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Inside C2

Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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Ukraine faces cyber attack as West demands proof of Russian troop pullback

MOSCOW/WASHINGTON, Feb 15 (Reuters) - Ukraine said its defence ministry and two banks had been hacked on Tuesday, appearing to blame Russia, as the West sought evidence from Moscow of a partial troop pullback.

The Kremlin, the United States and Europe are engaged in one of the deepest crises in East-West relations for decades over Ukraine, post-Cold War influence on the continent and energy supplies as Moscow wants to stop Kyiv ever joining NATO.

Western nations have suggested arms control and confidence-building steps to defuse the standoff and want Russia to reverse the build-up of some 130,000 soldiers on its neighbour's border.

On Tuesday, Russia said some were returning to base after exercises, prompting the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield to call for evidence, saying such a move "would be welcome news, if it is legitimate."

Ukraine did not say who it believed was responsible for the cyber attack, but a statement suggested it was pointing the finger at Russia.



"It is not ruled out that the aggressor used tactics of little dirty tricks because its aggressive plans are not working out on a large scale," said the Ukrainian Centre for Strategic Communications and Information Security, which is part of the culture ministry.

Privatbank users had problems with payments and a banking app, it said, Oshadbank said the cyberattack resulted in slowing down of some of its systems and a message on the defence ministry website's home page said it was under maintenance.

Russia's Federal Security Service did not immediately reply to a request for comment from Reuters.

One European diplomat said the hacking was concerning because a full military attack on Ukraine would likely be preceded by a cyber attack.

"It could mean a physical attack is imminent, or it could mean Russia is continuing to mess with Ukraine," the diplomat said, on condition of anonymity.

Distributed denial-of-service attacks,

when hackers flood a network with unusually high volumes of data traffic to paralyse it, such as those seen in Ukraine on Tuesday, are difficult to attribute but the European diplomat said there was no doubt that Russia was behind them.

The United States has offered support in the investigation and response to the attack.

'MEANINGFUL DE-ESCALATION'

World leaders continued their diplomatic efforts.

U.S. President Joe Biden is due to speak at 1530 ET (2030 GMT) about "the steps we have taken, the actions we are prepared to take, what's at stake for the U.S. and the world," according to the White House, which said there will be no new policy announcements.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken told Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov during a call on Tuesday that there needed to be "verifiable, credible, meaningful de-escalation" by Moscow.

NATO's chief welcomed signals from Russia in the past two days that it may be looking for a diplomatic solution but urged Moscow to demonstrate its will to act.

"There are signs from Moscow that diplomacy should continue," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg told reporters.

He said Russia often left military equipment behind after exercises, creating the potential for forces to regroup.

At a joint news conference with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Russian President Vladimir Putin referred only briefly to the troop moves and did not go into details.

Russia has always denied planning to invade Ukraine, saying it can exercise troops on its own territory as it sees fit. It has been pressing for a set of security guarantees from the West.

Putin told reporters Russia would not be satisfied with talk that Ukraine was

not ready to join the western military alliance any time soon and was demanding that the issue be resolved now.

"As for war in Europe ... about whether we want it or not? Of course not. That is why we put forward proposals for a negotiation process, the result of which should be an agreement on ensuring equal security for everyone, including our country," he said.

In a separate development, Russia's lower house of parliament voted to ask Putin to recognise two Russian-backed breakaway regions in eastern Ukraine as independent.

Recognition of the self-declared Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics could kill the Minsk peace process in east Ukraine, where a conflict between government forces and Moscow-backed separatists has caused 15,000 deaths. Asked about the move, Putin said the regions' problems should be solved on the basis of the Minsk agreements, which were signed in 2014 and 2015 but have never been implemented. Scholz said all sides should stick to those accords.

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WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

02/15/2022



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Our Society Is Really Sick Now



Recently we watched a group of people in San Francisco walk into a drug store and take several items off the shelves, drop them into the bags they were carrying and then simply walk away. No one stopped them. When the police arrived, they had fled.

According to California law, theft is not a crime when a person steals or robs less than \$950 dollars, which was a law passed in a bill supported by fifty-eight percent of the voters in 2014.

We are seeing more

homeless on the streets of California cities. They have set up tents all over many cities. The situation seems helpless from the cities' local governments.

To be honest, we are currently facing very serious social problems now. The government's welfare program is very easy to get. The people don't want to

get back to work.

We saw a lot of strong men on the street begging for money. Most of them should go back to work.

If the situation does not change, we are facing two societies: the rich and the poor, and we will end up living in two different worlds.



Southern DAILY Make Today Different

Editor's Choice



Kamila Valieva of the Russian Olympic Committee reacts after competing in the Women's Single Skating Short Program. REUTERS/Evelyn Hockstein



Soldiers from the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne Division walk out at dusk to a transport plane bound for Europe, at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. REUTERS/Jonathan Drake



An image of assassinated President Jovenel Moise is seen in the background as locals maneuver past a burning barricade in protest of fuel shortages in Port-au-Prince, Haiti October 21, 2021. REUTERS/Adrees Latif.



Pavel Dzik of Belarus in action during training in the Men's Freestyle Skiing Aerials. REUTERS/Dylan Martinez



A protestor adds to a burning barricade during a demonstration against high prices and fuel shortages, in Port-au-Prince, Haiti October 21, 2021. REUTERS/Ralph Tedy Erol



LGBTQ+ couples attend same-sex marriage registration on Valentine's Day as a symbolic movement, as they will be presented with certificates recognizing their relationships, but the certificates will not be legally binding in Bang Khun Thian district, Bangkok, Thailand. REUTERS/Chaline Thirasupa

Southern DAILY Make Today Different

BUSINESS

COVID-19 Toll Not As Heavy, But The Pandemic Is Not Over U.S. COVID-19 Deaths Officially Surpass 1918 U.S. Flu Deaths



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

U.S. COVID-19 deaths have now over 900,000 estimated deaths that occurred during the H1N1 influenza pandemic of 1918, but SARS-CoV-2 hasn't exacted as heavy a toll as that pandemic. With a national population of around 103 million people at that time -- about a third of the current total of 330 million Americans -- the 1918 pandemic killed roughly 1 in 150 people in the U.S.; COVID has killed 1 in 500 Americans. Globally, the 1918 flu wrought more havoc than COVID, too, infecting about 500 million people, or a third of the world's population at that time. It killed about 50 million people globally, according to CDC estimates. SARS-CoV-2 has infected nearly 230 million people around the world and killed some 4.7 million of them. There are many reasons for the differences in infection and mortality. The 1918 pandemic hit while the world was enmeshed in World War I and international travel was frequent; hospitals didn't have the same medicines and technology at their disposal to treat patients; the cause of the illness was unidentifiable and therefore a test, targeted treatment, or vaccine was impossible.



During the COVID-19 pandemic, global travel came to a halt and public health measures such as social distancing and masking were implemented relatively rapidly, vaccines were produced in record time, and treatments were investigated in real-time with a few proving helpful (with more still in development). Still, misinformation and disinformation campaigns stymied the effectiveness of some of those approaches in the U.S., and the virus threw humanity a curveball with the far more transmissible Delta variant. "Since May, [more than] 100,000 Americans unnecessarily lost their lives because they chose not to get vaccinated," tweeted Peter Hotez, MD, PhD, of Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. "They fell victim to the vile yet unopposed antisense aggression from 3 sources: The far right including members of U.S. Congress, Governors, conservative news outlets; the 'disinformation dozen' identified by CCDH; and Russian propaganda." With the U.S. now averaging some 2,000 deaths per day, and the potential for sustained, high levels of transmission to spawn another variant, SARS-CoV-2 can still wreak much more havoc. Whether that ever reaches 1918 H1N1 proportions remains to be seen. The comparison to the 1918 flu pandemic also serves as a reminder of

the risk that influenza poses. Since 1918, three other influenza pandemics occurred in the U.S.: H2N2 in 1957, H3N2 in 1968, and H1N1 in 2009. These pandemics were all far less severe than the first H1N1 pandemic. But that doesn't mean another killer flu -- or another deadly coronavirus -- outbreak is off the table.

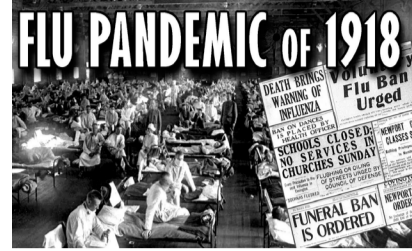


A reflection on the progress made since the 1918 pandemic by two CDC scientists published in Science for the 100-year anniversary of that outbreak concludes: "Philosopher George Santayana pointed out, 'Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.' We are no doubt more prepared in 2018 for an infectious disease threat than in 1918. But it is critical to remember that preparation only stems from a global commitment to share data about viral isolates, support innovative research, and dedicate resources to assess the pandemic risk of new and emerging influenza viruses from zoonotic reservoirs." (Courtesy medpagetoday.com)

COVID Has Now Killed As Many Americans As The 1918-19 Flu COVID-19 has now killed as many Americans as the 1918-19 Spanish flu pandemic did -- over 900,000

The U.S. population a century ago was just one-third of what it is today, meaning the flu cut a much bigger, more lethal swath through the country. But the COVID-19 crisis is by any measure a colossal tragedy in its own right, especially given the incredible advances in scientific knowledge since then and the failure to take maximum advantage of the vaccines available this time. "Big pockets of American society -- and, worse, their leaders -- have thrown this away," medical historian Dr. Howard Markel of the University of Michigan said of the opportunity to vaccinate everyone eligible by now. Like the Spanish flu, the coronavirus may never entirely disappear from our

midst. Instead, scientists hope it becomes a mild seasonal bug as human immunity strengthens through vaccination and repeated infection. That could take time.



"We hope it will be like getting a cold, but there's no guarantee," said Emory University biologist Rustom Antia, who suggests an optimistic scenario in which this could happen over a few years.

For now, the pandemic still has the United States and other parts of the world firmly in its jaws. While the delta-fueled surge in infections may have peaked, U.S. deaths are running at over 1,900 a day on average, the highest level since early March, and the country's overall toll topped 675,000 Monday, according to the count kept by Johns Hopkins University, though the real number is believed to be higher. Winter may bring a new surge, with the University of Washington's influential model projecting an additional 100,000 or so Americans will die of COVID-19 by Jan. 1, which would bring the overall U.S. toll to 776,000. The 1918-19 influenza pandemic killed 50 million victims globally at a time when the world had one-quarter the population it does now. Global deaths from COVID-19 now stand at more than 4.6 million.



Photo shows a demonstration at the Red Cross Emergency Ambulance Station in Washington during the influenza pandemic of 1918. Historians think the pandemic started in Kansas in early 1918, and by winter 1919 the virus had infected a third of the global population and killed

at least 50 million people, including 675,000 Americans. Some estimates put the toll as high as 100 million. (Library of Congress via AP, File) The Spanish flu's U.S. death toll is a rough guess, given the incomplete records of the era and the poor scientific understanding of what caused the illness. The 675,000 figure comes from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The ebbing of COVID-19 could happen if the virus progressively weakens as it mutates and more and more humans' immune systems learn to attack it. Vaccination and surviving infection are the main ways the immune system improves. Breast-fed infants also gain some immunity from their mothers. Under that optimistic scenario, schoolchildren would get mild illness that trains their immune systems. As they grow up, the children would carry the immune response memory, so that when they are old and vulnerable, the coronavirus would be no more dangerous than cold viruses.

The same goes for today's vaccinated teens: Their immune systems would get stronger through the shots and mild infections.

"We will all get infected," Antia predicted. "What's important is whether the infections are severe."



Something similar happened with the H1N1 flu virus, the culprit in the 1918-19 pandemic. It encountered too many people who were immune, and it also eventually weakened through mutation. H1N1 still circulates today, but immunity acquired through infection and vaccination has triumphed. Getting an annual flu shot now protects against H1N1 and several other strains of flu. To be sure, flu kills between 12,000 and 61,000 Americans each year, but on average, it is a seasonal problem and a manageable one. Before COVID-19, the 1918-19 flu was universally considered the worst pandemic disease in human history. Whether the current scourge ultimately proves deadlier is unclear.

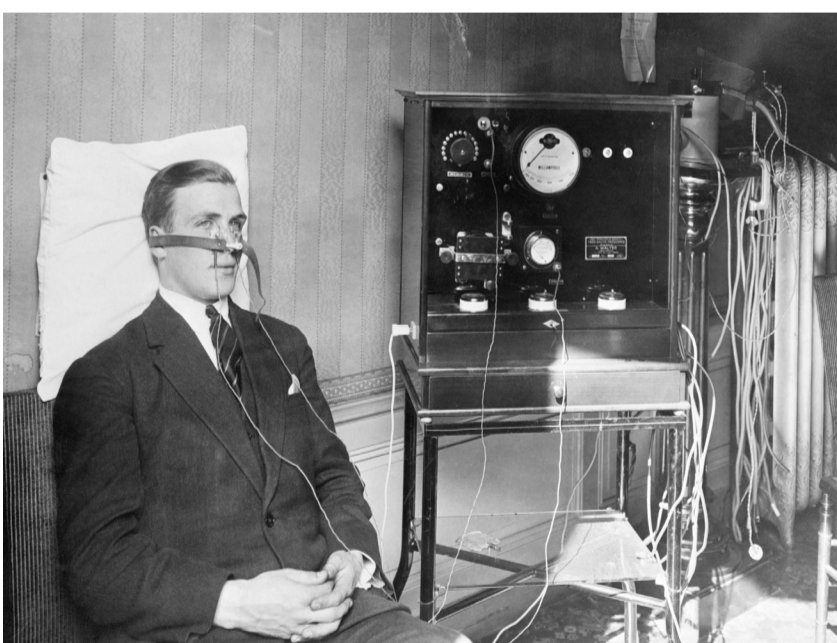
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Southern DAILY Make Today Different

COMMUNITY

(Article continues from above)

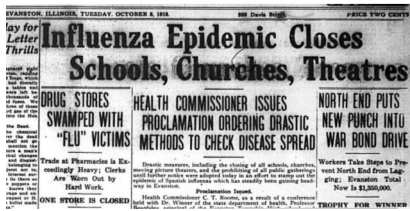
U.S. COVID-19 Deaths Officially Surpass 1918 U.S. Flu Deaths



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

In many ways, the 1918-19 flu -- which was wrongly named Spanish flu because it first received widespread news coverage in Spain -- was worse. Spread by the mobility of World War I, it killed young, healthy adults in vast numbers. No vaccine existed to slow it, and there were no antibiotics to treat secondary bacterial infections. And, of course, the world was much smaller. Yet jet travel and mass migrations threaten to increase the toll of the current pandemic. Much of the world is unvaccinated. And the coronavirus has been full of surprises. Professor Border of the University of Lyon in France demonstrates a machine he claimed could cure cold and flu symptoms in under one hour in about 1919. Markel said he is continually astounded by the magnitude of the disruption the pandemic has brought to the planet. "I was gobsmacked by the size of the quarantines," the Chinese government undertook initially, Markel said, "and I've since been gob-gob-smacked to the nth degree." The lagging pace of U.S. vaccinations is the latest source of his astonishment. Just under 64% of the U.S. population has received at least one dose of the vaccine, with state rates ranging from a high of approximately 77% in Vermont and Massachusetts to lows around 46% to 49% in Idaho, Wyoming, West Virginia and Mississippi. Globally, about 43% of the pop-

ulation has received at least one dose, according to Our World in Data, with some African countries just beginning to give their first shots. "We know that all pandemics come to an end," said Dr. Jeremy Brown, director of emergency care research at the National Institutes of Health, who wrote a book on influenza. "They can do terrible things while they're raging." COVID-19 could have been far less lethal in the U.S. if more people had gotten vaccinated faster, "and we still have an opportunity to turn it around," Brown said. "We often lose sight of how lucky we are to take these things for granted." The current vaccines work extremely well in preventing severe disease and death from the variants of the virus that have emerged so far.



It will be crucial for scientists to make sure the ever-mutating virus hasn't changed enough to evade vaccines or to cause severe illness in unvaccinated children, Antia said. If the virus changes significantly, a new vaccine using the technology behind the Pfizer and Moderna shots could be produced in 110

days, a Pfizer executive said Wednesday. The company is studying whether annual shots with the current vaccine will be required to keep immunity high.

One plus: The coronavirus mutates at a slower pace than flu viruses, making it a more stable target for vaccination, said Ann Marie Kimball, a retired University of Washington professor of epidemiology.

So, will the current pandemic unseat the 1918-19 flu pandemic as the worst in human history? "You'd like to say no. We have a lot more infection control, a lot more ability to support people who are sick. We have modern medicine," Kimball said. "But we have a lot more people and a lot more mobility. ... The fear is eventually a new strain gets around a particular vaccine target."

To those unvaccinated individuals who are counting on infection rather than vaccination for immune protection, Kimball said, "The trouble is, you have to survive infection to acquire the immunity." It's easier, she said, to go to the drugstore and get a shot. (Courtesy apnews.com)

The 1918 Flu Pandemic Never Really Ended After infecting millions of people worldwide, the 1918 flu strain shifted -- and then stuck around.

An unthinkable 50 to 100 million people worldwide died from the 1918-1919 flu pandemic commonly known as the "Spanish Flu." It was the deadliest global pandemic since the Black Death, and rare among flu viruses for striking down the young and healthy, often within days of exhibiting the first symptoms. In the United States, the 1918 flu pandemic lowered the average life expectancy by 12 years.



What's even more remarkable about the 1918 flu, say infectious disease experts, is that it never really went away. After infecting an estimated 500 million people worldwide in 1918 and 1919 (a third of the global population), the H1N1 strain that caused the Spanish flu receded into the background and stuck around as the regular seasonal flu. But every so often, direct descendants of the 1918 flu combined with bird flu or swine flu to create powerful new pandemic strains, which is exactly what happened in 1957, 1968 and 2009. Those later flu outbreaks, all created in part by the 1918 virus, claimed millions of additional lives, earning the 1918 flu the odious title of "the mother of all

pandemics."

The Deadly Virus Struck in Three Waves

Jeffrey Taubenberger was part of the pioneering scientific team that first isolated and sequenced the genome of the 1918 flu virus in the late 1990s. The painstaking process involved extracting viral RNA from autopsied lung samples taken from American soldiers who died from the 1918 flu, plus one diseased lung preserved in the Alaskan permafrost for nearly 100 years. Now chief of the Viral Pathogenesis and Evolution Section at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Taubenberger explains that genetic analyses of the 1918 flu indicate that it started as an avian flu and represented a completely new viral strain when it made the leap to humans shortly before 1918. Lab tests of the reconstructed 1918 virus show that in its original form, the virus's novel encoded proteins made it 100 times more lethal in mice than today's seasonal flu. The 1918 pandemic struck in three distinct waves over a 12-month period. It first appeared in the spring of 1918 in North America and Europe largely in the trenches of World War I, then reemerged in its deadliest form in the fall of 1918, killing tens of millions of people worldwide from September through November. The final wave swept across Australia, the United States and Europe in the late winter and spring of 1919. But did the 1918 flu simply "go away" after that third wave? Absolutely not, says Taubenberger.

Virus Mutates Into Seasonal Flu



Since the whole world had been exposed to the virus, and had therefore developed natural immunity against it, the 1918 strain began to mutate and evolve in a process called "antigenic drift." Slightly altered versions of the 1918 flu reemerged in the winters of 1919-1920 and 1920-1921, but they were far less deadly and nearly indistinguishable from the seasonal flu. "The 1918 flu definitely lost its real virulence by the early 1920s," says Taubenberger. But what's truly incredible, according to genetic analyses, is that the same novel strain of flu first introduced in 1918 appears to be the direct ancestor of every seasonal and pandemic flu we've had over the past century. "You can still find the genetic traces of the 1918 virus in the seasonal flu that circulate today," says Taubenberger. "Every single human infection with influenza A in the past 102 years is derived from that one introduction of the 1918 flu."

Welcome to the Pandemic Era

The 1918 flu pandemic was by far the deadliest flu outbreak of the 20th century to date, but it wasn't the only one to qualify as a pandemic. Even with the advent of the first seasonal flu vaccines after World War II, the flu virus has proven capable of some unexpected and deadly genetic tricks. In a normal flu season, vaccine scientists can track the most active viral strains and produce a vaccine that protects against changes in the human flu virus from year to year. But every so often, viral genes from the animal kingdom enter the mix. "If one animal is infected with two different influenza viruses at the same time," says Taubenberger, "maybe one virus from a bird and another from a human, those genes can mix and match to create a brand new virus that never existed before." That's what happened in 1957 when the 1918 flu, which is an H1N1 virus, swapped genes with another bird flu giving us the H2N2 pandemic, which claimed a million lives worldwide.



A man receives a shave from a barber wearing a mask during the ongoing flu pandemic, Chicago, Illinois, 1918. Chicago Sun-Times/Chicago Daily News Collection/Chicago History Museum/Getty Images.

It happened again in 1968 with the creation of the so-called "Hong Kong Flu," an H3N2 virus that killed another million people. The so-called "Swine Flu" pandemic of 2009 has an even deeper backstory. When humans became infected with the 1918 pandemic flu, which was originally a bird flu, we also passed it on to pigs. "One branch of the 1918 flu permanently adapted to pigs and became swine influenza that was seen in pigs in the US every year after 1918 and spread around the world," says Taubenberger. In 2009, a strain of swine flu swapped genes with both human influenza and avian influenza to create a new variety of H1N1 flu that was "more like 1918 than had been seen in a long time," says Taubenberger. Around 300,000 people died from the 2009 flu pandemic. All told, if 50 to 100 million people died in the 1918 and 1919 pandemic, and tens of millions more have died in the ensuing century of seasonal flu and pandemic outbreaks, then all of those deaths can be attributed to the single and accidental emergence in humans of the very successful and stubborn 1918 virus. "We're still living in what I would call the '1918 pandemic era' 102 years later" says Taubenberger, "and I don't know how long it will last." (Courtesy history.com)