

“We want them infected:” Emails show White House sought to promote spread of COVID-19

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18 December 2020

Health officials announced Thursday that Southern California has completely run out of Intensive Care Unit beds as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to overrun the health system in the United States. All over the country, doctors face the imminent prospect of rationing care. More than 300,000 people are dead, and public health experts warn that hundreds of thousands more could die in the months ahead.

This disaster is not the outcome of mere negligence. It is the result of a deliberate policy of sacrificing lives to protect the profit interests of major corporations.

On Wednesday, *Politico* released a set of documents detailing discussions behind the scenes this summer as the White House, together with the state governors and Congress, oversaw the full reopening of schools and businesses throughout the country in defiance of the warnings of public health experts.

Contrary to the official presentation, these emails show that US government policy was not aimed at saving lives, but at promoting the spread of COVID-19 through schools and workplaces.

In an email sent on July 4, Paul Elias Alexander, an advisor to Health and Human Services Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs Michael Caputo, said that the administration should open businesses and schools to infect as many people as possible.

“Infants, kids, teens, young people, young adults, middle aged with no conditions etc. have zero to little risk... so we use them to develop herd... we want them infected,” Alexander wrote.

Alexander’s memos express the view that the lives of elderly and sick people are less valuable than those of young people. “Data shows I have heard now that only 3.5 percent of deaths now are in persons younger than 44 years,” Alexander wrote, adding, “God forbid” this changes.

These statements can only be described as fascist rants. The population is seen as a set of guinea pigs to be infected at will, and the lives of the elderly are treated as valueless.

In a separate email, Alexander continued, “So the bottom line is if it is more infectionness [sic] now, the issue is who cares? If it is causing more cases in young, my word is who cares... who cares if we test more and get more positive tests?”

In his homicidal rants, Alexander was speaking both for the

White House and for dominant sections of the US political establishment. Together with his boss, Michael Caputo, Alexander successfully suppressed the publication of mortality and infection figures by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and strong-armed scientists into downplaying the threat posed by the pandemic.

More importantly, the White House’s “herd immunity” policy was supported and promoted by every section of the US media. Using Sweden—which did not close businesses and schools during the pandemic—as a model, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post* and *New York Times* promoted the quack theory of “herd immunity.”

On March 22, *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman declared that the “cure” can’t be “worse than the disease,” arguing that the government should “let many of us get the coronavirus, recover and get back to work.” In May, the *Washington Post* wrote in an editorial that “Sweden offers an appealing model to many people who are fatigued by the hardships of pandemic lockdown or who were never convinced it was entirely necessary.”

From the beginning of the pandemic, the entire response by the US government and political establishment was aimed at preserving the profit interests of major corporations.

A decision was made early on to downplay the danger. In January and February, President Donald Trump, his cabinet and Congress received high-level briefings from the US intelligence agencies, which warned that the pandemic was “the biggest national security threat” of Trump’s presidency. But rather than alerting the population, Trump, by his own admission, sought to “play it down.” For the first two months of the year, there was no systematic testing for the disease in the United States, allowing it to spread widely, even as the population was encouraged to travel, shop and congregate.

By March, the disease had become so widespread that its effects became impossible to conceal. By the middle of the month, workers began walking off the job at major US manufacturing facilities, leading to the shutdown of production at GM, Ford and Chrysler.

The US political establishment used the crisis triggered by the pandemic to carry out a massive bailout of the rich, putting some \$6 trillion at the disposal of corporations and the financial

markets through the combined intervention of the Federal Reserve and Treasury, sanctioned by the bipartisan CARES Act, passed in late March.

With the bailout secured, a decision was made to abandon any effort to contain the spread of the pandemic. This policy was agreed to and adopted at the highest levels of the state, involving both political parties and Congress.

Sweden, no doubt in close collaboration with the US and European governments, served as a model for a policy that would be rolled out throughout the United States in Europe. (Months later, Sweden has a per capita mortality rate 10 times higher than its neighbor Denmark, while its hospitals are totally overrun.)

This policy was based on a falsification of science and the promotion of misinformation. In his emails, Alexander argued, without evidence, that vaccines will be ineffective at protecting the population, declaring that “vaccine will not get us to HERD alone... that means intuitively that means we need infected people.”

Alexander’s ravings had no basis in science. With numerous vaccines already in production and showing overwhelmingly positive results, such claims have been completely debunked.

The proponents of herd immunity, including Alexander and the *New York Times*, argue that the pandemic has had virtually no effect on young people.

But the day after Alexander’s emails became public, the *Times* itself published an op-ed by scientists Jeremy Samuel Faust, Harlan Krumholz and Rochelle Walensky reporting on new research finding that “among US adults ages 25 to 44, from March through the end of July, there were almost 12,000 more deaths than were expected based on historical norms.”

The researchers added, “In fact, July appears to have been the deadliest month among this age group in modern American history. Over the past 20 years, an average of 11,000 young American adults died each July. This year that number swelled to over 16,000.”

The claim that it would be somehow feasible to protect the elderly from COVID-19 amid mass infection of the population has likewise been exposed as a lie. Nearly 40 percent of deaths from COVID-19 have been in nursing homes, which have been turned into death traps for the elderly.

On March 14, the *World Socialist Web Site* characterized the policies of the ruling classes in response to the COVID-19 pandemic as “malign neglect.” We wrote:

On the surface, this response appears to be chaotic, disorganized, and improvised. All of this is true. But out of this chaos a definite policy emerges, which can be defined as malign neglect. That is, governments are making a deliberate decision to minimize their response, to adopt an attitude of indifference to the spread of the virus.

In September, the *World Socialist Web Site* explained that “this policy has developed into something even more sinister, what might be termed ‘social euthanasia.’” The WSWS added:

The worker who is no longer able to work is, from the standpoint of the ruling class, less than useless. Not only is he or she not producing profit, but the resources devoted to health care for the elderly are a drain on what could otherwise be spent propping up the markets or financing the war machine.

The policy of mass infection advocated by the White House has become the norm throughout the United States and Europe. With hospitals full throughout the country, there is not a single part of the United States where manufacturing and other nonessential production is shut down.

In other words, the deranged rantings of Alexander’s emails represent the actual policy that is now in effect in the United States. The “Swedish model” has become the “American model.” That is why more than 3,000 people are dying every single day.

The response of the American ruling class to the pandemic is a massive social crime. High-level decisions were made that knowingly led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people. In the period ahead, there must be an investigation into this disaster. The individuals responsible must be named and held legally accountable for their crimes.

Despite the fraudulent claims of the White House, the pandemic can and must be contained. But this will take a movement of the working class to shut down nonessential production and halt in-person learning in the schools, while ensuring the payment of all lost wages and small business earnings.

The ruling elite will not willingly abandon its policy of sacrificing human lives for its own enrichment. It is up to workers to save their own lives and those of their loved ones! The Socialist Equality Party urges workers and young people who want to fight for this program to contact us today.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact