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Inside C2

Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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Tuesday, November 23 2021

Austria locks down, Merkel says new steps needed as Europe faces COVID freeze

VIENNA/BERLIN, Nov 22 (Reuters) - Austria became on Monday the first country in western Europe to reimpose lockdown since vaccines were rolled out, shutting non-essential shops, bars and cafes as surging caseloads raised the spectre of a second straight winter in deep freeze for the continent.

Germany will also need tighter restrictions to control a record-setting wave of infections, outgoing Chancellor Angela Merkel was quoted as saying, remarks that erased gains on European stock markets and sent bond yields down. [read more](#)

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With Europe once again the epicentre of the global pandemic that first prompted lockdowns in March 2020, new restrictions and vaccine mandates are expected to spread nearly two years after the first COVID-19 case was identified in China.

"We are in a highly dramatic situation. What is in place now is not sufficient," Merkel told leaders of her conservative CDU party in a meeting, according to two participants, confirming comments first reported by Bloomberg.

German Health Minister Jens Spahn, urgently calling on people to get vaccinated, said he was certain that by the end of the winter everyone in Germany would be "vaccinated, recovered or dead".

Austria told people to work from home if they can, and shut cafes, restaurants, bars, theatres and non-essential shops for 10 days. People may leave home for a limited number of reasons, such as going to workplaces, buying essentials or taking a walk.

The Austrian government has also announced it will make it compulsory to get inoculated as of Feb. 1. Many Austrians are sceptical about vaccinations, a view encouraged by the far-right Freedom Party, the third biggest in parliament.

"It's like a luxury prison. It's definitely limited freedom and for me it's not great psychologically," said Sascha Iamkovyi, a 43-year-old entrepreneur in the food sector, describing his return to lockdown on a chilly, overcast day in an unusually quiet Vienna.

"People were promised that if they got vaccinated they would be able to lead a normal life, but now that's not true."



Abandoned tables of a closed restaurant are seen in a street as the Austrian government imposed fourth national coronavirus disease (COVID-19) lockdown in Vienna, Austria, November 22, 2021. REUTERS/Lisi Niesner

S&P 500 hits record as banks rally on Powell nomination

Nov 22 (Reuters) - The S&P 500 hit a record high on Monday after President Joe Biden picked Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell to lead the central bank for a second term, with Wall Street lenders rallying on the prospect of interest rate hikes in 2022.

The Nasdaq (.IXIC) tumbled into negative territory after earlier hitting a record high, with rising Treasury yields weighing on Amazon (AMZN.O), Alphabet (GOOGL.O) and other major growth stocks. Bucking losses in other Big Tech stocks, Apple (AAPL.O) jumped 2% and was on track to close at its highest level ever after JPMorgan flagged possible improvements to the supply of the iPhone 13 in coming months.

Powell's nomination was largely welcomed by investors hoping for no big changes in the Fed as it guides the economy through a recovery from the pandemic. The central bank is set to herald a return to pre-pandemic policy by end-2022. [read more](#) Fed Governor Lael Brainard, who was the other top candidate for the job, will be vice chair, the White House said.

"Markets like predictability. ... While Brainard may have been a fine choice, the markets would not know what to expect from her even though the general consensus was that it meant lower rates for longer," said Randy Frederick, managing director of trading and derivatives, Charles Schwab, Austin, Texas. The S&P 500 banks index (.SPXBK) jumped 2.9%, tracking a surge in Treasury yields as investors priced in policy tightening by the first half of 2022. Wells Fargo & Co (WFC.N) led gains among major Wall Street banks, adding 3.5%.

Futures contracts tied to the Fed's policy rate indicated that money markets are now expecting the U.S. central bank to raise interest rates by 25 basis points by next June versus a previous estimate of July.

"Financials being up today is pretty much an interest rate story, and tech being down is a rates story too," said Ross Mayfield, investment strategist at Baird.

In afternoon trading, the Dow Jones Industrial Average (.DJI) was up

0.61% at 35,818.62 points, while the S&P 500 (.SPX) gained 0.41% to 4,717.01. The S&P 500 earlier touched a record high 4,743.83.

The Nasdaq Composite (.IXIC) dropped 0.48% to 15,980.63.

The S&P 500 value index (.IVX) rallied 1.13%, while the S&P 500 growth index (.IGX) lost 0.25%.

Investors were awaiting a slew of economic data this week, including IHS business activity readings, personal consumption expenditure, and minutes of the Fed's latest meeting.

Amazon declined 2.3%, while Alphabet lost about 1.4%, both weighing heavily on the Nasdaq.

Tesla Inc (TSLA.O) gained 3.2% after CEO Elon Musk tweeted that the Model S Plaid will "probably" be coming to China around March. [read more](#) Activision Blizzard (ATVI.O) slipped 0.9% after a media report that the video game publisher's chief executive, Bobby Kotick, would consider leaving if he could not quickly address concerns about company culture.

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CORONAVIRUS DIARY

11/22/2021

50th Anniversary Of
Ping Pong Diplomacy



promotion was led by the Chinese Civic Center and the Houston Sports Authority who co-sponsored a dinner to commemorate the historic occasion.

Today the U.S. and China are facing many challenges. In our

relationship, we need to cooperate and work together for world peace.

Ping Pong Diplomacy is the spirit we all need to encompass: the bridge over the wall and peace over the wars.



Many leaders from the U.S. and China came together in Houston, Texas, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Ping Pong Diplomacy which reflects on peace and friendship through sports.

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to enjoy our city and Texan culture.

Ping Pong Diplomacy was born when the U. S. and China table tennis teams came together in 1971 and exchanged gifts and created positive dialogues and built friendships through the sport.

In Houston, the event

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Editor's Choice



A polar bear is pictured after sparring with another bear near the Hudson Bay community of Churchill, Manitoba, Canada. REUTERS/Carlos Osorio



A front end loader transports members of the Canadian Forces amidst flooded waters as they help move chickens at a farm affected by floods in Abbotsford, British Columbia, Canada. Jonathan Hayward/Pool



Israeli couple Mordi and Natali Oknin speak to the media following their release after being detained over espionage charges for allegedly taking photographs of President Tayyip Erdogan's residence during a trip to Istanbul, Turkey, at their home in Modiin, Israel November 18. REUTERS/Ammar Awad



Chairs are left abandoned after a car plowed through a holiday parade in Waukesha, Wisconsin. REUTERS/Cheney Orr



A grandmother prays for her child's success in the annual college entrance examinations, at a Buddhist temple in Seoul, South Korea, November 18. REUTERS/Kim Hong-Ji



Travis McMichael reacts to questions during his testimony at the trial of Greg McMichael, his son Travis McMichael and William "Roddie" Bryan in the Glynn County Courthouse, as the murder trial over the killing of Ahmaud Arbery continues, in Brunswick, Georgia, November 17. Stephen B. Morton/Pool via REUTERS

BUSINESS

COVID-19 In The U.S. Update

CDC Panel Endorses COVID-19 Vaccine Boosters For All Adults



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

A key outside advisory group to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has endorsed the use of COVID-19 booster shots for all adults, a one-size-fits-all approach designed to simplify eligibility. If CDC Director Rochelle Walensky signs off on the broader use, as expected, the extra shots will be available immediately to all adults, as long as they are six months past the final dose of a Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, or two months after a Johnson & Johnson dose.

The recommendation from the panel comes just hours after the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized both Pfizer and Moderna’s booster shots for everyone over the age of 18.

Pfizer applied to the FDA earlier this month for an expansion of the emergency authorization for its booster shot to make it available to anyone 18 or older. Moderna announced just this week that it too had asked the FDA to allow its booster to be given to all adults.

Boosters for everyone has always been the Biden administration’s goal, but until now federal health authorities have stopped short of such a policy, and instead recommended boosters for only specific populations — those over age 65, anyone at high risk because of work or where they live, or those with an underlying medical condition. The primary COVID-19 vaccination continues to provide good protection against severe disease and death, even as effectiveness against milder infection has waned. But cases have been steadily rising across the country, and authorities have said they

want to stave off another winter surge.



The current recommendations, while fairly broad, have caused confusion. While people over the age of 65 are most at risk from waning vaccine immunity, fewer than 40 percent of them have received a booster, according to CDC data.

“The current guidelines, though well-intentioned and thoughtful, generate an obstacle to uptake of boosters. In pursuit of precision, they create confusion,” Nirav Shah, president of Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, told the panel.

The panel did not make a distinction in their recommendation between the two types of mRNA vaccines, despite the potential for increased risk of myocarditis — a type of heart inflammation — in young men after receiving Moderna’s vaccine. CDC officials told the panel it’s too early to draw conclusions on the risk of myocarditis after the third dose of mRNA vaccines, because teens and younger adults haven’t yet been boosted in large enough numbers.

Several other countries have discouraged use of the Moderna vaccine in people

younger than 30 because of that risk.

Gottlieb Says He Expects The CDC Will Consider ‘Fully Vaccinated’ As Including Boosters



Former Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Scott Gottlieb

Former Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Scott Gottlieb said on Sunday that he expects the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to consider Americans “fully vaccinated” when they receive a booster shot, adding that recommendations to change it would likely not happen this year.

“Should the CDC say you need a booster to be considered fully vaccinated?” “Face the Nation” moderator Margaret Brennan asked Gottlieb on CBS.

“I think at some point they’re going to, but not this year,” Gottlieb answered.

“I think eventually this will be considered the three-dose vaccine, but I would be hard pressed to believe CDC is going to make that recommendation any time soon, in part because of this debate about whether or not younger people who are less risk should be receiving that third dose in states where governors are looking to do this, and I think some local communities will do it,” he added.

Gottlieb was also asked about CDC saying last week that all American adults could get a booster shot while specifically recommending that people over the age of 50 get their boosters.



“I think the reluctant nature by which CDC has been stepping into this debate reflects a broader ambivalence or a broader debate happening in a public health community about whether the vaccines should be used as tools to protect people from bad outcomes from COVID, or whether they should be used as tools to try to end the pandemic and control transmission,” Gottlieb said.

CDC Director Rochelle Walensky late last week signed off on a recommendation from a CDC advisory panel to broaden el-

igibility of the COVID-19 booster to all American adults. The advisory panel had also recommended that those over the age of 50 should get their booster shot.

Fauci Hopes COVID-19 Booster Increases Durability To Not Need It Regularly

President Biden’s chief medical adviser Anthony Fauci said on Sunday that he hopes COVID-19 boosters will increase vaccine durability so that “you will not necessarily need it” every six months or a year,” Fauci said during “This Week” on ABC.



President Biden’s chief medical adviser Anthony Fauci

“We’re hoping it pushes it out more. If it doesn’t, and the data show we do need it more often, then we’ll do it,” he added.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director Rochelle Walensky signed off on a CDC advisory panel’s recommendation to increase eligibility for booster shots to all American adults. The decision means that all adults who are at least six months out since receiving their second shot of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines are now able to get their third shot of the COVID-19 vaccine.

“Booster shots have demonstrated the ability to safely increase people’s protection against infection and severe outcomes and are an important public health tool to strengthen our defenses against the virus as we enter the winter holidays. Based on the compelling evidence, all adults over 18 should now have equitable access to a COVID-19 booster dose,” Walensky said in a statement regarding the news.

The decision comes only weeks after children as young as 5 years old became eligible to get COVID-19 vaccine, much to the relief of parents and health officials seeking to have their kids inoculated in time for holiday gatherings.



Despite widespread vaccine availability, however, it has not stopped the U.S. from passing the grim milestone last week of recording more COVID-19 deaths in 2021 than last year. (Courtesy thehill.com)

OSHA Suspends Enforcement Of COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate For Businesses

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is suspending enforcement of the Biden administration’s COVID-19 vaccine mandate for large private businesses after a federal appeals court upheld a stay on it last week.



OSHA said in a statement published on its website Friday night that while it is confident in its power to protect workers amid the pandemic, it is suspending activities related to the mandate, citing the pending litigation.

“The court ordered that OSHA ‘take no steps to implement or enforce’ the ETS [Emergency Temporary Standard] ‘until further court order.’ While OSHA remains confident in its authority to protect workers in emergencies, OSHA has suspended activities related to the implementation and enforcement of the ETS pending future developments in the litigation,” OSHA said.



President Biden announced in September that the administration was rolling out a new rule that would require all private employers with 100 or more employees to mandate vaccines or weekly testing for all personnel, a guideline that has the potential to impact nearly 80 million workers. Earlier this month the administration set Jan. 4 as the deadline for qualifying private employers to start mandating the vaccine or requiring weekly testing. The rule was developed by OSHA.

In a 22-page ruling last week, the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals wrote that the administration’s COVID-19 vaccine and testing mandate was “fatally flawed” and ordered that OSHA not enforce the requirement “pending adequate judicial review” of a motion for a permanent injunction.

The court said OSHA should “take no steps to implement or enforce the mandate until further court order.” (Courtesy thehill.com)

Southern

DAILY

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COMMUNITY

A Daily Pill To Treat COVID-19 Could Be Just Months Away, Scientists Say



Results of trials on a daily pill to treat COVID-19 could be available within months.(Image/Unsplash/Halacious)

Key Point

- *At least three antivirals for COVID are in clinical trials.*
- *An early trial of 202 participants last Spring showed that molnupiravir rapidly reduced the levels of infectious virus.*
- *Antivirals are already essential treatments for viral infections, including hepatitis C and HIV.*
- *The drugs work by interfering with the virus’s ability to replicate in human cells*

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

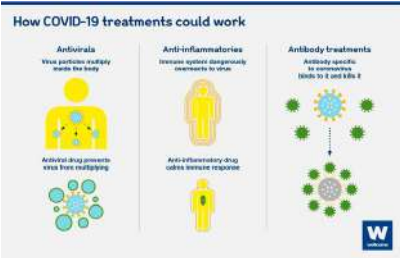
Within a day of testing positive for Covid-19 in June, Miranda Kelly was sick enough to be scared. At 44, with diabetes and high blood pressure, Kelly, a certified nursing assistant, was having trouble breathing, symptoms serious enough to send her to the emergency room. When her husband, Joe, 46, fell ill with the virus, too, she really got worried, especially about their five teenagers at home: “I thought, ‘I hope to God we don’t wind up on ventilators. We have children. Who’s going to raise these kids?’” But the Kellys, who live in Seattle, had agreed just after their diagnoses to join a clinical trial at the nearby Fred Hutch cancer research center that’s part of an international effort to test an antiviral treatment on the unvaccinated that could halt Covid early in its course.

By the next day, the couple were taking four pills, twice a day. Though they weren’t told whether they had received an active medication or placebo, within a week, they said, their symptoms were better. Within two weeks, they had recovered.

“I don’t know if we got the treatment, but I kind of feel like we did,” Miranda Kelly said. “To have all these underlying conditions, I felt like the recovery was very

quick.”

The Kellys have a role in developing what could be the world’s next chance to thwart Covid: a short-term regimen of daily pills that can fight the virus early after diagnosis and conceivably prevent symptoms from developing after exposure.



“Oral antivirals have the potential to not only curtail the duration of one’s Covid-19 syndrome, but also have the potential to limit transmission to people in your household if you are sick,” said Timothy Sheahan, a virologist at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill who has helped pioneer these therapies.

Antivirals are already essential treatments for other viral infections, including hepatitis C and HIV. One of the best known is Tamiflu, the widely prescribed pill that

can shorten the duration of influenza and reduce the risk of hospitalization if given quickly. The medications, developed to treat and prevent viral infections in people and animals, work differently depending on the type. But they can be engineered to boost the immune system to fight infection, block receptors so viruses can’t enter healthy cells, or lower the amount of active virus in the body.

At least three promising antivirals for Covid are being tested in clinical trials, with results expected as soon as late fall or winter, said Carl Dieffenbach, director of the Division of AIDS at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, who is overseeing antiviral development.

“I think that we will have answers as to what these pills are capable of within the next several months,” Dieffenbach said.

The top contender is a medication from Merck and Ridgeback Biotherapeutics called molnupiravir, Dieffenbach said. This is the product being tested in the Kellys’ Seattle trial. Two others include a candidate from Pfizer, known as PF-07321332, and AT-527, an antiviral produced by Roche and Atea Pharmaceuticals.



They work by interfering with the virus’s ability to replicate in human cells. In the case of molnupiravir, the enzyme that copies the viral genetic material is forced to make so many mistakes that the virus can’t reproduce. That, in turn, reduces the patient’s viral load, shortening infection time and preventing the kind of dangerous immune response that can cause serious illness or death. So far, only one antiviral drug, remdesivir, has been approved to treat Covid. But it is given intravenously to patients ill enough to be hospitalized, and is not intended for early, widespread use. By contrast, the top contenders under study can be packaged as pills.

Sheahan, who also performed preclinical work on remdesivir, led an early study in mice that showed that molnupiravir could prevent early disease caused by SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid. The formula was discovered at Emory University and later acquired by Ridgeback and Merck.

Clinical trials have followed, including an early trial of 202 participants last spring that showed that molnupiravir rapidly reduced the levels of infectious virus. Merck chief executive Robert Davis said this month that the company expects data from its larger phase 3 trials in the coming weeks, with the potential to seek emergency use authorization from the Food and Drug Administration “before year-end.”

Pfizer launched a combined phase 2 and 3 trial of its product Sept. 1, and Atea officials said they expect results from phase 2 and phase 3 trials later this year.

If the results are positive and emergency use is granted for any product, Dieffenbach said, “distribution could begin quickly.”

That would mean millions of Americans soon could have access to a daily orally administered medication, ideally a single pill, that could be taken for five to 10 days at the first confirmation of Covid infection.



“When we get there, that’s the idea,” said Dr. Daniel Griffin, an infectious diseases and immunology expert at Columbia University. “To have this all around the country, so that people get it the same day they get diagnosed.”

Once sidelined for lack of interest, oral antivirals to treat coronavirus infections are now a subject of fierce competition and funding. In June, the Biden administration announced it had agreed to obtain about 1.7 million treatment courses of Merck’s molnupiravir, at a cost of \$1.2 billion, if the product receives emergency authorization or full approval. The same month, the administration said it would invest \$3.2 billion in the Antiviral Program for Pandemics, which aims to develop antivirals for the Covid crisis and beyond, Dieffenbach said.

The pandemic kick-started a long-neglected effort to develop potent antiviral treatments for coronaviruses, said Sheahan. Though the original SARS virus in 2003 gave scientists a scare—followed by Middle East respiratory syndrome, or MERS, in 2012—research efforts slowed when those outbreaks did not persist.

“The commercial drive to develop any products just went down the tubes,” said Sheahan.

Widely available antiviral drugs would join the monoclonal antibody therapies

already used to treat and prevent serious illness and hospitalizations caused by Covid. The lab-produced monoclonal antibodies, which mimic the body’s natural response to infection, were easier to develop but must be given primarily through intravenous infusions. The federal government is covering the cost of most monoclonal products at \$2,000 a dose. It’s still too early to know how the price of antivirals might compare.

Like the monoclonal antibodies, antiviral pills would be no substitute for vaccination, said Griffin. They would be another tool to fight Covid. “It’s nice to have another option,” he said.



One challenge in developing antiviral drugs quickly has been recruiting enough participants for the clinical trials, each of which needs to enroll many hundreds of people, said Dr. Elizabeth Duke, a Fred Hutch research associate overseeing its molnupiravir trial. Participants must be unvaccinated and enrolled in the trial within five days of a positive Covid test. Any given day, interns make 100 calls to newly Covid-positive people in the Seattle area—and most say no.

“Just generally speaking, there’s a lot of mistrust about the scientific process,” Duke said. “And some of the people are saying kind of nasty things to the interns.”

If the antiviral pills prove effective, the next challenge will be ramping up a distribution system that can rush them to people as soon as they test positive. Griffin said it will take something akin to the program set up last year by UnitedHealthcare, which sped Tamiflu kits to 200,000 at-risk patients enrolled in the insurer’s Medicare Advantage plans. Merck officials predicted the company could produce more than 10 million courses of therapy by the end of the year. Atea and Pfizer have not released similar estimates.

Even more promising? Studies evaluating whether antivirals can prevent infection after exposure.

“Think about that,” said Duke, who is also overseeing a prophylactic trial. “You could give it to everyone in a household, or everyone in a school. Then we’re talking about a return to, maybe, normal life.” (Courtesy weforum.org)

聯合健康保險專為紅藍卡受益人的需求所設計的 2022年度聯邦醫療保險計劃



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獨有和加倍的福利和服務

Noel表示:「我們想讓會員知道,每項計劃提供新的福利和方案,全是因為我們認真聽取了會員的需求而設計。」

和保健需求,並與醫療護理提供者保持互信的關係。聯合健康保險提供完善的個人、僱主、及聯邦醫療保險(Medicare,俗稱「紅藍卡」)和醫療補助(Medicaid,俗稱「白卡」)受益人的全方位健康福利計劃,並與全國超過一百三十萬名醫生和專業護理人員,以及六千五百家醫院和其他護理設施直接簽約。聯合健康保險還通過在南美洲擁有和營運的醫療護理設施為當地居民提供健保福利及照護。聯合健康保險是聯合健康集團(UnitedHealth Group)(紐約證券交易所代碼:UNH)旗下企業之一。欲瞭解更多資訊,請瀏覽聯合健康保險網站 www.uhc.com 或在 Twitter 上關注 @UHC。



更多計劃選項滿足不同需求

聯合健康保險是唯一一家以 AARP 冠名提供紅藍卡計劃的保險公司,通過多元化計劃組合,為近五分之一的紅藍卡受益人提供服務4。聯合健康保險也是全美最大的聯邦醫療保險輔助計劃提供者,通過其聯邦醫療保險輔助計劃為大約 440 萬人提供服務。

「我們的聯邦醫療保險輔助計劃是消費者評價最高的計劃之一,我們為具有競爭力和維持穩定的費率感到自豪。我們在2022年將推出新的低保費計劃,以滿足消費者不斷增加和多样化的需求。」Noel表示。

民眾可於紅藍卡年度註冊期間10月15日至12月7日轉換紅藍卡計劃。如有查詢,可致電聯合健康保險華語專線 1-866-868-8988。

關於聯合健康保險

聯合健康保險致力幫助全國民眾過更健康的生

1CMS 註冊數據,2021年8月。所有計劃註冊數字。

2根據聯合健康保險標準紅藍卡優惠計劃(非特殊需要計劃)。

3網絡規模因計劃和市場而有所不同。

4 CMS 註冊數據,2021年8月。



慶祝中美乒乓外交50周年晚宴，周日晚舉行 佳賓雲集，六百餘人與會，場面盛大



中國選手林高遠將與美國選手張莉莉搭檔,美國選手卡納克·費特與中國選手王曼昱搭檔。

(休士頓/秦鴻鈞報導)一場象徵了中美友誼及乒乓球技交流的慶祝中美乒乓外交50周年晚宴於周日(11月21日)晚在休士頓市中心的希爾頓賓館盛大舉行。佳賓雲集,六百多人與會,美國前總統尼克森的孫子克里斯托福·尼克森·考克斯和老布希總統的兒子尼爾·布希都出席盛會並發言。休士頓市長 Sylvester Turner,中國乒協主席劉國樑也與會致賀詞。

尼克森總統的孫子考克斯在致詞時回顧爺爺當年在建交時的歷史性談話:“乒乓外交”體現兩國人民之間的認知、交流。雖然文化背景不同,但經過“破冰”,彼此之間就能進一步合作交流。這是最好的向前看的態度,雙方透過合作建立穩固的基礎。考克斯不晦言雖然現在中美兩國關係面臨諸多挑戰,但他希望雙方透過溝通、交流,了解彼此關切的問題,強化共識,共同努力尋求解決之道。畢竟中、美兩個大國的友好與合作對全世界都有益。

George Bush 老布希總統的兒子尼爾·布希也提到他的父親非常關注中、美兩國的關係。1974年,他就擔任美國駐華聯絡處主任。他充分了解中美關係的重要性。老布希總統生前每兩年都會辦一次美中關係會議。他曾親自參加了前五屆的會議,並在父親的支持下,他在2017年成立「喬治·布希美中關係基金會」透過該平台表達他一生對中美關係的關注,並以此架起兩國之間

互信、溝通的橋樑。

因為2021年正逢中美“乒乓外交”50周年,中國乒協聯合美國乒協向國際乒聯提出混雙中美跨國配對的建議,幾位原本是朋友的運動員並肩作戰,使乒乓球又一次成為體育和文化交流的紐帶,小球帶動大球。

世界乒乓球協會(WTT)理事會主席、中國乒協主席劉國樑是促成這次中美混雙配對的關鍵人物。他說”幾天以前,當中國隊到達休士頓,看到疫情期間國際乒聯、美國乒協,休士頓體育局在組織賽事方面的努力,備受感動“。

他說:”我們一直在思考「乒乓外交」50年後的今天,我們如何在前輩紮實的中美友誼的基礎上,再進一步通過體育賽事、體育活動、民間活動來增加兩國的友誼。而此次活動,是兩國的球迷,共同奏響新時期“乒乓外交”的新篇章,也是我們最重要的目的。

最後,劉國樑也對跨國混雙球員表達了自己的期盼:“我期待高遠和張安、卡納克和王曼昱,能夠在這次合作當中發揮出自己最高水平,不僅有機會在混雙獎杯—赫·杜塞克杯上刻下他們的名字,同時也能夠由此結下深厚的友誼,為乒乓球在全世界的推廣和發展作出自己的貢獻。

國際乒聯集團執行官史蒂夫·丹表示:”我們在休士頓再次見證了體育獨特的力量,以及乒乓球如何創造對話、促進相互理解。這將激勵我們展示了一場非凡又深具歷史意義的世乒賽,並支持整個乒乓球乃至下一代的夢想、希望和抱負“。

休士頓市長 Sylvester Turner 也在晚宴上致詞表示:這是北美首次舉辦世界乒乓球錦標賽總決賽,也是休士頓首次舉辦世界級乒乓球大賽。這是一場世界乒壇名將高手雲集,競爭激烈,前所未有的世界乒乓球錦標賽總決賽。休士頓歡迎您們!他說:乒乓球比賽將重新架起我們的友誼,友誼第一,比賽第二。休士頓 Turner 市長和中國乒協主席劉國樑互送了象徵美中友誼的禮物。



圖為今年出席乒乓外交50周年晚宴的貴賓(後排左起)用國際乒聯首席執行官史蒂夫·丹頓,尼克森總統的孫子考克思、世界乒乓球協會(WTT)理事會主席、中國乒協主席劉國樑、休士頓市長 Sylvester Turner,休士頓體育局行政總監詹尼斯·柏克及國會議員 Al Green (前排中)及混雙球員合影。(記者秦鴻鈞攝)

當晚,在國際乒聯紀念“乒乓外交”50周年的晚宴上,兩對美中跨國配對的混雙球員驚艷亮相。他們是張安(美國)—林高遠(中國),卡納克(美國)—王曼昱(中國)。其中張安是來自中國的美國隊一號種子選手,世界排名第35,會講中文。林高遠在世界排名第七位,在2019年世乒賽闖入男單8強。卡納克,現在世界排名第31位。卡納克曾在2018年青奧會上獲得男單銅牌。王曼昱22歲,現在世界排名第四位。王曼在今年的東京奧運會上獲得女團冠軍。另外,休士頓體育局行政總監詹尼斯·柏克,美國乒乓球協會行政總監 Virginia Sung,及中國人活動中心董事長彭梅也在大會上致詞。



圖為出席中美乒乓外交50周年晚宴前的貴賓招待會的來賓們在會上合影。(記者秦鴻鈞攝)

乒乓外交50周年貴賓招待會

(休士頓/秦鴻鈞報導)中美乒乓外交50周年晚宴於11月21日(周日)晚間6:00舉行。主辦單位於晚宴前的四時半至五時半舉行貴賓招待會,歡迎認可合作夥伴及贊助商,介紹贊助商「China Star Restaurant Group」(中國之星餐飲集團)負責人 Sally Sha,金牌贊助商「Global Development Houston Methodist Global Health Care Services」(全球發展休士頓衛理公會全球醫療保健服務)副總裁 Jose F.Nunez,美國前總統尼克森的孫子 Christopher Nixon Cox,由陸峻擔任主持人。

會中還由主辦單位「中國人活動中心」執行長楊德清介紹獲獎者:(一)中國乒乓球隊獲獎者(二)美國乒乓球隊獲獎者(三)50年前訪問中國的美國乒乓球運動員 Connie Sweeris, Olga Soltész, Judy Hoarfrost,並作簡短致詞。而當晚出席的貴賓:州議員吳元之(Gene Wu)、CCC年會聯歡晚會主席陳韻梅、Bao Shi Yi 會長劉思達,中國總商會會長易建中,及眾議員 Troy Nelms 等人。他們在致詞時提及50年前的中美乒乓外交的重要性,對兩國的友誼、國力交流都具有歷史性的偉大意義。