after the Soviet Union launched its first Sputnik satellite.
- The authors have retracted a large, influential study in the medical journal The Lancet which found antimalarials such as hydroxychloroquine provided no benefit and was potentially harmful to treating Covid-19. They cited concerns the company that provided the research data refused to share the full, detailed data set as part of a thorough review. (Wall Street Journal)
1. Military arriving in Hawaii subject to separate restrictions – 6/4  
Associated Press | Not Attributed

HONOLULU — Members of the U.S. military arriving in Hawaii will not be subjected to the state’s quarantine rule resulting from the coronavirus pandemic, but service members will follow a separate order restricting their movements.

The Department of Homeland Security exempted military members from the state’s quarantine guidelines for arriving travelers, The Honolulu Star-Advertiser reported Wednesday.

But the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, which oversees operations in the state, said its own “restriction of movement” guidelines prohibit service members from going out for 14 days except for travel to places considered essential such as grocery stores, doctors or pharmacies.

Maj. Gen. Kenneth Hara, incident commander for the state’s coronavirus response, said military members coming to Hawaii on official business were already considered to be on “essential travel for critical infrastructure.”

The Homeland Security department has asked the state to extend a quarantine exemption to military family members moving to Hawaii, officials said.

The military order is less restrictive than the requirements for arriving civilian residents and tourists, who are required to stay in a dwelling for 14 days without traveling into the community.
“I strongly believe that if residents of the state of Hawaii have rules imposed on them, then everybody should abide by the same rules,” Honolulu City Council member Kym Pine said.

The state’s COVID-19 Joint Information Center declined comment on the policy, including whether the center was tracking the number of arriving service members who are not required to quarantine.

For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia and death. The vast majority of people recover.

2. CDC director says protesters should be tested for Covid-19 – 6/4
   CNN | Amanda Watts

Protesters need to be evaluated and tested for coronavirus, Dr. Robert Redfield, director of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said Thursday.

“We really want those individuals to highly consider being evaluated and get tested,” Redfield said at a House Appropriations hearing on the Covid-19 response.

“I do think there is a potential, unfortunately for this to be a seeding event,” he said — especially those in metropolitan areas where there has been significant transmission.

“The way to minimize that is to have each individual to recognize it’s to the advantage of them to protect their loved ones to (say) ‘Hey, I was out, I need to, I need to go get tested,’ you know, and in three, five, seven days go get tested, make sure you’re not infected,” Redfield said.

During an exchange with Rep. Mark Pocan (D-WI), Redfield addressed the use of tear gas on protesters. Redfield said in his experience tear gas can cause people to cough – not a good thing during a pandemic involving a respiratory virus.

“Definitely coughing can spread respiratory viruses, including Covid-19,” he said.

Pocan asked Redfield if he had advised the President or worked with law enforcement to discontinue to use of tear gas during the pandemic.

“I think you raised an important point we have advocated strongly — the ability to have face coverings and masks available to protesters, so that they can at least have those coverings,” Redfield said.

Redfield added he would “pass on this comment to next Task Force meeting."

3. Shipment of ventilators arrives in Russia, US Embassy says – 6/4
   CNN | Nathan Hodge

A shipment of US-made ventilators arrived Thursday in Russia, the US Embassy in Moscow said.

"Arriving now in Moscow: Humanitarian aid delivery from the American people to the people of Russia," embassy spokesperson Rebecca Ross said on Twitter. "This represents a $5.6 million donation which includes 200 much needed U.S.-manufactured ventilators to help Russia deal with the Covid-19 crisis."

An earlier shipment of 50 US-made ventilators arrived in Moscow on May 21.
Russia is currently the third hardest-hit country worldwide by the virus following the US and Brazil. While the country's official death toll is relatively low, with more than 5,000 deaths, some critics and experts say the figure is almost certainly underestimated.

Moscow's mortality rate surged by 18% in April compared to the same month last year, as well as compared to the April average for the past decade, according to data released by the city's civil register office.

The situation has led to growing anger in the country, with concerns raised about the conditions in which medical workers are forced to operate.

As of early Thursday, Russia has reported at least 440,538 cases of Covid-19 and at least 5,376 virus-related deaths, according to Johns Hopkins University data.

4. Arthur Herman: US coronavirus lockdown — China seizes chance to fulfill these global ambitions – 6/4

Fox News | Arthur Herman

Our current lockdown strategy may or may not defeat the coronavirus. But the Chinese clearly see it as a big win for them.

China already feels it's stolen a march on us by getting its economy back up and running as early as March. The truth is, the longer America's lockdown drags on, the better it gets for China. Our blue-state governors and the Trump-hating media have propelled the perception that we are socially and economically paralyzed by COVID-19. That has clearly emboldened Beijing to aggressively push its agenda for becoming the new superpower Colossus bestriding the world.

One obvious sign of this has been Beijing's renewal of its effort to bring Hong Kong to heel with the security law that prompted demonstrations in the streets and international outrage just a year ago. President Xi Jinping and his Communist cohorts are counting on our distraction with the COVID pandemic to prevent us from lending effective support for the protesters fighting Beijing's ever-increasing iron grip.

Beijing has also been stepping up pressure on nearby Taiwan, with bombers buzzing the median line between the two countries in the Taiwan Straits, while its catspaw the WHO has blocked Taiwan's effort to share its successful anti-COVID best practices with the rest of the world.

In the South China Sea, we've seen a bold increase in Chinese intimidation tactics against the other countries who have claims to that strategically important seaway. A Chinese military vessel recently rammed and sank a Vietnamese fishing boat, while other Chinese ships have harassed our destroyers USS Barry and Bunker Hill.

The fact that the USS Theodore Roosevelt had to cut short its presence there due to the coronavirus outbreak has also played into Beijing's hands (although Pentagon officials say the aircraft carrier will return to the South China Sea very soon).

Meanwhile, Huawei, China's stalking horse for control of the future of 5G wireless technology, has launched a charm offensive in the wake of the COVID-19, by associating itself with efforts to ship medical supplies to countries stricken by the deadly virus — the virus China let spread beyond its borders without warning, killing more than 100,000 Americans.

What's going on here? Clearly China is taking advantage of America's COVID distraction and lockdown, especially as it unfolds in economically significant states like California, New York, New Jersey and Illinois. Their governors' determination to drag out the lockdown and the loss of jobs and economic opportunity as long as possible, is only grist for Beijing's effort to portray America as a declining power.
The protracted week of riots and looting has played directly into China’s hands, as well. It helps China to portray America as a country in decline, and to fan anti-American feeling. The Global Times asked on Twitter if American police are “Peacekeepers or mass murderers?” The state-controlled news Xinhua republished a New York Times article supporting the rioters—while the government in Beijing is using the disorder here to rationalize its crackdown on Hong Kong’s democracy movement.

Between lockdown and riots, the liberal media and social media haven’t helped. For 10 straight weeks, they have pushed the narrative that America is on the brink of societal and economic chaos; that we are trapped with an unemployment rate higher than during the Great Depression; and that lockdown is the only alternative to massive illness and death — even that we have to brace ourselves for a “second wave” this autumn. Chinese state media organ The Global Times has even circulated a story that Harvard researchers claim the lockdown needs to continue until 2022.

From Hong Kong to the WHO and the South China Sea, Chinese leaders clearly feel like winners in the geopolitical competition with the United States. They would love to see the world perceive the COVID-19 crisis as a grim benchmark in America’s eclipse as a superpower.

Whether they are right or not, depends on how quickly we get our economy back on its feet — and how robustly we respond to Beijing’s macroaggressions around the world. Right now, getting America back to work isn’t just good economics; it’s going to be vital to the survival of freedom around the world.

Historian Arthur Herman is a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute in Washington, D.C.

5. Rethinking a modern military during a pandemic – 6/4
The Hill | Brandon Valeriano and Eric Gomez

The United States leads in defense budgets by a wide margin, accounting for 38 percent of the globe’s total defense spending. The defensive umbrella extends all over the world with little benefit to the security of the homeland. Pressing threats such as global health and climate change are changing the notion of what national security means—and these threats have no clear military solution. The rate of U.S. military spending was unsustainable long before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Continuing to divert a large amount of resources towards pre-COVID-19 military threats siphons funds away from where they are needed most: economic recovery. The pandemic’s economic impact is a sobering reminder of President Eisenhower’s warning on military spending, “Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed.” Inflating the Pentagon’s budget further only weakens other institutions that could make positive contributions to America’s security and well-being. To illustrate the tradeoff between additional military spending and public health, the F-35’s $144 million per aircraft price tag could purchase some 2,800 ventilators. Military power is still important for preventing or responding to some threats, but these challenges should be narrowly defined.

Persistent budget pathologies impede innovation. The Department of Defense, for example, abuses its Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funding stream by including items in the spending category that are not related to overseas combat missions as the fund is intended. Since 9/11 Congress appropriated $2 trillion through OCO. This allows the Pentagon to skirt legally mandated budget caps; the OCO funding line alone would make it the fourth largest government agency. The DoD reprograms carefully allocated budget lines against legislative intent, recently stripping billions from the department’s base improvement funds to build a wall with Mexico that no one else will fund.

On top of these challenges, the structure of the military requires overhaul. We are long past the time when manpower was the key facet of U.S. military strength, now we need a lean and agile fighting force. The United States should also stop investing in old and outdated systems that do not meet the requirements for modern battle. Premier new systems, such as the F-35 fighter program (the Pentagon had requested $11.4 billion to buy...
79 F-35s next year) do not meet design goals due to either structural flaws or bureaucratic malfeasance. The Air Force should focus on improving readiness, training, and retention so it can shift away from its recent pattern of doing less with more money.

Ending the forever wars in the Middle East and shifting the Army’s priorities toward long-range offense and short-range defense will enable the service to get smaller without sacrificing effectiveness. Investing in new long-range weapons platforms and mobile missile defense will give the ground service the defensive capabilities it needs to survive as other countries develop their own precision strike capabilities.

The U.S. Navy needs to re-think its strategic objectives and shape the force accordingly. COVID-19’s economic fallout will make it impossible to achieve the legally mandated 355-ship navy by 2030. The Columbia-class nuclear missile submarine program is useful as a nuclear deterrent, but it will eat up a large share of the service’s shipbuilding budget and potentially crowd out funding for other ships. A distributed fleet architecture based on smaller manned warships, such as frigates, plus a new class of unmanned surface and subsurface vessels, are best suited for meeting future challenges.

The U.S. Marine Corps has a head start on the other services when it comes to finding innovative solutions to their pressing challenges. The service recently released its 2030 force design, which sacrifices several legacy platforms like helicopters and tanks to move the service toward new capabilities like unmanned vehicles and mobile, anti-ship missile systems. The Marines will be in a much better position to fight effectively on future battlefields with a lighter, more agile force.

Finally, America’s approach to strategic deterrence also deserves a fresh look. Our current, overly broad definition of strategic deterrence encourages the creation of a nuclear arsenal that prioritizes flexible response options that are both expensive and excessive for preserving strategic deterrence.

The United States is ramping up a nuclear modernization plan that could cost well over $1 trillion over 30 years. The fiscal impact of COVID-19 ought to renew serious debate in Congress about which modernization efforts are necessary, given budget cuts on the horizon. Nuclear modernization should not be discarded entirely, but delaying some programs and reducing others would be prudent steps. One such modernization effort that could be scaled back is the B61-12 nuclear bomb. Malfunctioning parts recently added $600-$700 million on top of the bomb’s $9.4 billion expected total cost. Moreover, the modernization plan calls for a new air-launched nuclear cruise missile that U.S. aircraft could launch at long range from their target, making the B61-12 superfluous.

A global health crisis should communicate the need for drastic changes, including how we define threats and what we consider to be normal. The U.S. defense budget was never normal nor built for the defense of the homeland. The time is now to divest from age-old ideas of military strength built on manpower and endless spending.

Brandon Valeriano is the Bren Chair of Military Innovation at the Marine Corps University and a senior fellow at the Cato Institute, where Eric Gomez is director of defense policy studies. They are co-authors of “Building a Modern Military: The Force Meets Geopolitical Realities.”

Inside Defense | Tony Bertuca

Pentagon acquisition chief Ellen Lord is scheduled to appear before the House Armed Services Committee on June 10 to discuss the challenges the COVID-19 pandemic poses for the U.S. defense industrial base.

"The hearing will focus on the department’s efforts regarding defense industrial base challenges, contribution to interagency efforts, and use of existing acquisition authorities, including the Defense Production Act, to respond to challenges presented by COVID-19 and meet the department’s readiness needs," according to a committee notice.
News of the hearing follows several significant developments at the Pentagon, including the ouster of Jen Santos, the former deputy assistant secretary of defense for industrial policy who served as the Defense Department's point person on the Defense Production Act.

President Trump has also announced the Pentagon will play a major role in its "Operation Warp Speed" vaccine effort and has named Army Materiel Command chief Gen. Gus Perna to the leadership team.

Meanwhile, defense contractors say DOD will need to seek supplemental funding from Congress to address programs delayed by COVID-19 challenges.

Lord has previously said she expects the pandemic to delay major programs by about three months and require a supplement of "billions and billions" of dollars to reimburse contractors required to remain in a "ready state." At the time, Lord said she hoped the funding could be provided through legislative action, but DOD has yet to submit a request to Congress.

7. The number of confirmed cases is growing faster than ever as new hot spots emerge around the world. – 6/4

New York Times | Not Attributed

The pandemic is ebbing in some of the countries that were hit hard early on, but the number of new cases is growing faster than ever worldwide, with more than 100,000 reported each day.

Twice as many countries have reported a rise in new cases over the past two weeks as have reported declines, according to a New York Times database. On May 30, more new cases were reported in a single day worldwide than ever before: 134,064. The increase has been driven by emerging hot spots in Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

Over all, there have been more than 6.3 million reported cases worldwide and more than 380,000 known deaths. More than a quarter of all known deaths have been in the United States. But the geography of the pandemic is changing quickly.

The increases in some countries can be attributed to improved testing programs. But in many places, it appears that the virus has only now arrived with a wide scope and fatal force. Here is a look at some of the countries where the number of new cases has been doubling every two to three weeks.

The death toll in Brazil, Latin America's largest country, passed 30,000 on Tuesday, when officials reported 1,262 deaths, which was the nation's highest one-day total. President Jair Bolsonaro, who has repeatedly minimized the threat, said, "We are sorry for all the dead, but that's everyone's destiny." Brazil now has more than half a million known cases, second only to the United States.

But it has no health minister: Two were forced out in less than a month after they balked at expanding the use of hydroxychloroquine, a malaria drug promoted by President Trump and subsequently Mr. Bolsonaro that has not been proved effective against the virus. And despite the growing number of cases and hospitals that are close to capacity, businesses have started reopening in major cities, including Rio de Janeiro, Manaus and Vitória.

Peru has more than 170,000 confirmed cases, despite taking the virus seriously early on. The president, Martín Vizcarra, ordered one of the first national lockdowns in South America. Though the official virus death toll stands at around 5,000, Peru had 14,000 more deaths than usual in May, suggesting that a growing number of people are dying at home as hospitals struggle to handle a flood of cases.
The pandemic provoked an exodus from Lima, the capital, as people unable to work fled by bus, and even by foot, to family farms. It is widely expected that the number of new cases and of deaths will continue to rise in coming weeks as winter nears and the economy slowly reopens.

For months, Egypt, the Arab world’s most populous country, seemed to avoid the worst of the pandemic. In early March, Egypt confirmed 45 cases on a Nile tour boat in the area, among both crew and passengers. But recently the number of cases there has been rising significantly, reaching 27,536 on Tuesday.

The recent death of a young doctor, who was denied treatment for Covid-19 at an overwhelmed hospital, ignited a revolt by members of the medical staff. They said the government had failed to provide adequate protective equipment and training to front-line workers.

With more than 35,000 confirmed infections, the most in Africa, South Africa still has a growing number of new cases, despite enacting a strict lockdown in March that included a ban on the sale of tobacco and alcohol. The prohibition was lifted this month even though the total number of cases continued to rise.

Bangladesh now has 55,000 known cases, and its troubles were compounded last month by Cyclone Amphan, a deadly storm that tore through communities under lockdown.

This week, the country reported its first death from Covid-19 in a refugee camp: A 71-year-old Rohingya man died May 31 while receiving treatment in an isolation center. His death raised fears about the hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees who, after fleeing Myanmar, live in camps with tightly packed tents and shacks.

8. U.S. to revise Chinese passenger airline ban after Beijing move: sources – 6/4
Reuters | David Shepardson

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Transportation Department plans to issue a revised order in the coming days that is likely to allow some Chinese passenger airline flights to continue, government and airline officials said.

On Thursday, China said it would ease coronavirus restrictions to allow more foreign carriers to fly to the mainland, shortly after Washington said it planned to bar Chinese passenger airlines from flying to the United States by June 16 due to Beijing’s curbs on U.S. airlines.

The announcement should allow U.S. carriers to resume once-a-week flights into a city of their choosing starting on June 8.

The Transportation Department did not immediately comment.

The department said on Wednesday it would allow Chinese carriers to operate “the same number of scheduled passenger flights as the Chinese government allows ours.”

The U.S. order would halt the four weekly U.S. roundtrip flights by Air China, China Eastern Airlines Corp, China Southern Airlines Co and Xiamen Airlines Co.

U.S. and airline officials have privately raised concerns about the revised Chinese rules.

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.

A Delta spokeswoman said the company was reviewing the order from the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC).
The CAAC said all airlines will be allowed to increase the number of international flights involving China to two per week if no passengers on their flights test positive for COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus, for three consecutive weeks.

*Editing by Chris Reese and Richard Chang*

**9. Some Air Force pilots are choosing to stay in uniform amid commercial aviation slump – 6/4**

*Stars and Stripes | Seth Robson*

The Air Force is hoping more soon-to-be-departing pilots will consider its generous retention bonuses as commercial airlines struggle with the effects of the coronavirus.

Gen. David Goldfein, the Air Force chief of staff, told the House Armed Services Committee on March 4 that the service was 2,000 pilots short of the 21,000 needed to meet requirements laid out in 2018 National Defense Strategy. He cited competition from high-paying commercial airlines.

However, the pandemic has thrown commercial aviation into a free fall with passenger volumes dropping by 90%, the Financial Times reported May 14.

"Recognizing the challenges the airline industry is facing, we are providing options for rated officers to remain on active duty who otherwise had plans to depart," Air Force spokeswoman Lt. Col. Malinda Singleton said in an email Wednesday.

“We have seen Air Force members with approved retirement and separation dates request to withdraw their paperwork since March, and at this time 171 pilots have been approved to stay past their original retirement or separation dates,” she said.

Airlines have received billions of dollars in government funding for payrolls in recent months, the Financial Times reported.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, passed March 18, prohibits airlines from laying off or furloughing staff until Oct. 1, Singleton said.

“We might expect to see furloughed pilots requesting to return to active duty after this date and are keeping a close watch on the situation,” she said.

Active-duty aviators whose initial service commitment expires during this fiscal year are being offered the following retention bonuses:

- **Bomber, fighter, mobility and special operations pilots:** Annual payments of $35,000 for contract lengths of three to 12 years. Lump-sums of $100,000 for seven- to nine-year contracts and $200,000 for 10- to 12-year contracts.

- **Command and control intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance pilots, combat search and rescue fixed wing pilots and remotely piloted aircraft pilots:** Annual payments of $30,000 for contracts of three to six years and $35,000 for contracts of seven to 12 years. Lump-sums of $100,000 for 10- to 12-year contracts.

- **Combat search and rescue rotary wing pilots:** Annual payments of $25,000 for contracts of three to six years and $30,000 for contracts of seven to 12 years.

- **Combat systems officers and air battle managers:** Annual payments of $20,000 for contracts of three to six years and $25,000 for contracts of seven to nine years.

Aviators whose contracts have expired, or who have never signed a previous retention agreement, are being offered the following retention bonuses:
• Bomber, fighter, mobility and special operations pilots: Annual payments of $35,000 for contracts of three to nine years.
• Remotely piloted aircraft pilots, command and control intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance pilots and combat search and rescue fixed wing pilots: Annual payments of $30,000 for contracts of three to nine years.
• Combat search and rescue rotary wing pilots: Annual payments of $25,000 for contracts of three to nine years.
• Air battle managers: Annual payments of $20,000 for contracts of three to five years

The Air Force is working to increase its training capacity to produce 1,480 pilots a year as well as improving quality of life for aircrew and their families, Singleton said.

“In addition, the Air Force is partnering with commercial aviation and pilot educators who share our concern in ensuring the national pilot supply meets the needs of both the military and commercial communities,” she said.

10. USS Theodore Roosevelt officially restarts patrol two months after coronavirus outbreak – 6/4
Stars and Stripes | Caitlin Doombos

The USS Theodore Roosevelt redeployed Thursday after a coronavirus outbreak on board that had sidelined the aircraft carrier at Naval Base Guam since March.

Sailors manned the rails “as a gesture of respect and admiration for the people of Guam for their support and hospitality over the last two months” as the ship left the island, the carrier’s commander, Capt. Carlos Sardiello, said in a Facebook post Thursday afternoon.

“We owe them all a debt of gratitude that words cannot express,” he said.

The carrier was patrolling the Western Pacific when it diverted to Guam on March 26 after several of its sailors tested positive for the coronavirus. Over the following weeks, more than 1,150 of the Roosevelt’s 4,800 crewmembers became infected, according to the Navy.

One Roosevelt sailor died from the virus, according to the Navy.

The aircrew returned to sea two weeks ago for carrier flight qualifications before the ship went back to Guam this week to retrieve the remaining sailors who were medically cleared to re-embark, Sardiello wrote in the post.

“To this date, since returning TR to sea two weeks ago, we continue to sail and operate with no return of the virus onboard,” he said. “The Rough Riders and our families’ tenacity and resiliency in the face of uncertainty has been put to the test and met the challenge.”

Sailors still battling the coronavirus were left behind, where “they will continue to be cared for ashore until all are recovered, while we remain on mission,” Sardiello said.

“Now it is time to continue to protect our ability to do our mission and protect our sailors’ health,” he added. “We have returned Theodore Roosevelt to sea as a symbol of hope and inspiration, and an instrument of national power.”

Sardiello took over for Capt. Brett Crozier, the carrier’s former commander, when then-acting Navy Secretary Thomas Modly removed Crozier from command in April.

The removal came after a letter Crozier had written to Navy higher-ups pleading for help for his crew was leaked to the San Francisco Chronicle and picked up by worldwide media.
“The spread of the disease is ongoing and accelerating,” Crozier wrote March 30. “We are not at war. Sailors do not need to die.”

Modly received backlash from sailors and lawmakers for removing Crozier. Video of thousands of Roosevelt sailors chanting Crozier’s name as he walked off the carrier for the last time flooded social media.

Modly resigned about a week after removing Crozier when a recording of his speech to the Roosevelt’s crew criticizing the former skipper and calling him “stupid” was leaked to the public.

A report on the outbreak’s handling was turned into to Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday last week. Crozier’s removal prompted an inquiry into the situation, which led Gilday to order a follow-on investigation.

Gilday’s office has not commented on the report but told media on May 27 that Gilday will need time to review and endorse its contents.

11. Sailors aboard Virginia Beach-based USS Carter Hall test positive for COVID-19 – 6/4
Virginian-Pilot | Katherine Hafner

Sailors aboard the USS Carter Hall tested positive for the disease caused by the novel coronavirus last month and are undergoing a restriction of movement.

The crew of the dock landing ship homeported at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story had been tested “in order to ensure the crew was a healthy, surge-capable force ready to respond in the upcoming hurricane season,” Lt. Cmdr. Amelia Umayam, a Navy spokeswoman, said in an email.

Results for multiple COVID-19-positive sailors came back May 23, she said. She would not confirm the specific number of cases on the ship, citing Department of Defense policy issued in March that says individual military installations are no longer allowed to tell the public specifics about COVID-19 cases.

The Carter Hall crew members were moved ashore for the restriction of movement and are being checked on each day by leadership as well as receiving food and essential item deliveries, Umayam said.

An unspecified portion of the crew remains on board to clean and maintain in-port watchstanding requirements, she said. They are supposed to be physically distancing from each other, minimizing gatherings, wearing face coverings and cleaning extensively.

The positive test results came less than a week before more than 100 members of the Fighting Blacklions strike fighter squadron were removed from the USS Gerald R. Ford for similar reasons. Those sailors were placed into a “precautionary restriction of movement” after one sailor, who was not on the ship but had contact with other squadron members, tested positive for COVID-19. The Ford went underway shortly after.

The Navy has more than 2,500 cases of the illness in its active ranks, as of Wednesday.

Wall Street Journal | Jared S. Hopkins and Russell Gold

Three authors of a large study that last month found antimalarials provided no benefit to treating Covid-19 infections, while increasing the risk of heart problems and death, retracted their findings.

The authors said in a statement Thursday provided by The Lancet, the medical journal that published the study on May 22, that they decided to issue the retraction after Surgisphere Corp., the private company that provided
the research data, refused to share the full, detailed data set as part of a review after outside researchers raised concerns.

“We always aspire to perform our research in accordance with the highest ethical and professional guidelines,” said the authors, Mandeep Mehra, Frank Ruschitzka and Amit Patel. “We can never forget the responsibility we have as researchers to scrupulously ensure that we rely on data sources that adhere to our high standards. Based on this development, we can no longer vouch for the veracity of the primary data sources.”

The authors also said they apologized for “any embarrassment or inconvenience that this may have caused.”

The Lancet said in a statement that it “takes issues of scientific integrity extremely seriously, and there are many outstanding questions about Surgisphere and the data that were allegedly included in this study.”

The peer-reviewed study analyzed medical records of 96,000 patients hospitalized across six continents with confirmed coronavirus cases from Dec. 20 to April 14. Of the total, 15,000 patients were treated with the malaria drugs alone or in combination with an antibiotic.

Its findings indicated the antimalaria drugs, which many doctors have used to treat Covid-19 patients, didn’t help and might even hurt patients.

Following the study, the World Health Organization paused enrolling patients in clinical trials testing hydroxychloroquine, although this week the organization said it resumed the trials.

More than 100 researchers have raised questions about the data behind the study and about Surgisphere, which had supplied it.

Surgisphere said it has petabytes of data from more than 100 million patients, culled from some 1,200 hospitals and institutions on six continents. Yet many researchers and some hospitals said they had never heard of Surgisphere.

The founder of Surgisphere, Dr. Sapan Desai, was the other author on the paper. Dr. Desai couldn’t be reached for comment.

13. Cold War echoes in race for vaccine — 6/4

The winning nation could get a jump-start on protecting its citizens and restarting its economy

Washington Post | Carolyn Y. Johnson and Eva Dou

With testing underway on five experimental vaccines in China and four in the United States, the race to produce a vaccine for covid-19 has taken on political dimensions that echo jockeying for technological dominance during the Cold War, including the space race after the launch of Sputnik in 1957.

The same day in mid-March that the United States launched human testing of its first experimental coronavirus vaccine, scientists in China announced their own trial would begin. Days after a company unveiled the partial data from the first U.S. human tests last month, a complete report of the Chinese trial was published in a prestigious medical journal.

Both countries are also taking huge financial risks to scale up production of possible vaccines before they know any are safe and effective — a gambit to ensure their citizens won’t have to wait. The nation’s top infectious disease expert said the U.S. will manufacture 100 million doses by year’s end.

“We’re going to start manufacturing doses of the vaccines way before we even know that the vaccine works,” Anthony S. Fauci said in an interview with the Journal of the American Medical Association.
The nation that produces the first safe and effective vaccine will gain not only bragging rights but also a fast track to put its people back to work, a powerful public health tool to protect its citizens and a precious resource to reward allies. In an election year in the United States, the prospect of a successful vaccine by year’s end could also be a potent campaign tool.

“The vaccine is partly about health, but it’s absolutely equally as much about getting our engine of productivity back,” said Lawrence Gostin, a professor of global health law at Georgetown University Law Center. “If China had it and we didn’t, their economy could hum, and ours would continue to be in social distancing lockdowns and disruptions. This has economic, political and public health consequences.”

And with the world increasingly jigsawed along nationalistic lines, the race has become one more facet of that geopolitical contest.

“Within China, the issue of the vaccine has taken on a symbol of whether China is going to be the leading power in the world,” said Bonnie Glaser, director of the China Power Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Scientists see the race as one in which academic research groups, companies and countries are working in rare unity against a common enemy — the virus. But health policy experts already see “vaccine nationalism” creeping in. President Trump on Friday announced he would terminate the United States’ relationship with the World Health Organization, which he accused of misleading the world about the coronavirus at the urging of the Chinese government. The United States skipped an international pledging conference in early May that put billions toward developing a vaccine for the world.

President Trump has addressed the issue directly, saying in a Rose Garden news conference that if China wins the vaccine race, the U.S. would get access.

Political leaders criticized for their handling of the pandemic and eager to notch a win have already begun securing doses for their own citizens — as the United States did in making a $1.2 billion investment to secure 300 million doses of a vaccine being developed by the University of Oxford and the pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca. The first 100 million doses have been committed to the United Kingdom. Companies are spreading their manufacturing plants across multiple countries, a partial protection against the possibility that any nation prohibits exports.

Who gets the vaccine first matters not just for national pride but because that country’s citizens will almost certainly get first access to limited doses — even if the virus is raging in another part of the world.

Recent history shows that countries inevitably look to first take care of their own citizens. During the 2009 H1N1 outbreak, countries pledged to donate portions of their influenza vaccine for equitable distribution “only after it turned out there was an excess of vaccine and the influenza was not so bad,” Gostin said.

With its relations with the West increasingly fraught, China has focused its public diplomacy efforts on the developing world, pitching Beijing as an alternative ally to the United States that has deep pockets — and fewer objections on human rights issues in partner countries.

China’s leader, Xi Jinping, recently said China would seek to ensure developing nations have access to any Chinese vaccine, an offer that could help to strengthen these diplomatic bonds if the Chinese vaccine proves effective. Xi also pledged to contribute $2 billion over two years to the international coronavirus response. But such offers could backfire if the Chinese vaccine turns out to be unsafe or faulty, as happened with its donations of face masks when they were found to be defective.

Fauci said in an interview with The Washington Post that it’s too early to tell which nation will bring the first successful coronavirus vaccine to market, but he believes the United States and China are each on track to produce viable contenders.
"I think both countries are eminently capable of developing a vaccine," he said. "I’m cautiously optimistic that both countries will be successful in developing a vaccine for their own country."

Fauci downplayed the U.S.-China rivalry, pointing out that the immense global need means multiple vaccines will be necessary. He also noted his team at the National Institutes of Health relied on the genetic sequence of the virus made public by Chinese researchers in January to begin their own work on a vaccine — before a single case in the United States had been reported.

But Trump and Xi have each made clear that developing a vaccine is a national priority, which has cleared red tape but also heaped additional pressure on researchers and made their work a proxy for their country’s technological and manufacturing prowess. It will also be a test of how each country shares if they are successful.

For example, the Ebola vaccine was invented by Canadian researchers, but licensed to an American biotechnology company that partnered with one of the world’s biggest pharmaceutical companies. The vaccine is produced in Germany.

The nationalist overtones have unnerved health experts, who fear they could complicate efforts to eradicate a deadly virus and also exacerbate already tense trade talks between the heavyweights.

"The danger of vaccine nationalism is that it undercuts efforts to end this pandemic in the shortest period of time," said Kendall Hoyt, assistant professor of medicine at Dartmouth’s Geisel School of Medicine. "Once we have a vaccine, we will want to prioritize individuals who are most likely to transmit the virus, regardless of nationality or ability to pay."

Nationalist language around the origins of the virus, as well as the race to find a vaccine could also trigger a domino effect of protectionist measures, disrupting medical and other supply chains for which China is an essential source.

Some health experts remain optimistic, nonetheless, that vaccine diplomacy could prevail against a pathogen that has cut such a deadly swath across the globe. They note that even during the Cold War, for example, the United States and Soviet Union were able to collaborate on an oral vaccine against the scourge of polio.

"This is a planetary problem, and it requires a planetary solution," said J. Stephen Morrison, director of the global health policy program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "We have to be conscious and realistic about the nationalistic impulses that move through this. How do you get that collaborative finish to all of this that’s not going to leave whole segments of the world at the side of the road?"

"Winning" the race, many scientists argue, is the wrong way to think about the problem, especially since the global economy will struggle if the virus continues raging in any significant part of it. A vaccine’s passport into the world is the data that shows it is effective and safe, not who invented it.

And in a global economy, the notion that a vaccine “belongs” to one country or another is complicated by the multinational lineage of many efforts. Johnson & Johnson, for example, is building out manufacturing capabilities in the United States, Europe and Asia. Pfizer has partnered with a German firm and is establishing manufacturing capabilities in the United States and Belgium. Moderna has a factory in suburban Massachusetts but is partnering with a Swiss contract manufacturing firm to scale up production.

China has already struck some partnerships with other countries, such as the company CanSino Biologics’ collaboration with Canada’s National Research Council, which could be an avenue for quick adoption and manufacturing of CanSino’s trial vaccine in Canada, if it proves effective.
Chen Wei, the Chinese military’s top virologist, who is leading the research on another vaccine candidate, said in an email to The Washington Post that her team has made manufacturing preparations, even though the vaccine has only gone through initial safety testing.

“Production capacity of the vaccine is in place,” she said. “We can vaccinate as needed.”

For China, which has for years been vying to narrow the biomedical research gap with the United States, developing a vaccine first could be an important symbolic victory and a domestic morale booster amid a recession.

It could give the country a head start on reigniting its economy since the sports, entertainment and retail sectors cannot fully recover until large public gatherings can take place without significant risk of infection. A majority of China’s economic activity is consumer driven, despite its reputation as a manufacturing giant.

There, as in the United States, widespread vaccination could also allow the resumption of full-scale manufacturing without social distancing requirements that slow output and add costs for masks and other protective equipment.

Paul Stoffels, Johnson & Johnson’s chief scientific officer, said there will be a need for multiple vaccines — probably five to 10 to inoculate the world’s population. He and other pharmaceutical leaders racing to develop vaccines said at a news conference Thursday that rival countries and companies must root for each other.

“The rival is only … covid, the virus right now,” said Albert Bourla, chief executive of Pfizer.

Being first in medical science doesn’t always mean winning the race. The first vaccines are likely to be eclipsed by follow-ons, as scientists learn more about which approaches work best.

“The first vaccines are not going to be the best ones, most likely,” said Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine. “They may be partially protective, but they will be replaced over time with better vaccines. Maybe you can call it a race, but it’s more of a marathon.”

William Wan in Washington and Liu Yang in Beijing contributed to this report.

14. Pentagon’s coronavirus plan includes millions for missile tubes and body armor – 6/4
Washington Post | Aaron Gregg and Erica Werner

The Pentagon plans to devote billions of dollars in new defense spending to vaccine development, medical supplies, and financial help for defense contractors as part of an ambitious plan to address the coronavirus pandemic, according to documents obtained by The Washington Post.

But critics say the department is moving too slowly to spend the money as the pandemic enters its fifth month. Ten weeks after President Trump invoked wartime production powers to address deep medical supply shortages, only 15 percent of that funding has been placed under contract. The department received $10.5 billion in Cares Act funding to address the crisis, and had spent about $2.65 billion as of Wednesday afternoon, a department spokesman said.

And questions remain about whether those funds are being spent appropriately; among $1 billion allocated to the Defense Department under the 1950 Defense Production Act, $668 million will be used to address weakness in the military supply chain that largely predates the current crisis.

Although the Pentagon’s spending report was delivered a month ahead of its congressional deadline, there is a broader concern that the federal government is moving too slowly to address the crisis.
"The fact that this spending is happening now, five months after this crisis started, suggests the Defense Department is woefully unprepared for real biological warfare," said Bill Greenwalt, a defense consultant who served as acquisitions chief in the George W. Bush administration.

In a statement, Jonathan Rath Hoffman, the assistant secretary of defense for public affairs, said the department continues to "aggressively" identify opportunities to use the Cares Act funding, while emphasizing the need to spend funds responsibly.

"The Department remains committed to legally and responsibly executing these funds on the highest priorities to protect our military and their families and safeguard our national security capabilities," Hoffman said. "As we have seen, this is an evolving and dynamic situation where priorities and requirements change, which is why it is so important that we remain faithful and accountable stewards of the taxpayer dollar."

The document obtained by The Post shows how the Pentagon intends to spend the roughly $10.5 billion allocated by Congress under the Cares Act. It includes hundreds of millions of dollars for projects seemingly unrelated to the pandemic, including submarine missile tubes, space launch facilities, and golf course staffing.

It also includes aggressive efforts to alleviate the public health crisis in cooperation with other government agencies, although those efforts are being relegated to third priority.

The document indicates the Pentagon wants to play a leading role in developing effective vaccines and treatments for covid-19, the disease caused by the new coronavirus. It projected eventually purchasing 7.5 million doses of vaccine for military service members and their families at approximately $19 per dose, even though no such vaccine yet exists. The department is funding the development of three possible vaccines in its own medical research labs, part of roughly $1.6 billion that is being put toward testing and medical research.

The spending plan includes $4.4 billion for coronavirus-related medical care, including $175 million on basic equipment for military hospitals, including personal protective equipment, masks, ventilators and other items.

And the department is devoting many of its technology development offices toward efforts to fight the disease.

The spending plan includes $22 million for a project to build wearable monitoring devices that can measure disease symptoms and keep track of contagious individuals. The project is being managed by the Defense Innovation Unit, a technology development office founded in 2015 under then-defense secretary Ash Carter.

The department is also deploying Project Maven, an artificial intelligence unit known primarily for rapidly analyzing drone footage, to create an algorithm-based covid-19 surveillance system that can track the spread of the virus around the globe.

The plan includes $3.48 billion for various costs needed to prevent the coronavirus from degrading the U.S. military's readiness to respond to a national security threat. That includes setting up quarantine facilities for people who are designated "mission essential," such as pilots and missile crews. Hundreds of millions of dollars is designated for extra IT spending needed to help the military services work remotely, including unspecified "commercial solutions" that would allow remote access to classified computer systems.

Another $307 million is being used to protect Defense Department jobs during the pandemic. The Pentagon identified 55,500 jobs in roles such as food preparation, youth centers and fitness centers that would be at risk of furlough without federal help. That funding includes some jobs at "nonessential" establishments such as bowling alleys and golf courses, according to the spending plan.

It also calls for $1 billion in new spending under the Defense Production Act. That includes $100 million for federal loans to build out the U.S. national stockpile with more N95 respirators, personal protective gear, testing supplies and other items. On Wednesday the Defense Department awarded a $138 million contract for pre-filled syringes to be ready when a vaccine is made available.
But the bulk of that funding is being spent to shore up the military supply chain, primarily to correct problems that are only tenuously related to the pandemic — including $150 million for shipbuilders, including funds for submarine launch equipment and missile tubes; $40 million for hypersonic missile development; $80 million for microelectronics; $150 million for space launch companies, and $62 million for body armor and pelvic protectors.

The funding for defense contractors could be met with controversy if Congress steps up its oversight of Cares Act spending. When the Trump Administration activated the Defense Production Act in mid-March, it was billed primarily as an effort to correct medical supply shortages.

The defense industry has already received help from the Pentagon in the form of improved financing terms.

"A lot of these are things they already wanted or were hoping for before this crisis, and the covid funding sort of came as manna from heaven for the Pentagon," said Steve Ellis, a former Coast Guard officer who is now vice president for the Taxpayers for Common Sense.

Dan Grazier, a former Marine captain who now works at the nonprofit Project on Government Oversight, attributed the defense industrial base spending to "defense lobbyists leveraging this crisis" on behalf of their clients.

"With millions of people out of work and small business owners across the country worried they will not be able to weather this storm, we should be focusing our efforts at helping them rather than giving handouts to defense contractors," Grazier said.

Most defense production lines remained open through the worst of the crisis in recent months after the government declared those facilities essential for the national defense.

But numerous defense contractors have struggled to contain coronavirus outbreaks at their factories, and other costs have arisen as they attempt to reconfigure their workplaces and deal with the disruption of having some skilled workers stay home to care for children when schools and child-care facilities closed.

Eric Fanning, who is president of the Aerospace Industries Association and served as secretary of the Army under President Barack Obama, said his organization would advocate for even more funding for the defense industry.

"Everything in the industrial base is suffering in some way from the effects of covid," Fanning said.

Wes Hallman, a former Air Force official who serves as vice president of policy at the National Defense Industrial Association, another trade group, said the funding is needed to stave off permanent damage to America's national security.

"Once you lose a capability, it's so hard to reconstitute it … and sometimes it's impossible," Hallman said.

15. Russian labs race to find a covid-19 vaccine by fall, but concerns raised about fast-track methods – 6/4
Washington Post | Isabelle Khurshudyan

MOSCOW — In Russia’s push to develop a vaccine for the novel coronavirus, researchers have tested formulas on themselves, members of the military have been selected for trials and some officials are claiming that a breakthrough could be just months away.

But Russia’s rush to be first — and claim the global bragging rights for President Vladimir Putin’s government — also is prompting some in the country to raise warnings about possibly cutting corners with testing and keeping expectations in check.
“There are still too many questions to give you time predictions,” said the head of Russia’s consumer health regulator, Anna Popova, speaking on a panel Thursday.

“We all want it now, but I know we won’t get it by tomorrow,” she said at an event hosted by the Valdai Discussion Club, a Moscow-based think tank. “We all want to get there as quickly as possible without violating the ethical rules.”

The contrasting approaches offer a sense of the internal tensions in Russia as the state-backed medical system is throwing resources at potential vaccines. That has led to highly unorthodox proposals that critics say cross ethical lines — such as researchers taking self-administered doses of test samples and a politician’s suggestion of using inmates in clinical trials.

“When we mention some timelines, this is always somebody’s hope,” Popova said. “We can say when it’s technically going to be possible to get the vaccine, but we cannot say in advance how efficient that vaccine is going to be.”

The global race for a coronavirus vaccine could lead to this generation’s Sputnik moment

Russia — with the third-most confirmed coronavirus cases in the world with more than 400,000 — is far from alone in the vaccine hunt. It is competing against other countries including the world’s two biggest economies, the United States and China, in the vaccine race for the prestige of having the first team to crack the covid-19 code. Testing is underway on at least five experimental vaccines in China and four in the United States.

Top infectious-disease scientists, including Anthony S. Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and infectious-disease, have offered a timeline of a year to 18 months for a vaccine.

But Moscow’s mayor, Sergei Sobyanin, said Thursday that Muscovites will be required to wear face masks until a vaccine is available, which he expects “will happen between October and February of next year.”

“I would like to hope that we will receive the first large vaccine shipments in October,” Sobyanin told the state-run Tass news agency.

Russian Minister of Health Mikhail Murashko was more optimistic just two weeks ago, telling state television that a “vaccine’s availability for broader use should materialize somewhere in late July.” He made the same claim during a parliamentary session.

Deputy Prime Minister Tatyana Golikova said last month that Russia is developing 47 coronavirus vaccines, but 10 are listed on the World Health Organization’s latest registry.

“I think it’s impossible, if we’re talking about a tested, reliable vaccine ready for mass application,” said Vitaly Zverev of Moscow’s Mechnikov Research Institute of Vaccines and Sera. “We should always remember that we’re going to administer a vaccine to perfectly healthy people. That’s why we have to be absolutely sure it’s safe, but it’s impossible to check that in such a short period of time.”

Zverev said the rush to claim the world’s first novel coronavirus vaccine could be about “prestige” for Russia, which has long prided itself on its legacy of scientific innovation. The Soviet Union was a vaccinating force, collaborating with U.S. scientists on a polio vaccine during the Cold War and donating more anti-smallpox vaccines to the WHO than all other countries combined.

But Anton Gopka, the head of the health-care investment firm ATEM Capital, said Russia’s disregard for international ethical protocols means that any vaccine is unlikely to gain acceptance outside of the country.
The Ministry of Defense announced Tuesday that it has “finished selecting volunteers” from its military ranks — 45 men and five women who already underwent a preliminary health checkup and testing and have not been diagnosed with any diseases for a month, the statement said.

Gopka said that using members of the military means “you can’t say they are volunteers.”

“We have brilliant scientists, but there needs to be a constructive discussion about bioethical standards,” Gopka said.

Moderna’s coronavirus vaccine shows encouraging early results

Researchers at Moscow’s Gamaleya research institute, part of the Russian Health Ministry, drew scrutiny after boasting about testing a vaccine on themselves — an act Gopka referred to as “crazy” and Zverev similarly decried because it means the experiment couldn’t have been blind, when the subject doesn’t know if he or she received a placebo or the vaccine.

Gamalyea director Alexander Gintsburg told the Interfax news agency that the staff working on the so-called viral vector vaccine “didn’t so much seek to test it on themselves, rather, they sought to protect themselves in order to be able to work on this development amid the pandemic.”

Gopka said he doubts there was any ill intent with the methodology but the mentality needs to change for wider acceptance of any results.

“They’re trying to show the commitment of the state, or that by testing it on themselves, they’ll reassure people it’s safe,” Gopka said.

Other vaccine fervor has included research from St. Petersburg’s Institute of Experimental Medicine on a vaccine that could be administered orally in a dairy product, perhaps yogurt. Nationalist lawmaker Vladimir Zhirinovsky made headlines last month when, in an interview with state television, he proposed asking inmates to volunteer for trials in exchange for reduced prison sentences.

“This rush scares me,” Zverev said. “I believe the earliest we can have a vaccine ready is the middle of next year.”