

Biden marks 1 million US COVID deaths by preparing for the next million

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On Thursday, US President Joe Biden finally acknowledged that over 1 million Americans have now died from COVID-19. He did so by issuing a perfunctory written statement and a pre-recorded video, both of which were characterized above all by their cynicism and indifference to the lives of those lost and their loved ones still mourning.

Various COVID-19 trackers rely on different data sets, and the Biden administration artificially delayed official recognition of this horrific milestone, choosing to use the Reuters tracker. The 1 million death milestone was first reached by Worldometer nearly two months ago on March 22, which only the *World Socialist Web Site* commented on at the time. This was followed by the NBC and News Nodes trackers last week, which led to a handful of additional comments in the corporate media but continued silence from the White House.

Estimates of excess deaths, rarely referred to by politicians and the media, found that by mid-December over 1 million Americans had died directly or indirectly due to the pandemic. Today, excess death estimates place the real US death toll at above 1.2 million, while over 20 million people have likely perished worldwide due to the pandemic.

Biden's written statement comes out to just 213 words and has the character of being drafted by a low-level staffer. After repeating the hackneyed military phrase from his State of the Union speech, "One million empty chairs around the dinner table," it states, "I also know the ones you love are never truly gone. They will always be with you."

No, in fact, all of those killed by COVID-19 are gone forever. Their lives were needlessly cut short due to the policies implemented by the entire American political establishment. The majority of the 1 million deaths in the US have taken place under the Biden administration which has pursued a vaccine-only approach and adamantly refused to close schools and nonessential workplaces as part of a broader strategy to eliminate the virus.

The most absurd portion of Biden's statement reads, "As a nation, we must not grow numb to such sorrow. To heal, we must remember. We must remain vigilant against this pandemic and do everything we can to save as many lives as possible, as we have with more testing, vaccines, and treatments than ever before. It's critical that Congress sustain these resources in the coming months."

What incredible hypocrisy!

As soon as the Omicron BA.1 subvariant began ripping through

the US last December, the Biden administration spearheaded a bipartisan, media-backed campaign to "numb" the population to mass infections and deaths, lift all mitigation measures, and do everything possible to falsely portray the pandemic as over.

This reached a crescendo at the April 30 White House Correspondents' Association propaganda dinner, at which Biden declared, "We're here to show the country that we're getting through this pandemic." Over the past two weeks, the politicians and reporters present at the dinner have deliberately concealed dozens and possibly hundreds of infections that took place at the super-spreader event.

Biden's claim that the US has "more testing, vaccines, and treatments than ever before" is a bald-faced lie. Federal pandemic funding dried up in March, and over 30 million uninsured Americans can no longer access free testing or treatment.

Both the Democrats and Republicans have conspired to prevent the passage of any additional funding. On Tuesday, the House of Representatives once again removed COVID-19 funding from a \$40 billion military aid package for the Ukrainian government to escalate the US-NATO proxy war against Russia. This vast military expenditure, which surpasses all state and federal public health spending, was praised by Biden and unanimously supported by all House Democrats, including the pseudo-left Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and other supporters of Bernie Sanders.

The evaporation of pandemic funding and Biden's acknowledgment of 1 million deaths from COVID-19 take place under conditions of yet another surge of infections and hospitalizations driven by the highly infectious and immune-resistant Omicron BA.2 and BA.2.12.1 subvariants. On Thursday, the US recorded 106,964 official new cases, bringing the seven-day average to 89,406, the highest figure since February 19.

In an accompanying "Proclamation on Remembering the 1,000,000 Americans Lost to COVID-19," the only action mandated by Biden to mark the milestone is entirely performative: the lowering to half-staff of all American flags at governmental buildings for five days. He issued no executive order to mandate the distribution and use of high-quality masks, provide universal COVID-19 testing and contact tracing, renovate all ventilation systems, or do anything else to stem the growing tide of infections and deaths.

Biden's pre-recorded video, played at the 2nd Global COVID-19 Summit, repeated many of the same talking points and stock phrases from his written statement. As with the summit as a

whole, it focused solely on deepening the bankrupt vaccine-only strategy, with Biden stating, “We have to double down on our efforts to... get shots in people’s arms, country by country, community by community.”

A separate White House statement on the summit notes that the participants, who included the warmongers Samantha Power (US) and Annalena Baerbock (Germany), “re-emphasized the value of safe and effective vaccines for bringing the acute phase of COVID-19 to an end.”

In the “Commitments” page listing what each country pledges to do in the coming months, the words “vaccine,” “vaccinate” and “vaccination” appear a combined 201 times, while the words “lockdown,” “ventilation” and “masks” are entirely omitted. All non-pharmaceutical interventions have been done away with, despite their proven efficacy in China and numerous other countries that eliminated SARS-CoV-2 before vaccines were even produced.

For over a year, the vaccine-only strategy has proven to be unviable. Due to viral evolution resulting from the unmitigated spread of COVID-19, the vaccines now provide very little protection against infection. They help prevent hospitalizations and deaths, but in February fully 40 percent of all COVID-19 deaths in the US were among people with at least two shots, with 15 percent of all deaths among people who had received a booster shot.

In total, the world summit secured just \$3 billion in new funding for their global vaccination efforts. The US committed just \$200 million to the global fund, amounting to roughly 0.5 percent of the nearly \$40 billion military package for Ukraine.

Either out of embarrassment or indifference to those whose lives have been destroyed by the pandemic, Biden refused to hold a press conference or participate in any live event to commemorate the passing of 1 million Americans from COVID-19. Instead, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi held a press conference which opened with one-minute remarks on the milestone. Later in the afternoon, members of Congress staged a brief moment of silence on the Capitol steps.

At the press conference, a reporter asked Pelosi, “When President Biden took office, there was about 400,000 COVID deaths. Now, as you noted, there’s about 1 million. You said Democrats were committed to ‘crushing the virus,’ President Biden ran on beating COVID. Looking back at this time, do you think there’s anything else you all could have done to prevent this death toll?”

Pelosi replied, “I want to salute President Biden for what he has done in the fight against COVID. It made a drastic difference from the denial that our country was in before and the lack of attention that was given to it. The President is paying attention to science, science and science, and the governance necessary to deal with it.” Pelosi then abruptly ended the press conference, allowing just one more question on a separate matter.

Contrary to the claims of Pelosi, the Biden administration never adopted a scientific approach to the pandemic and genuine scientists have been continuously shunted aside and ignored. For his first year in office, Biden appointed multimillionaire financier Jeff Zients as his COVID Response Coordinator, only to replace

him with the media charlatan Dr. Ashish Jha.

The centerpiece of Biden’s domestic policy has been to fully reopen schools and keep them open based on lies about the impacts of COVID-19 on children. At a CNN town hall event on February 16, 2021, Biden lied directly to a second-grader, saying, “Kids don’t get ... COVID very often. It’s unusual for that to happen.” Since then, tens of millions of American children have been infected with COVID-19 and at least 1,000 have died. Over 200,000 American children have been orphaned during the pandemic, the majority losing their parents or primary caregivers since Biden took office.

The Biden administration is well aware that the continued pursuit of a vaccine-only approach will only lead to further waves of mass infections and deaths of unknown duration, possibly for many years to come. An unnamed federal official warned last week that upwards of 100 million Americans could be infected with COVID-19 in a major surge this fall.

Modeling from Fractal Therapeutics estimates that over 400,000 Americans could succumb to the virus each year under the current “herd immunity” policies implemented by both big business parties. Under this scenario, by the end of the Biden administration the US death toll could be well above 2 million, with potentially tens of millions suffering from a myriad of symptoms associated with Long COVID.

The American and international working class has been profoundly radicalized by the pandemic, with nurses, oil workers, autoworkers, educators and other workers entering into struggle throughout the world. It is critical that all workers draw the necessary political conclusions from the passing of the 1 million death milestone in the US and the broader global experience of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Biden’s indifference to the deaths of 1 million Americans is an expression of his culpability in the majority of these deaths. World capitalism stands exposed as wholly incompatible with the social needs of the working class, including the most basic right to life itself.

The most far-sighted scientists have made clear that from a scientific standpoint elimination is now more feasible than ever before. Only through the building of an independent mass movement of the working class, armed with a scientific and political understanding of the pandemic, can further suffering and deaths be prevented.



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