

World News

In the Persian Gulf, the US Navy claimed Iranians were harassing US ships [1]. Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard acknowledged the encounter [2]. In response, President Trump authorized the US Navy to destroy any Iranian asset used to harass US ships [3].

Meanwhile, coronavirus is not the only news coming from China. Reports indicate the communist giant may deploy its Xian H-20 stealth bombers year [4]. This comes as a Chinese newspaper is calling for China to increase its nuclear warheads to 1,000 [5]. China's navy also floated a new assault carrier, the Type-075 class large amphibious warfare ship [6]. The Chinese navy also put two new nuclear powered ballistic-missile submarines into service [7]. Meanwhile, China confidently predicts that Taiwan will not be admitted into the World Health Organization (WHO) [8].

Elsewhere, China continues to assert its military as the COVID-19 pandemic continues. Case in point, China will prohibit fishing activities in the waters Beijing has claimed [9]. For example, Chinese Coast Guard ships chased a Japanese fishing boat in contested waters [10].

1. Durschlag, Jack, Fox News, *US Navy claims Iran's Navy taunts ships in Persian Gulf*, April 16, 2020.
2. Vahdat, Amir, Time/AP, *Iran's Guard Acknowledges Tense Encounter With U.S. Navy Ships in Persian Gulf*, April 19, 2020.

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Wuhan Coronavirus

Paul Ehrlich received a Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine in 1908 for his discovery of the arsenic based arsphenamine (Salvarsan); the first known cure for treating syphilis [1]. This was the start of the chemotherapy discipline. That is, using chemicals the body does not produce to kill diseases. So when President Trump suggested looking into disinfectant used within the body to fight COVID-19, the press made this look foolish [2]. However, regardless of the press interpretation, looking into chemotherapy as a solution is a legitimate research topic.

At this time, the number of COVID-19 related deaths

has surpassed 78,000 [3] making this pandemic worse than seasonal influenza. However, based on a study of 3,000 people, New York COVID-19 infections are estimated to be 13.9% or 2.7 million people [4]. When the level reaches 70–90 %, it will have reached herd immunity [5].

Meanwhile, reports indicate the World Health Organization (WHO) found no evidence that recovering from the coronavirus prevents reinfection [6]. Does the body forget how it defeated the virus in the first place? Does the virus mutate? Did the patient not recover from the infection but tests showed they had? Many questions, few answers.

With all the hype surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, the military has added a new twist. It seems that the COVID-19 may be a disqualifier for military entrance processing stations [6]. So it appears that if you had the virus, you cannot join the military. If the antibody tests are a correct measure of who had the virus, the military may have a hard time getting recruits. There is a continuing conspiracy by nature theory suggesting the Wuhan coronavirus was the result of natural mutations [7]. The argument is the virus is based on SARS-CoV-2, found in bats. However, short of detecting synthetic

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Special points of interest:

- 14.7 unemployment rate
- COVID-19
- 78,000 US Deaths

Wuhan Coronavirus

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nucleotides, it is infeasible, just by looking at the sequencing, to ascertain if man played a role in the virus. A bioweapon design would start with the bat virus and make slight changes to avoid detection of engineering. So perhaps the best determiner is probability analysis. Is it more probable that such a contagious virus could have mutated from the bat virus as claimed by China or engineered in a lab as suggested by others? In future newsletters, we may explore probability and cumulative distribution functions for the two competing theories to help determine the most likely cause.

1. Tampa, M. et al., Journal

of Medicine and Life, *Brief History of Syphilis*, March 25, 2014.

2. Walker, James, Newsweek, *Trump Hints At Cancelling Coronavirus Press Briefings: 'What Is The Purpose?'*, April 26, 2020.
3. Chapman, Ben, et. al., The Wall Street Journal/Fox News, *Global coronavirus infections top 4 million, US death toll passes 78,000*, May 10, 2020.
4. Morrison, Cassidy, Washington Examiner/AP, *Stunningly high reported New York infection rate illustrates coronavirus uncertainty*, April 24, 2020.
5. Lee, Alicia, CNN, *What is herd immunity and why*

some think it could end the coronavirus pandemic, April 23, 2020.

6. Isaac, Lindsay, and Croft, Jay, CNN, *WHO says no evidence shows that having coronavirus prevents a second infection*, April 25, 2020.
7. Myers, Meghann, Military Times, *Coronavirus survivors banned from joining the military*, May 6, 2020.
8. Healy, Melissa, Los Angeles Times, *Was the coronavirus made in a Wuhan lab? Here's what the genetic evidence shows*, May 9, 2020.

One letter to bin Laden reveals that al Qaeda was working on chemical and biological weapons in Iran.

—Michael T. Flynn

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3. Snow, Shawn, Military Times, *Trump tweets that he's instructed the Navy to 'destroy' any Iranian gunboats that harass US warships*, April 23, 2020.
4. Chakraborty, Barnini, Fox News, *China's Xian H-20 stealth bomber completes nuclear triad, could make debut this year*, May 4, 2020.
5. Tian, Yew Lun, Reuters, *China needs more nuclear warheads: Global Times*

editor, May 8, 2020.

6. Sutton, H I, Forbes, *Chinese Navy Launches New Assault Carrier*, April 22, 2020.
7. Chan, Minnie, South China Morning Post, *China's navy has put 2 new nuclear-powered ballistic-missile subs into service*, April 30, 2020.
8. Tian, Yew Lun, et. al. Reuters, *China says Taiwan's bid to attend key WHO meeting will fail*, May 8, 2020.
9. The Korean Times, Bei-

jing's South China Sea fishing ban threatens to raise tensions, May 9, 2020.

10. The Japan Times, *Chinese ships chase Japanese fishing boat near Senkaku Islands*, May 9, 2020.

Terrorism

In the past, we have seen cases where terrorists dress up in the uniform of the victims. Case in point, Islamic State fighters have dressed in American uniforms to bypass security [1]. So what is to prevent a bad actor from pretending to be a police officer? For instance, in Canada, a gunman disguised as a police officer left at least 18 people dead [2]. While we do not know the motive, it illustrates a vulnerability were a bad actor disguises as a first responder.

While most of the world news focused on the COVID-19 pandemic, terrorism in the around the world continues. For instance, in Syria, terrorists used a truck bomb in a crowded market to kill at least 40 people [3]. In Afghanistan, the Taliban killed at least 17 civilians during the first week of Ramadan [4].

1. Cox, Matthew, Business

Insider, *ISIS fighters wearing US Army uniforms attacked the Afghan interior ministry*, May 31, 2018.

2. NBC/AP, *18 confirmed killed in Canada's deadliest mass shooting, but officials expect to discover more victims*, April 21, 2020.

3. BBC News, *Syria war: Dozens killed in truck bomb attack at Afrin market*, April 28, 2020.

4. Najafizada, Eltaf, Bloomberg, *Taliban Mount Attacks After Deal, Killing 17 During Ramadan*, May 3, 2020.

A pandemic influenza would mean widespread infection essentially throughout every region of the world.—Anthony S.

Fauci

Economy

The impact of COVID-19 to the oil industry is devastating. For the first time, oil prices traded in the negative range [1]. That is, oil companies paid customers to take oil off their hands. Moreover, the US economy shrank at a rates of 4.8% during the first quarter [2].

News on the employment front is dismal. Not since the Great Depression, has the US unemployment rate hit 14.7% [3]. The weekly unemployment claims reflects the economic downturn. For the week ending April 18, the number of first time unemployment claims was 4,427,000 [4]. For the week ending April 25, the number reported was 3,839,000 [5]. Finally, for the week ending May 2, the number was 3,169,000 [6]. The cumulative unemployment for the past 7 weeks is 33 million workers [7]. With numbers such as these, recovery will be long.

So the question remains, was the shutdown the best approach for the US? Consider, Sweden did not use a lock down and now appears close to its peak with 3,000 deaths

so far [8]. Whereas, the population of Sweden is over 10 million people while the US exceeds 328 million. Sweden reached 3,000 deaths at a time when the US exceeded 74,000. So while there are 32 times more people in the US, the number of deaths is only 25 times greater than Sweden. So right now, the death rate in Sweden is approximately 30% higher per 100,000 people. We will keep our eyes on this for the next newsletter.

1. Egan, Matt, CNN Business, *Oil prices turned negative. Hundreds of US oil companies could go bankrupt*, April 20, 2020.
2. Henney, Megan, FOX Business, *US economy shrank by 4.8 percent in first quarter, as coronavirus ends record-long expansion*, April 29, 2020.
3. Kelly, Jack, Forbes, U.S. *Unemployment Is At Its Highest Rate Since The Great Depression At 14.7% –With 20.5 Million More Jobs Lost In April*, May 8, 2020.
4. Department of Labor, *Unemployment Insurance Weekly Claims*, April 23, 2020.
5. Department of Labor, *Unemployment Insurance Weekly Claims*, April 30, 2020.
6. Department of Labor, *Unemployment Insurance Weekly Claims*, May 7, 2020.
7. Jones, Charisse, USA Today, *Jobless claims climb to 33M in seven weeks as nation braces for historic unemployment rate*, May 7, 2020.
8. Ellyatt, Holly, CBNC, *Sweden's chief scientist admits lessons have been learned over no-lockdown policy*, May 7, 2020.

In the field of biological weapons, there is almost no prospect of detecting a pathogen until it has been used in an attack.—Barton Gellman
