

Testimony by former Johnson advisor exposes UK "herd immunity" policy

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Prime Minister Boris Johnson's former chief adviser Dominic Cummings has lifted the veil on a vast criminal exercise that has led to the deaths of more than 150,000 people from COVID-19 in Britain.

Testifying before a joint hearing of parliament's health and science committees into "the lessons that can be drawn from the handling of the pandemic, and applied now and in the future," Cummings said, "Tens of thousands of people died who didn't need to die."

Referring to a public inquiry authorised by Johnson that will not take place until next year, he added, "There is absolutely no excuse for delaying that because a lot of the reasons for why that happened are still in place now."

During seven hours of questioning, Cummings showed how the refusal of the government to take any measures to prevent the spread of the virus in January, February and most of March 2020 laid the basis for mass deaths.

Cummings gave substantial evidence that Johnson and his chief scientific advisers favoured a policy of "herd immunity" to allow the virus to spread unchecked through an unvaccinated population. Herd immunity "was the whole logic of all the discussions in January and February and early March," he said.

For months, nothing was done to combat the pandemic, with Johnson frequently comparing it to a "scare story". So blasé was Johnson about COVID-19 that he suggested, "I'm going to get [Chief Medical Officer] Chris Whitty to inject me live on TV with coronavirus so everyone realises it's nothing to be frightened of."

Even after the World Health Organization, on January 30, stated that the pandemic was a global emergency and the first case had emerged in Britain, Cummings reported, 'It was not at all seen in Whitehall that there was going to be a pandemic.'

Asked if the spread of COVID-19 was "the most important matter" for the government, Cummings replied, "At the time, in no way shape or form did it act like it was the most important thing in February, let alone January."

In February 2020 as the virus was spreading exponentially throughout Britain, Johnson "went away on holiday for two weeks" to his Chevening grace-and-favour countryside estate and "lots of key people were literally [on holiday] skiing in the middle of February.'

As it became clear that the virus was spreading rapidly and there was talk about having to enact some containment measures, Johnson was resolutely opposed. His central concern was that this would harm the economy. Cummings said, "There were quite a few people around Whitehall who thought the real danger was the economy. The PM's view was that the real danger was not the disease, but the measures we take against the disease and the economic consequences." Johnson said, "in several meetings: 'We're going to completely destroy the economy with lockdown.'"

No plans were enacted to close borders, despite Cummings claiming that he advised a root and branch copying of the policy of Singapore and Taiwan who successfully carried this out. "There was no proper border policy because the prime minister never wanted a proper border policy." It was already known that among Johnson's favourite characters is the "real hero" of the film *Jaws*, the mayor of Amity, who orders the beaches to stay open despite a great white shark eating people.

Cummings recounts that in April, after the March 23 lockdown was reluctantly put in place but with airports still open and people coming to Britain from countries where COVID-19 was rife, he and others advised that a strict border closure policy be imposed. Cummings said, "At that point he [Johnson] was back to, 'lockdown was all a terrible mistake, I should've been the mayor of *Jaws*, we should never have done lockdown... the travel industry will all be destroyed if we bring in a serious border policy'."

In March, Cummings said that it was then "far, far too late" to prevent mass deaths. This outcome was well understood at the top of government. On March 13, Helen MacNamara, "the second most powerful civil servant in the country... the deputy Cabinet Secretary, walked into the office while we were looking at this whiteboard." Among the information written on the whiteboard in Johnson's Downing Street office—that Cummings said was used to plan the government's early response was the question—"Who do we not save?" and "1. No vaccine in 2020... 3. To stop NHS collapse we will probably have to 'lockdown'."

He recounted, "Helen MacNamara said 'I've come through here to the Prime Minister's office to tell you all—I think we are absolutely f****d', I think this country is headed for a disaster,

I think we're going to kill thousands of people'."

Cummings claims that on March 11, after speaking with scientists, he had insisted that the original herd immunity strategy had to be discarded for a Plan B including some measures to contain the pandemic. He said that he texted Johnson on the morning of March 12, 2020 "We must force the pace, we're looking at 100 to 500,000 deaths between optimistic and pessimistic scenarios."

But March 12 also passed with nothing done to combat COVID-19's spread. The militarist agenda of US and British imperialism and Johnson's family life were both deemed far more important. Cummings told the parliamentary committee that in the morning "suddenly, the national security people came in and said 'Trump wants us to join a bombing campaign in the Middle East tonight'... and we need to start having meetings about that through the day with Cobra [an emergency committee] as well."

"So everything to do with Cobra that day on Covid was completely disrupted because you had these two parallel sets of meetings. You had the national security people running in and out talking about 'are we going to bomb the Middle East?'..."

On top of this "the prime minister's girlfriend [Carrie Symonds] was going completely crackers" as the *"The Times"* had run a huge story about the prime minister and his girlfriend and their dog about this story and demanding that the press office deal with that."

The herd immunity agenda had been publicly espoused by Johnson and his Chief Scientific Officer, Sir Patrick Vallance, for well over a week. This was stressed by Cummings when he quoted senior civil servant Sir Mark Sedwill telling Johnson on March 12, "Prime Minister, you should go on TV tomorrow and explain the herd immunity plan and that it is like the old chicken pox parties. We need people to get this disease because that's how we get herd immunity by September."

Cummings said that on the evening of March 13 he decided to confront Johnson with the need to change policy as "we're going to have to ditch the whole official plan, we're heading for the biggest disaster this country has seen since 1914."

Despite being forced into a lockdown and Johnson himself contracting the disease, Cummings said the prime minister doubled down on his prioritisation of the economy over public safety.

The main priority was to bailout big business and to get the spring lockdown over as quickly as possible.

Ahead of Cummings' appearance, ITV News reported that Cummings alleged that Johnson had delayed a lockdown in the autumn with the prime minister saying that "Covid is only killing 80-year-olds." The *Daily Mirror* said it had "a second government source" that backed Cummings version and who also recalled that Johnson had said, 'If I was 80 I wouldn't care, I'd be more worried about the economy.'

Last month it was reported in several newspapers and by the BBC that Johnson blurted out at the end of October, before

being forced to sanction a further four week limited lockdown, "No more f***ing lockdowns, let the bodies pile high in their thousands!" Asked by the committee if he heard Johnson say this, Cummings said that the BBC version of events was correct, "I heard [Johnson say] that in the prime minister's study."

The "Plan B" Cummings claims won out consisted of the most limited lockdowns and other containment measures that were politically possible to get away with, being abandoned, repeatedly, at the earliest opportunity. This led to even more deaths in the winter months, as the government kept much of the economy open for months with the virus allowed to spread out of control and to mutate into even more deadly variants.

Cummings was finally forced out of Downing Street last November, after having burnt his bridges with Johnson. He stated in his evidence that he considered Johnson "unfit for the job." A critical motive involved in Cummings testifying is seeking to distance himself from the crimes carried out by a government in which he played such a prominent role. In his evidence Cummings denied reports, first published in the *Sunday Times*, that he had summed up government policy at a private meeting in February 2020 as "herd immunity, protect the economy and if that means some pensioners die, too bad."

Cummings spent much of his testimony denouncing Health Secretary Matt Hancock, saying that he should have been fired on 15 to 20 occasions, including for lying to the public during the pandemic. Asked by a committee member if people in government might face "corporate manslaughter charges," Cummings replied, "I think that there is no doubt many senior people performed far, far disastrously below the standards which the country has a right to expect. I think the secretary of state for health is certainly one of those people."

No matter what Cummings' motives, he has revealed the extraordinary level of criminality in ruling circles that has led to mass deaths and unimaginable suffering. More than 3.5 million lives have been lost internationally. Given the extraordinary unanimity of the responses of government of all stripes in prioritising profits over lives, the type of discussions sanctioning social murder revealed by Cummings will have taken place in every country.



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