

Biden's infection exposes "living with COVID" propaganda

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On Thursday morning, news broke that US President Joe Biden has tested positive for COVID-19. Biden's infection takes place amid a massive global surge of the Omicron BA.5 subvariant, which nearly every world government has sought to cover up through the dismantling of testing, data manipulation and corporate media propaganda.

The fact that Biden, who is surrounded by a level of security unknown to all but a handful of Americans, has contracted COVID-19 exposes the recklessness of his administration's "living with COVID" policy. In recent weeks, Biden was made into the poster boy for this propaganda campaign, taking numerous maskless photo ops throughout the world.

Historically, an announcement that the president is ill, especially with a virus responsible for widespread death, would be taken with great seriousness, if for no other reason than it creates a political crisis. Instead, Biden's bout with COVID-19 has been presented almost as a cause for celebration.

Typical of this trend is an op-ed in the *Washington Post* by Leana Wen, one of the chief minimizers of the Omicron variant who has supported all of the Biden administration's unscientific policies. Wen writes, "President Biden's covid-19 diagnosis is an opportunity for his administration to demonstrate the success of his leadership on the pandemic and what living with the coronavirus looks like." She adds, "Biden should use his illness as an opportunity to inform the public that covid-19 is a manageable disease for almost everyone, so long as they use the tools available to them."

Instead of reflecting on their disastrous mishandling of the pandemic—which has now killed over 600,000 Americans in just the first 18 months of his administration—the Biden White House is promoting this same line and stressing that he will continue working while sick with COVID-19, with the implication that all Americans should do the same when infected.

In a photo op posted Thursday afternoon, which clearly exposed the photographer to the airborne virus, instead of recuperating Biden is shown maskless and working at his desk, with the caption, "Keeping busy!" In a follow-up video, Biden states, "I'm doing well, getting a lot of work done. Going to continue to get it done."

In a press release, White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-

Pierre stressed that Biden "will isolate at the White House and will continue to carry out all of his duties fully during that time... and will participate in his planned meetings at the White House this morning via phone and Zoom from the residence." She added, "he will continue to work in isolation until he tests negative. Once he tests negative, he will return to in-person work."

At a press conference Thursday afternoon, co-hosted with media charlatan-turned-White House COVID Response Coordinator Dr. Ashish Jha, Jean-Pierre stated, "With the photo, he took off his mask so that the American people can see him, and see directly, see the work that he's doing and sitting at his desk, continuing to do his work." Later in the press conference, she said bluntly, "We knew this was going to happen. As Dr. Jha said when he joined me in the briefing room not too long ago, he said, 'At some point, everyone's going to get COVID.'"

Underneath the almost celebratory statements from the White House and the media is a deeply disturbing reality.

The *Post* commentary concludes that becoming repeatedly infected with COVID-19 will be "the new normal going forward," even for the president. "Indeed, this is almost certainly not the only time Biden will get the coronavirus. He, like the rest of us, could contract the virus once a year or more."

An article by Apoorva Mandavilli in the *New York Times* states, "President Biden's coronavirus infection is a stark illustration that the Covid vaccines, powerful as they are, are far from the bulletproof shields that scientists once hoped for." She adds, "even booster doses offer little defense against infection, particularly with the most recent versions of the virus. What protection they do offer wanes sharply and quickly, several studies have shown. In the president's case, the booster shot he received nearly four months ago is likely to have lost most of its potency at preventing infection."

Mandavilli notes, "Earlier in the pandemic, experts believed that the vaccines would be enough to forestall not just severe disease, but also the vast majority of infections... But the Omicron variant upended those hopes. As more of the population gained some immunity, whether from infection or vaccines, the virus evolved to dodge those defenses... Each

subsequent avatar of the virus has become still better at sidestepping immunity.”

What is described here is a public health and personal health catastrophe.

Numerous studies show that infection with COVID-19 can damage nearly every organ in the body, and reinfections increase the odds of this damage. If the media and politicians were honest, they would tell the American public, “You may be infected and severely ill for days or weeks at a time, once or multiple times per year, and with each reinfection your chances of dying or developing long-term complications will deepen.”

The implication of this “new normal” is that more immune-resistant variants will continue to evolve, spurring repeated waves of mass infection, debilitation and death, potentially for years or decades to come.

A biological ticking time bomb has been set off, and at any point a new variant could evolve that is more transmissible, immune-evading and lethal than any previous variant. With each new variant, the death toll will continue to mount, life expectancy will sink even further, and quality of life will diminish for millions more people suffering from Long COVID.

Despite the happy talk in the media, the US is presently mired in a protracted, steadily worsening surge of Omicron subvariants, with the most infectious and immune-resistant BA.5 subvariant now dominant. While Biden is the most public figure now infected, virtually everyone in the country knows multiple family members, friends or coworkers currently or recently infected with COVID-19.

After a two-month lull in infections, since late March cases have gradually risen across the country, with the official seven-day average of daily new cases rising nearly five-fold to 128,933 on July 20, according to News Nodes. COVID-19 hospitalizations have risen more than three-fold since their April 17 trough, reaching 42,612 on July 20. In the past month, the seven-day average of daily new deaths has surged by 57 percent, reaching 413 on July 20. Each week, as many Americans are now dying from COVID-19 as were killed in the September 11 terrorist attacks.

Since the winter surge of the Omicron BA.1 subvariant, testing has been drastically curtailed across the US, causing a total decoupling of official figures from the actual level of disease in society. The real scale of viral transmission can be seen in nationwide wastewater sampling, which shows that the current surge has surpassed the peak of the Delta variant one year ago.

From the very beginning, the entire American political establishment has held onto the concept that the virus will be stopped partly through vaccination and partly through mass infection, or what was termed “herd immunity” under Donald Trump.

The highly infectious and immune-resistant Omicron BA.1 subvariant, which unleashed the most devastating wave of

infections last winter, was treated with thinly-veiled enthusiasm. In January, Dr. Anthony Fauci declared that it could be “the live virus vaccination that everyone is hoping for.” Dr. Jha said he was “hoping that this really is the transition variant that gets us into a different footing.”

The vaccine-only strategy, based on these unscientific conceptions of viral evolution, which numerous principled scientists have cautioned against, has been shattered by the experience of the past eight months. The emergence of the Omicron variant and each of its subvariants proves the most fundamental argument of the Zero-COVID global elimination strategy, that in the absence of proven and essential public health policies the pandemic will not stop.

Alongside the deepening COVID-19 crisis, monkeypox has been allowed to spread through the country almost entirely unchecked. US infections have surged to 2,425, the second highest figure in the world.

The abandonment of all efforts to stop the COVID-19 pandemic, instead demanding that society “live with the virus,” set the stage for the disastrous response to monkeypox and all future infectious diseases. Likewise, nothing is done to stop the ever-growing existential threat of climate change.

American individualism, increasingly promoted for the past four decades, has assumed a socially pathological and criminal character. Public health and all social needs are now entirely subordinated to the profit interests of the corporate-financial oligarchy.

To varying degrees, the same policies have been implemented worldwide with the same recklessness and stupidity of the Biden administration. Every capitalist government outside of China has surrendered to SARS-CoV-2, giving the virus free rein to infect billions of people, mutate into more dangerous variants and wreak havoc on global society for years to come.

The Socialist Equality Party (US) and its affiliated parties in the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) are the only political tendency in the world that has opposed these homicidal policies and called for a globally-coordinated elimination strategy to stop the spread of COVID-19 worldwide.

It is critical that workers, professionals and principled scientists draw the necessary political conclusions from the catastrophic first two-and-a-half years of the pandemic. Only through the socialist reorganization of the world economy will it be possible to end the pandemic, halt and reverse climate change, and prevent the outbreak of future pandemics.



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