

Biden White House discusses how many daily COVID deaths would be acceptable to declare the pandemic over

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A report in *Politico* Monday sheds light on the ruthless and cynical effort by the Biden White House to convince Americans that the COVID pandemic has officially ended. Citing three sources, the website reports internal conversations among Biden aides as to what would be a “general metric” for daily COVID death figures that would be acceptable to the public and provide the basis to declare the pandemic over.

This would come from the president who declared last summer that America had entered a period of “freedom” from COVID, to be followed by a deluge of infections and deaths that stunned the population and pushed the health care system once more to the brink of collapse. COVID vaccines were being hailed as decisive in lifting the country out of the pandemic, but while effective, they provided only limited relief.

Due to the sensitive nature of the issue, the three individuals who spoke to *Politico* did so on conditions of anonymity, knowing the explosive nature of making these calculations public. *Politico* reported that “the discussions, which took place across the administration, and have not been previously disclosed, involved a scenario in which 200 or fewer Americans die per day, a target kicked around before officials ultimately decided not to incorporate it into pandemic planning.”

Politico remarked, “the discussions represented at least a nascent effort to create a framework for a post-COVID world. One of the three people involved in the conversations last year said it was an effort to gauge what the American public would ‘tolerate.’ ‘Five hundred a day is a lot. You still have 9/11 numbers in a week,’ the person said. ‘People generally felt like 100 [a day] or less, or maybe 200, would be ok.’”

What is such talk?

These cold-blooded calculations show representatives of the White House, supposedly sworn to protect and defend the population, speaking like insurance executives who are determining the cost of their payouts versus income from premiums. It is clear from the casual character of these discussions that such barbaric mathematics are part of everyday life in the top circles of the Biden administration.

And while the death toll from COVID is calculated in the tens and hundreds of thousands, the death toll from an all-out war with nuclear-armed Russia or China will be tallied in the millions, if not billions.

The White House conversation sounds like something out of Stanley Kubrick’s macabre *Dr. Strangelove*. When General “Buck” Turgidson, played by George C. Scott, advocates a preemptive nuclear attack on the Soviet Union, he tells the president, “I’m not saying we wouldn’t get our hair mussed. But I do say no more than 10 to 20 million killed, tops. Uh, depending on the breaks.”

Clearly, the Biden administration is seeking to extricate itself from the COVID pandemic by relegating it to just another seasonal virus and diverting attention from the continued threat posed by SARS-CoV-2, which currently continues to infect close to 110,000 people each day and kill more than 300 daily.

At no point in the entire period of the pandemic has the US ever dropped below 200 deaths per day. Even the lowest daily deaths recorded thus far would equate to 100,000 annual fatalities. Even 200 COVID deaths per day would mean more than 73,000 COVID deaths annually, 12,000 deaths above even the worst flu season in the last decade, in 2016-2017. During the Omicron wave, 40 percent of the 170,000 deaths were

among the vaccinated.

One must ask how these flunkeys who are trying to ascertain what an acceptable threshold for declaring COVID is over can square their calculations with the dreadful forecast from the same White House that this fall and winter could see 100 million COVID infections, including a significant wave of deaths among the elderly and most vulnerable.

As for children, who remain the least vaccinated for COVID, the SARS-CoV-2 virus is far deadlier than the flu, which killed a handful of children in the last two years, versus more than 1,500 dead of coronavirus. Even Dr. Ashish Jha, who has been a staunch advocate of school reopening, has recently acknowledged this, admitting that COVID has been “a far greater threat to kids than the flu is.”

However, few have remarked that the limited measures to contain the SARS-CoV-2 virus nearly eliminated flu for the last two years. Yet, without efforts to build the necessary infrastructure to ventilate and filter air in public spaces and ensure mask wearing to prevent respiratory infections altogether, the population will be subjected to multiple pathogens, including the persistence of the immune-evading SARS-CoV-2.

In a manner of speaking, the COVID pandemic has demonstrated the woeful state of the entire public health infrastructure, which has subjected people to unnecessary illnesses for years, not to speak of the impact of poor air quality to the cognition of school children from high CO2 levels and the impact on their pulmonary health.

More urgent for the Biden administration and the entire bourgeois political apparatus are the growing economic crisis and the constant outbreak of struggles by workers, the social crisis erupting in its most pathological form in what seems like daily mass murders, and the growing threat of nuclear war with the US-led NATO war with Russia. All these are being exacerbated by the constant reminder that the pandemic is far from finished taking its toll on the health and well-being of the population.

Indeed, the WSWS's characterization of the pandemic as a trigger event in world history is being continually affirmed by the intensifying crisis of capitalism, with the US the epicenter. The deaths of more than 1 million people, with close to 60 percent of

its population infected and millions debilitated by Long COVID, are a stark reminder of the criminal policies based on the mantra that the cure cannot be worse than the disease.

To officially declare the pandemic over is to declare SARS-CoV-2 a permanent fixture of daily life and the official abandonment of public health as a social institution for the betterment of the health of the population. The impact of repeated infections with SARS-CoV-2 will mean a drastic decline in the health of the population. The CDC has already acknowledged that one in five working age adults will develop Long COVID after their infection.

What remains undetermined is how this will impact their mortality long after they have been declared infection free, but this is expected to be considerable. These figures are being pored over by financial statisticians for the banks and insurance companies, but their focus is not to provide any meaningful response to the dangers posed by COVID but to inform the markets and their CEOs on the future of their labor force and direct and indirect costs to their financial holdings.

The grotesque comments by the Biden officials on what level of death is tolerable should not come as a surprise to the working class. This is what is meant by the attempt to normalize death and force the population to acquiesce to these supposed realities. However, there is an alternative to this bankrupt nihilistic perspective. COVID can be eliminated. It has been scientifically proven, and demonstrated in practice in China. But the end of the pandemic on an international scale is a political question requiring a socialist perspective for which the working class must fight.



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