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Cuomo Prime Time

**FDA Fully Approves Pfizer Vaccine For Those 16 And Older;
Biden Weighs Extending August 31 Deadline In Afghanistan;
White House Briefs House Intel Committee On Afghanistan.
Aired 9-10p ET**

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[21:00:00]

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

ANDERSON COOPER, CNN HOST: The news continues. Let's hand things over to Chris for "CUOMO PRIME TIME."

Chris?

CHRIS CUOMO, CNN HOST: All right, thanks, Anderson.

I am Chris Cuomo and welcome to the PRIME TIME COVID Command Center.

We do have breaking developments in Afghanistan. And one of the key players in the Trump-Taliban deal is here, with a twist. And we will test it.

But first, full approval at long last for the Pfizer vaccine from the FDA, for those 16 and older. Now, why only

those people? Why not under 16? We'll get to all that.

Here's the question. Will this get enough people to take the shot, so we can stop making ourselves sick? Three in 10 unvaccinated adults said in a recent survey, they would be more likely to get vaccinated, if one of the options moved to full approval.

The President says, "Now's your time."

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

JOE BIDEN, PRESIDENT, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: The moment you've been waiting for is here, and it's time for you to go get your vaccination, and get it today.

The FDA approval is the gold standard.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

CUOMO: And approval on his efforts on COVID is the gold standard for his ratings. And they're down. And getting people vaccinated is a big thing for him, and for the country.

Private companies, by the way, agree that approval was huge, why? They want to mandate vaccines, and now they believe they have clearance to, for their employees.

Now, this has been met with a lot of hype. "You know? If your employer makes you get a vaccine, that's discriminatory." Legal tests of this will come. It will be shocking, of a private business is not allowed to have their employees be vaccinated.

And the idea that "Insisting that you be protected, is unfair to the unvaccinated," unless you are immune-compromised, not getting, vaccinated is what is unfair, to the people, in your family, your job, and anywhere you go. This is on you, not your employer.

The Pentagon also announced earlier that all U.S. service members will now be required to get immunized. Why? Because sick people are weak people. And if that happens in the military, a mass contagion, that could have national security implications.

So, where are we? Take a look. We're averaging nearly 150,000 new cases a day. Deaths are up to almost 1,000 a day. That's 54 percent more than a week ago.

Dr. Sanjay Gupta is going to be with us tonight with a reality that we're going to all have to accept, about what our future looks like, and what's going to be happening, all over this country, like it or not.

Now, a lot of you want to be angry. I'm OK with that. But remember why we have to do all this.

Denial, by Trump and his administration, to start messaging, that turned his base into a population that wouldn't test, mask-up, or get vaccinated, as some perverse sense of strength, found in making themselves, and others, sick, a false exercise of freedom that makes them and others less free.

So much mis- and dis-information, so much perversion, of what freedom means that even the Pied Piper of the Pandemic, Trump himself, can no longer control those who were believed to be his people.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

DONALD TRUMP, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: And you know what? I believe totally in your freedoms. I do. You got to do what you have to do.

(AUDIENCE APPLAUSE)

TRUMP: But I recommend, take the vaccines. I did it. It's good. Take the vaccines. But you got--

(AUDIENCE BOOS)

TRUMP: No, that's OK. That's all right. You got your freedoms.

(AUDIENCE BOOS)

TRUMP: But I happened to take the vaccine. If it doesn't work, you'll be the first to know, OK?

(AUDIENCE LAUGHTER)

(END VIDEO CLIP)

CUOMO: They booed him. You know why? He's never really been their leader. He was a repeater. He repeated their angst and their animus.

And his legacy will be that he literally led people to risk their own lives. And he gave birth to a new wave of demagogues, who are misleading, just like he did, making people so resistant to reason, and relying on lies that they would rather try poison than a real cure.

The FDA just literally had to remind some Americans, "You are not a horse. You are not a cow." Why? Because some, are taking a drug, that's given to livestock, as an anti-parasitic, to treat, or prevent COVID. It doesn't work.

At least two people have been hospitalized in Mississippi after taking Ivermectin. It is a dewormer. It's not a COVID cure. Please don't take it.

[21:05:00]

The State's health department put out a warning saying, "Animal drugs are highly concentrated for large animals and can be highly toxic in humans." And they should have said, and I don't know why they didn't, "And this drug is not for COVID." I wonder if politics played into even that!

The State's Poison Control Center has been receiving an increasing number of calls, in relation to this. Why? Because somewhere, on the Right fringe, they said, "This will do it. Forget about the vaccine."

Look, people are literally insisting on making themselves sick. It is like a bad movie that we're all trapped in. Yes, this country is divided. Those who tell you otherwise, I don't get it, but they're wrong.

But define the division. It's not Left/Right. Come on, who defines themselves as that anymore? Those are just ideological extremes, for the political class. GOP or Democrat? Who calls themselves that anymore? Those are just teams in a bad game. This country is about the vaccinated, and those who choose to put them at risk.

And here's the good news. The vaccinated are this country. They are over 50 percent of every place and face. They've all done the right thing. So, how long must the majority wait, for the stubborn?

How long must kids not get educated, because a stubborn few won't learn the lesson about masks, refusing to

protect their kids, and your kids, especially when they know that kids under 12 can't even get vaccinated? So, they need adults, they are dependent on adults, to step up.

How long must all lives be stilted, at home and work, waiting on people, who insist on making themselves and others sick?

So, the question now is with the FDA approval, and the wave of mandates, will that make the difference? Let's take it to a better mind, former FDA Commissioner, under Trump, Dr. Stephen Hahn.

Good to see you back, Doc.

DR. STEPHEN HAHN, FORMER FDA COMMISSIONER UNDER PRESIDENT TRUMP, CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER, PREEMPTIVE MEDICINE - FLAGSHIP PIONEERING: Hi, Chris. Thanks for having me.

CUOMO: FDA approval, do you believe this could be something that creates a massive catalyst, among people, who haven't been vaccinated to date?

HAHN: Chris, it's a really important day, in our fight against COVID- 19. I don't know about the word "Massive," Chris. But I certainly hope for those who've been waiting for this full approval, that this is the impetus for them to get vaccinated.

We have clear evidence of the safety and effectiveness of the Pfizer- BioNTech vaccine. It's undergone full approval, and full vetting, by the gold standard, the U.S. FDA.

CUOMO: You used "Full" there twice. The "Hate Parade" is already marching and saying "They took shortcuts. This isn't real approval. They hedged it, just to make you take it." Do you believe any of that?

HAHN: No, I don't. Chris, we heard from the FDA today that the application for the Pfizer-BioNTech, Biological License Application, this is, for the full approval, was over 300,000 pages.

The FDA career staff went through it. They did the number crunching. They know. So, not only was this data in the clinical trial that was performed, but we have over several hundred million people, around the world, vaccinated with this vaccine.

What does that tell you? That tells you that we have more data about efficacy and safety than almost any other vaccine, in the history of vaccination. The data are clear. The FDA has spoken. The vaccine is safe and effective.

CUOMO: Why isn't Pfizer approved for 12 to 15? It's still under an Emergency Use Authorization, for 12 to 15, but is approved 16 and up, why?

HAHN: Well, the original trial was in 16 and over, so we have data that's at least six months, in terms of safety, which is the requirement that the FDA has that, the folks, who went through the trial, had to have six months of follow-up safety data.

And we just recently saw the Emergency Use Authorization for 12 to 15. So, we have to wait a little bit more time to collect additional safety data. But Chris, there's no reason to believe that it won't be as safe in that group, as it is in 16 and older. We just have to wait for the data to be complete. CUOMO: What do you say to those, in Right-wing media, saying "This deworming drug, this could do the trick?"

HAHN: Which drug, Chris?

CUOMO: Ivermectin.

HAHN: Ah, yes.

CUOMO: The deworming drug.

HAHN: Right. So, we've seen this before.

And it's ironic, Chris, a drug that indeed is approved by the FDA, for certain infections, but for which there's pretty good data, as suggested, does not work against COVID-19, and would not be recommended, by any medical professional, that that would be chosen over a vaccine that's been studied, and looked at, in hundreds of thousands of people.

So, Ivermectin is not a drug that anyone should take for COVID-19. It does not appear to work. And it may be harmful, particularly if you take the animal version of it.

[21:10:00]

CUOMO: What do you think is going on with people, who would rather push? Sophisticated people? They're no Hahn. But they're somewhere smarter than a Cuomo, but not as smart as a Hahn. And they would rather push a deworming drug, than a vaccine. What does that tell us?

HAHN: I don't know the answer to that question because it doesn't follow the science, and the data. And, as we have discussed before, this is not about politics. This is about what is the - what do the science and data show us.

And the science and data show us that Ivermectin, at this point, has no benefit, for COVID-19 patients, either in the prevention, or in the treatment, whereas the vaccine clearly has efficacy and the prevention.

So, I don't have any understanding of that at all. What I can do is reiterate what I said. We have to stop the politics. We have to follow the science and the data.

CUOMO: Dr. Stephen Hahn, thank you for being on the show. Please come back again soon.

HAHN: Thank you, Chris.

CUOMO: All right, be well.

All right, so at home, we're trying to get people to save themselves. In Afghanistan, we face an equally toxic situation, and a key decision. Will Biden extend the Taliban deadline, to rescue trapped Americans and allies? Key question, why did America ever agree to any Taliban control, over any kind of timeline? Biden blames Trump for that.

The last person to head the Pentagon, on Trump's watch, says "Biden has it wrong, and this is his problem." He's here. Let's get after it, next.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

TEXT: CUOMO PRIME TIME.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

[21:15:00]

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

TEXT: LET'S GET AFTER IT.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

CUOMO: All right. We're on the precipice of a big moment.

The Pentagon is advising President Biden, "You got to make a call by tomorrow," to extend the deadline for withdrawal from Afghanistan. Word is leaders from the G7 countries are saying "You have to do that." Meanwhile, the Taliban calls the August 31st date a, quote, "Red line."

Look, we don't even know how many Americans and allies may be in harm's way there. I know the White House is putting out numbers. We don't know that they're right.

Can America really allow the Taliban to dictate anything? How did this even happen? How did we get into this situation? Let's discuss with Donald Trump's former Acting Secretary of Defense, who served in combat, in Afghanistan, Special Ops, Christopher Miller.

First of all, sir, thank you for your service to the country, especially during that time. I know, you know, the country, and the politics of it well. Appreciate you being here.

CHRISTOPHER MILLER, FORMER ACTING SECRETARY OF DEFENSE UNDER PRESIDENT TRUMP, COL., 5TH SPECIAL FORCES GROUP, AFGHANISTAN (RET), BOARD PRESIDENT, SPECIAL OPERATIONS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA: Chris, I don't think words can describe how honored I am, in to be, on your show. This is the first time I've publicly appeared, on these matters.

And I was raised in that era, where politics stopped at the water's edge. And you brought up earlier, about some big news coming out of the White House. And we're going to talk about that.

But I just want - some news came out, just recently, about our last POW, our prisoner of war that's being held

there, a guy named Mark Frerichs. He was a contractor, a Navy veteran, that's still being held by the Taliban. It looks like the Biden administration is going to do everything they can to get him back.

And I'm really thrilled by that. And that's an example. This is bipartisan, Chris. And I'm not going to be some hectoring political pundit on this one. But I certainly have some experience.

I went into Afghanistan, on the 5th of December, 2001, after three of my men, were killed, Cody Prosser, J.D. Davis, and Dan Petithory, and then, of course, have spent the rest of my professional career, involved in this fight.

And really looking forward to your questions, and hopefully, we can educate the American public. That's what I love about your show. You take this seriously. And it's a little more long form, as opposed to just sound bites.

So, over to you, sir.

CUOMO: All right. So, let's start at the beginning.

The decision to elevate the Taliban, and do a deal with them, during the Trump administration, was that a mistake? Were they given too much control, for them to be saying anything as a "Red line?" Should America be listening to the Taliban?

MILLER: They're a notable enemy. They've done obviously extremely well. And you have to respect your enemy. That's one of the fundamental principles, of being a military person.

You got to talk to your enemy. It took a long, long time. We had opportunities earlier to do that. We didn't take them. And finally, the window opened, and we had the opportunity to sit down, and talk with them, and start hashing out an agreement.

So you get - this is how these wars have to end. Insurgencies are just horrifying. They're devastating, and the human cost and the emotional cost. But you got to start talking sometime.

CUOMO: I got you with the talk. But bringing them to Camp David, elevating them that way, allowing them to somewhat dictate terms, and then to continue honoring an agreement, even after they didn't, was that a mistake? Or how was it not a mistake?

MILLER: I saw it a bit differently. I thought that the agreement that we established with the Taliban was basically the first step, the first phase, of an ongoing process, and dealing with the Taliban in negotiations is kind of set piece on that one.

We had to get an agreement with the Taliban, to start the negotiations, to bring the - to bring the Afghan government, into, or President Ghani, and his people. So, this did not end the way we expected. We thought we still had some leverage, and some opportunity, to modify. And as has been noted before, this was conditions-based. And there was an opportunity to renegotiate, or to push back, if we felt that things weren't going the way they needed to go.

CUOMO: So, when they weren't going the way they were supposed to go, the Taliban, missing deadlines, to start talks with the Afghan government, the Taliban still supporting al Qaeda, you know the particulars, why wasn't it renegotiated? Why wasn't the deal pulled then?

MILLER: Because on the - at 12:01, on the 20th of January 2021, Trump administration left office, and this was handed over to the Biden administration. And that is in no way shape or form a criticism of the Biden administration.

I felt that we gave them plenty of flexibility and room to negotiate, if that's what they wanted to do.

[21:20:00]

I haven't been involved in those conversations, obviously, since I left Government. So, I don't know what went on with the decision to withdraw the way we did, and to end our involvement there, in the manner that we've seen, since last Friday.

CUOMO: You had windows before that, though, in terms of what the DOD was warning, August, even prior to that. Why did the Administration not move then on its own watch?

MILLER: See - I'm kind of confused on that one.

I took over on 9th of November 2020. I was involved, from afar, as the Director of the National Counterterrorism Center, the organization that oversees indicators, and warnings, and threats, for terrorism directed towards the United States.

I was disconnected, at that time, from the negotiations. So, I really can't comment on that. And that's not like some political spin that I'm trying to dodge your questions.

CUOMO: No, I - you're right. You're right. On the dates.

MILLER: You know, so?

CUOMO: I was just wondering about your perspective. Let's go to your watch.

MILLER: I took--

CUOMO: Three months later?

MILLER: OK, sorry.

CUOMO: Go ahead, Chris. No, no, no, Chris, I'm here to hear you. So, finish the point.

MILLER: No, I mean, great point, Chris.

And when we came in, it was - we had the final 72 days - 73 days, in the administration. So wanted - the goal was to make sure that the table was set, and allow the Biden administration, the opportunity, to do what they thought best, to half the nation.

So, I felt very comfortable with the agreement. I felt very comfortable with drawing down to 2,500.

I want to be like brutally clear. I am violent - viscerally committed to ending the war in Afghanistan, was then, and was a great supporter of the efforts, to reduce our troop presence, overseas. So I'm not - I'm not trying to like dodge the question.

We had - we left with 2,500 troops, in the country. We actually had 3,500. We had some counterterrorism forces there as well. I felt like we had a pretty good force structure there and the opportunity to keep the Taliban at bay.

And we were at stalemate at that point. Remember, Chris, we were completely at stalemate, when we left, and political negotiations needed to continue. The war wasn't going to be won militarily.

And unfortunately, things didn't go our way. And the opportunity to further negotiations, and bring the Ghani, the Afghan government in, in negotiations, didn't work the way we hoped.

CUOMO: The agreement had called for having somewhere around 13,000, in the Doha deal, 13,000 troops. We wound up having a fraction of that, as you just said.

For the American people, they always say, in polls, "We want to get out." Why? Because they don't like the idea of men like you, men and women, shedding their blood, in a war that they don't think they can win, in a place that they don't think is theirs to fight.

But I always wondered, if they had been asked, "Are you OK, getting out of Afghanistan, if you won't be as safe at home afterwards?" What do you think of that proposition, Chris?

Do you think that America can be as safe at home from terror attacks, as it was with a presence in Afghanistan?

MILLER: Chris, I was - I'm shamelessly partisan when it comes down to our Special Operations forces and our Counterterrorism forces. I was enormously blessed and honored to serve with them, for quite a period of time.

When we defeated the Taliban in 2001, we did that with 200 special operators, and paramilitary forces, from our Intelligence agencies.

I felt very comfortable that we could maintain pressure on the Taliban, and keep the war at a stalemate, with the same sort of force structure, going on, after the negotiations with the Afghan government, and the Taliban were complete. So, I felt very comfortable that we could arrange a situation, where we could keep a stay-behind force, of commandos and counterterrorism forces, paramilitary forces and Intelligence assets there, so that we could keep a finger on the pulse of terrorist groups that mean harm to us. So, I have a little different view on that.

We did force structure analysis quite deliberately. And we had a figure of about 800 would work. But when you look at it, like I said, we took the country down and defeated them with 200. I think we could have probably maintained some, stiffen the spine of the Afghan National Security Forces with 200 as well.

CUOMO: So, the Biden administration makes a pretty steady case that, "Look, we're saddled with this deal. This is the deadline. This is when we have to get out."

And then you are credited with saying "No, no, no. The May 1st deadline was always a ruse. That wasn't real."

And Will Ruger just put out a tweet. You know him for being part of the team. "I wasn't aware of any alleged "ruse," and believe the report to be false. It also doesn't fit with President Trump's sense of where things needed to go, in terms of Afghan policy and other reporting on the subject."

Why did you say that May 1 wasn't a real date?

MILLER: I really don't like the way that headline read, is a "Ruse." It wasn't a ruse.

[21:25:00]

It was part of an ongoing strategy to negotiate with the Taliban and maintain counterterrorism forces, in Afghanistan, or immediately very close to Afghanistan. So, ruse is an inaccurate term.

The agreement that was signed between the United States and the Taliban was phase one of a more ongoing thing.

And our intention, all along, was in the - the Taliban talks about we have the watches and the clocks, but they have the time. So, time was - we felt we had the ability to move the - move the goal posts, if we needed to, on that one, in a way that would - remember, the Taliban wanted us out.

So, let's talk about straight negotiating. They wanted us out. We wanted to maintain some sort of counterterrorism presence there.

The idea was force the Ghani government, into negotiations with the Taliban, then use their traditional Loya Jirga, that's a huge gathering of Afghan leadership that then establishes a new form of government, use that, and then there's a new government established.

Obviously, the Afghan government would have limited participation in that. But they'd still be a coalition. It would be a interim government that then we would have the opportunity to further negotiate with.

So, the Taliban would go away. The Afghan national government would go away. There's now a new government, that our previous agreements are no longer extant or applicable. So, now you have a new

government to negotiate with. That was our - that was our intention.

CUOMO: I hear it. And again, for the audience, in case they're just tuning in right now, Chris Miller was the former Acting Defense Secretary, under President Trump. But he didn't - he wasn't at the table for the initial Doha agreement. He came into - effectuated later.

And that's my question, in terms of shedding insight, Chris, which is, there's nothing in the Doha agreement, about getting our allies out. It doesn't really list that, "Hey, we're going to take our time." It puts it on the Taliban that they get to control this.

What was your understanding when you came in, of where Trump was, in terms of being OK with this, being as one sided as it was, and why nobody had renegotiated, or gone to phase two, to use your language, that this was just the first step, why had there been no other step taken, before you got in?

MILLER: Well, Chris, I was involved. I was a bit player. I was Head of Counterterrorism.

CUOMO: Right.

MILLER: For the National Security Council for the President.

So I was - I don't want to give the impression that I was some major- domo or anything like that, in the negotiations. But I certainly was tracking it, and was aware of what was going on, and was privy to the longer-term plan.

And the way I described it, although it was a very close-hold negotiations, between Ambassador Khalilzad, and the Taliban, the question you have about the President is, is you saw that he desperately wanted to withdraw forces, prior to his departure. But he was also strategically competent and strategically aware that that was impossible, at the time, based on what the Taliban were doing.

So, President Trump has - spoke extensively about this. And I have no reason to doubt his statements that he would have handled this differently, if the Taliban would have continued, this type of egregious behavior that was in violation of the agreement.

CUOMO: See, that's the one part I don't get. And I want to give you another chance--

MILLER: Yes.

CUOMO: --to kind of clear this up for people, is that when you look at the timeline, and what was in the deal, I'll accept that this was part of what was expected to be a multi-part process. But nothing ever followed. And it was left, where you're going to be set up or have a problem getting out of there.

And I don't understand why nobody ever took any of the other steps that you are outlining.

"Well the Afghan allies, and when we get people out, well, that wasn't in there. But we were going to do it later. The deadline, when we'd be out, well, those were all soft points. We were going to deal with it later."

Why didn't anybody in the Trump administration do anything better than what was handed to Biden?

MILLER: I don't - I don't have any idea why the Biden administration didn't go forward with the plan. It's been seven months.

I can understand getting your feet on the ground and figuring things out. But, at the end of the day, we certainly had the ability to do a responsible drawdown and departure from there, and through some additional planning.

I can't answer that. But we weren't going to execute the final withdraws. So, I have - I have no way to answer your question on that. Sorry.

CUOMO: No, not on the Biden side, on the Trump side. There was never any renegotiation. There was never any better terms. There was never any pushing the Taliban to do what it wasn't doing at the time. Why wasn't that done on Trump's watch, before Biden came in?

MILLER: You'd have to ask Ambassador Khalilzad. I assume that he was doing that throughout, even after the signing of the Doha agreement.

CUOMO: So, you don't see that as being the responsibility of the Trump administration, in terms of how to commit, or de-commit, or control the exit of American troops?

MILLER: Oh, no. We were absolutely thinking about it, planning. And I gave you what our intentions were, earlier, about how we intended to do that.

[21:30:00]

CUOMO: Last thing. Extending the date of the 31st, do you think America has any choice, but to blow off that date, and do what it takes, to get its people, its citizens, and its allies, out of that country?

MILLER: I think we have a huge commitment. And we've heard the administration and their officials talk about getting all Americans out. So I'm not - I don't know what exactly is going on right now. I know that we got great Americans over there working as hard as they can.

And Chris, we got to highlight that this is basically a "Digital Dunkirk," right now. There are enormous amount of Americans that are giving their time, their money, their effort, to help with this. There's an opportunity for a public-private partnership.

The pieces really aren't in place yet. But I'm really hoping that there's this center set up for civil military relations, of these folks that have this desire to help. America is a wonderful country with hugely, hugely empathetic and sympathetic folks that want to help. So, I really hope we do that. That needs to happen soon.

There's some simple issues that need to be addressed. There are people with airplanes and capability that are ready to go in, and help, but the bureaucracy is slowing that down right now.

And we also just need to recognize veterans, and specifically, our women veterans that have served there so magnificently. This was the first war, where we had women in combat. And we need to make sure that they get the services from the Veterans Administration, and elsewhere, that they're entitled to.

CUOMO: You think that you'll be able to get to a position, with the Taliban in control, where you can have private citizens going, in and out of there, or any kind of joint efforts, with that type of despotic group, sitting there on the ground, up to who knows what kind of violence?

MILLER: Yes, absolutely. There is - we still have some leverage on the Taliban. They want these people out. Let's help get them out.

They're a threat to their regime. I don't see any reason at all, why they wouldn't be supportive of continuing the evacuation. I mean, there's absolutely room to negotiate, and to extend the deadline, from my perspective.

But then, again, I'm out of government right now. And I don't have that horrible burden on my shoulders. And I

really wish them the best, because when they do well, America does well, and that's what we all want on this.

CUOMO: Chris Miller, I appreciate your service. I appreciate you talking to us, about how we got here, and what you think the considerations are. Thank you very much.

MILLER: Thank you, Chris.

CUOMO: All right, we'll be right back.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

TEXT: CUOMO PRIME TIME.

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[21:35:00]

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

TEXT: LET'S GET AFTER IT.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

CUOMO: A lot of hype about FDA approval of the vaccine. Does it matter? Let's bring in the Wiz, Harry Enten.

What's the answer?

HARRY ENTEN, CNN SENIOR DATA REPORTER: The answer is yes, it helps a little bit, certainly of the things that you would do voluntarily. The full FDA approval certainly helps.

If you look at the list of things that the Kaiser Family Foundation asked about a month ago, what do you see?

You see the FDA giving full approval, that's the top one, 31 percent, the unvaccinated more likely to get the vaccine. That's higher than if a chance to win a million dollars, access to mobile clinic, or free childcare. I've looked at all of it. It's one of the best on there.

But here's the thing about the full FDA approval, what it will really do. What it does is it gets those people, who are thinking about getting the vaccination, much more likely to get it.

So, if you wanted the vaxx, as soon as possible, 79 percent of those folks say, it's more likely to get us the vaccination, 49 percent, who were saying, "You know? We're going to wait and see how the vaccine works." Even 30 percent, who said that they'd only get, if enforced, it makes them more likely.

But among those, who were the definitely nots, just 8 percent say, be more likely. So, it's really about pushing those people, over the edge, who are thinking of getting it, to actually get the vaccine.

CUOMO: So, you think it takes a carrot and stick?

ENTEN: I think it takes a carrot and stick. That's exactly right. So, if we were in fact, to team this up, with a vaccine mandate, what do we do? Number one, by giving this full approval that makes vaccine mandates much more likely.

But more than that, if in fact let's say you say "OK, we're going to have this full FDA approval," and then employers basically say, "You have to, in fact, get vaccinated, if you want to keep working there," look at that, 51 percent of unvaccinated workers say they will get the vaccine, or more likely to get it. Just 43 percent say, no, and they'll quit their job.

So, I think that if you team this up, you team up a full FDA approval, along with a full - along with a vaccine mandate, I think that's the ticket to success.

CUOMO: Harry Enten, very good on time, and thank you for making the points that matter. Appreciate you.

The Wizard of Odds, Harry Enten! ENTEN: My pleasure, sir.

CUOMO: All right, so look, vaccinated or not, you want the truth? Here it is. COVID is not going anywhere.

Dr. Sanjay Gupta gives us the reality, and what we can do about it, next.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

TEXT: CUOMO PRIME TIME.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

[21:40:00]

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

TEXT: LET'S GET AFTER IT.

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CUOMO: How big a deal is the FDA approving Pfizer's vaccine? Let's bring in Dr. Sanjay Gupta.

Good to see you.

DR. SANJAY GUPTA, CNN CHIEF MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT: Good to be here.

CUOMO: What do you believe the net effect of this move could be?

GUPTA: I think it's actually going to be somewhat significant. Maybe not right away. But I think there's three categories of people that are going to be affected by this.

People, as Harry was just talking about that have sort of been on the line, maybe about 30 percent of people, who said, "Look, it felt too new. And now with approval, I'll go ahead and get it."

Keep in mind as well, that as part of the approval, Pfizer will now get to market, and advertise this vaccine. So, you're going to see pricey ads popping up, Chris, basically showing you what life is like, if you get the vaccine, versus if you don't. That might have an impact.

But it's the bottom one that I think is going to have the biggest impact. Universities are already doing this, big institutions. You heard about the VA, University of Minnesota. So, the mandates will certainly have an impact, I think.

Let me just show you real quick, snapshot of the country, in terms of where we are of this pie chart. We have about 51 percent that have been vaccinated, another 9 percent that have been partially vaccinated. It's the red, 25 percent that are eligible, but are not yet vaccinated. So, that's the population of people, about 80 million people that could be potentially affected by this.

CUOMO: Look, my thing is that this country is divided, but it's not Red, Blue, Democrat, GOP. It's Vaccinated and Unvaccinated.

And I got to tell you, up until this point, it's all been about "Be nice to the Unvaccinated. Don't shame them. Let them learn." Enough! They're holding up life for everybody else.

And now, you just wrote in an Op-Ed, something that's popping a lot of eyes, but it was a point you had to make, Doc. This is going nowhere. COVID will be with us six months, 12 months, 18 months, yes?

GUPTA: Yes. I mean, it's becoming endemic. That's the word that people use. And I also put in there though, five strategies, about how to sort of dance or coexist with this - with this virus. We've been talking about them for some time.

Vaccinations. First of all, I got my vaccine card here. I think we need to have some way of actually proving that people are vaccinated.

These cards, I mean, it's a little bit ridiculous that you have the app up in New York. How are people traveling from state-to-state, how are they going to show that? That's going to be a point that they're going to have to address.

The right kind of masks, Delta changed the equation, Chris. This is far more transmissible. So, surgical masks are good.

This is my go-to mask, which is a KN95 mask here, the black one, that's the kind of mask that is pretty easy to use, very, very effective, in terms of filtering out particles.

And then, this is the N95 mask, you hear a lot about. This is supposed to be fit-tested, do you actually put it on. But one thing to sort of look for is if you have the loops going around your head, you're going to get a better seal.

Regardless, if you're going to be in an environment, where there's a lot of viral transmission, you're going to need to wear masks.

Ventilation, everyone talks about this, Chris. I don't think very many people really know what it means.

[21:45:00]

I want to show you something here. I just set this up. This is a CO2 monitor. It's sort of a cheap man's version of actually measuring ventilation. How much carbon dioxide, which we all breathe out, is in the air?

You want it to be somewhere around 1,000. Mine is what, 1,055, it gets. You're making me a little nervous, Chris. I'm breathing out more carbon dioxide. But this is - this is something you can do, to try and get a sense of just how much the ventilation is in your area.

Antigen testing, Chris, we talk a lot about the vaccines, but antigen tests, something that you can do on a regular basis. There are several authorized antigen tests now. You could do this daily, if you needed to.

And this is, if you are feeling fine, but you want to know, if you're a potentially contagious, that's what those tests are good for. I feel fine. But am I going to be potentially contagious to other people?

So, those are the big things, Chris. Overall, you just - we need to reevaluate risk nowadays, you know? Are you still going to do indoor dining, in an area where there's lots of viral transmission? Maybe not. Now, viral transmission goes down, we can think about it, then.

It's going to be kind of like thinking of the weather, in some ways, at least for the next several months.

CUOMO: That's if people accept the reality. And that's been the sticking point.

But I got to hand it to you, Sanjay. You've been putting out the message. You've been keeping it real. And you've been right all along. So, thank you, for giving us the right information, at the right time.

GUPTA: Thank you.

CUOMO: Be well, brother.

GUPTA: You got it. You too.

CUOMO: All right, so did you hear what happened tonight in Congress? There were key members. They got a briefing from the White House, on the mass evacuation effort, in Afghanistan. One of them is here.

I want to ask, do they believe the numbers coming out of the White House? Next.

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[21:50:00]

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

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TEXT: LET'S GET AFTER IT.

(END VIDEO CLIP) CUOMO: The White House briefed the House Intel Committee, on the situation, in Afghanistan, including my next guest, Representative Jackie Speier.

Congresswoman, thank you for joining us tonight.

REP. JACKIE SPEIER (D-CA): Good to be with you, Chris.

CUOMO: In terms of the numbers, of how many Americans are still there, how many allies, how much confidence do you have, in the numbers the White House are using?

SPEIER: Well I'm not sure that any of us really know.

There's no requirement that a U.S. citizen has to check in with the U.S. embassy, when they come into a country. So, what we know is what has been given to us, by persons, who have contacted either the embassy or congressional offices.

And I think, at this point, our focus has to be in getting those, who have contacted us, out of Afghanistan.

CUOMO: Do you have any concern that the White House is using smaller numbers, to make it an easier task?

SPEIER: I don't know one way or the other.

And, at this point, really, Chris, the important thing is to get all of these people out, to get those that were the interpreters, and the drivers, and their families out, and to get every U.S. citizen out, who wants to leave.

And I think we have a Herculean task ahead of us. We have now been able to evacuate 28,000. We have eight more days left, in which we will have to evacuate the rest of the people.

And the pictures that we see, at the airport, in Kabul, are pretty daunting. So, it's important that we stay focused on what we can do, and must do.

CUOMO: Right. Well, obviously, the "Must" is getting them all out. That's why the number matters.

But to how you get that done, one, do you believe that a Taliban deadline should be respected? And what do you think of the security situation at the airport, from the briefing?

SPEIER: Well, I'm concerned about the status of the airport. And I think that we have to make sure that if that deadline is extended, it's negotiated with the Taliban. And I'm sure President Biden has that in mind, because that date is certain. And if we go beyond that August 31st date, then there could be repercussions. So, it has to be negotiated.

CUOMO: What do you think about the security situation at the airport? And what do you know about the status of negotiations? SPEIER: I don't know anything about the status of negotiations.

And, as to the security of the airport, we have a lot of remarkable Afghan people, who have been helping us,

and have worked very hard and worked with our various military there.

It is dangerous. I don't think there's any question about that. And we have to do everything in our power, to secure the airport, for as long as we are there.

CUOMO: And just to understand, Representative, the status of the negotiation of the deadline, wasn't part of the briefing?

SPEIER: It was not.

CUOMO: Did you - anybody ask what's going on with the deadline?

SPEIER: Yes.

CUOMO: And they said, "We're not going to tell you?"

SPEIER: They said that they weren't familiar with what was being negotiated.

CUOMO: So, the people at the White House didn't know what was being negotiated with the deadline?

SPEIER: We didn't speak to people from the White House. We spoke to representatives that would normally come before the Intelligence Committee.

CUOMO: I got you. Are you going to ask for follow-up on that, because it pretty - is the key determination right now, right?

SPEIER: Absolutely. And we will continue to debrief on this issue. And it's important for us to stop pointing fingers right now, and get our American citizens, and those Afghans, who have helped us, out of the country.

CUOMO: I hear you, 100 percent. That's why I'm so worried about the number that you got to know how many people you're trying to get, so that you'll be able to figure out, how many of them you do get, and how many are left behind.

Because let's be honest, as you know, better than I, the Taliban, in charge of Afghanistan, you're not going to hear as much from that country, once we leave, in terms of who's left behind.

How concerned are you that America will not get this done?

SPEIER: Well, at this point, I'm not looking at whether we're going to get it done. We have to get it done.

I'm also very concerned about the women and girls in Afghanistan. I think we have a femicide that's about to happen in that country.

[21:55:00]

It doesn't have to be in anyone's memory, not to remember the fact that there was a stadium used to--

CUOMO: Yes.

SPEIER: --stone people to death, and women in particular, and shoot people at point-blank range. So, I don't think the Taliban has changed its spots. And I think it's very important for us to do everything we can to get women and girls out that want to get out.

CUOMO: Absolutely. And it'll be very interesting to see what the posture is of all allies, about what is done to females, old and young, in that country, when we're gone.

Congresswoman, thank you so much. I know it's been a very long day. Appreciate you taking this opportunity, to inform the audience.

SPEIER: Good to be with you, Chris.

CUOMO: All right. We'll be right back.

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TEXT: CUOMO PRIME TIME.

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(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

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TEXT: LET'S GET AFTER IT.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

CUOMO: Got to watch Afghanistan, got to see what happens in this country. And both of them are knitted together by a principle of trust, but verify.

The numbers, the efforts, in Afghanistan, the ability to take a safe vaccine, here, and then the responsibility to do what's right for yourself, your family and the people in your community. Will we get it right? We'll see.

Thank you for watching. "DON LEMON TONIGHT" with the big star, D. Lemon, now.

DON LEMON, CNN HOST: Got a translator, who came over here, helped the U.S. military, in Afghanistan, came over, as a teenager, promised to get his family here. He is working on that now.

I have some good news.