

Biden's infection and the horrific reality of "forever COVID"

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The infection of US President Joe Biden with COVID-19 marks a significant turning point in the US response to the pandemic. This event, which should have provoked deep concern and self-reflection by the Biden administration, was instead utilized to openly state the White House's brutal new policy towards the pandemic: Everyone will get infected with COVID-19, repeatedly, year after year, forever.

As the *World Socialist Web Site* has noted, last winter's surge of the highly infectious and immune-resistant Omicron BA.1 subvariant prompted the scrapping of all mitigation measures to slow the spread of COVID-19. As with previous variants, officials from numerous world governments made unscientific claims that BA.1 would induce lasting immunity and send the virus into "endemicity."

Now, after successive waves of three more Omicron subvariants, this threadbare lie is being discarded and the Biden administration is openly pursuing a policy of perpetual mass infection. This is essentially a repackaged and even more dangerous version of the "herd immunity" strategy implemented by Donald Trump, as it threatens to rapidly erode the efficacy of existing vaccines and treatments. While openly stating its intention to allow SARS-CoV-2 to spread uncontrolled in perpetuity, the White House continues to cover up the horrific implications this will have for American and world society.

It is evident that sometime in June the decision was made to substantially reduce the safety precautions in place to protect the president from contracting COVID-19. In recent weeks, numerous photos and videos were staged at large indoor events and meetings internationally with a maskless Biden. In effect, the White House consciously allowed Biden to be infected as part of a deepening propaganda campaign to force American society to accept its policy of "forever COVID."

On July 18, three days before Biden's infection was made public, his 81-year-old chief medical advisor, Dr. Anthony Fauci, told *Politico*, "We're in a pattern now. If somebody says, 'You'll leave when we don't have COVID anymore,' then I will be 105. I think we're going to be living with this." In other words, Dr. Fauci stated that the pandemic will drag on for at least the next quarter century.

At each of the three press conferences held during Biden's illness, White House COVID Response Coordinator Dr. Ashish Jha and Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre reiterated this statement of surrender to the virus, while stating that all Americans will inevitably be infected with COVID-19.

On July 21, Jean-Pierre stated, "Look, we knew this was going to happen. As Dr. Jha said... at some point, everyone is going to get COVID." The following day, Dr. Jha said bluntly, "This virus is going to be with us forever." On Monday, July 25, Jean-Pierre

repeated, "As we have said, almost everyone is going to get COVID." Numerous articles in the bourgeois press and segments on the broadcast news outlets parroted these same talking points.

Finally, on Wednesday Biden tested negative for COVID-19 and ended his isolation. Visibly unwell, coughing repeatedly, his voice still deep from the infection, and stumbling over his words more than usual, Biden gave a lying and cynical 10-minute speech to a group of maskless, cheering staffers in the Rose Garden, in which he portrayed vaccines and Pfizer's antiviral Paxlovid as magical "tools" that nullify the dangers of perpetual mass viral transmission.

In the course of his speech, Biden referred to God three times and "prayers" once. He made no reference to the rising daily death toll from COVID-19, the impacts of Long COVID, viral evolution, mask mandates, airborne transmission, or other critical concerns about the pandemic raised by leading scientists. On the same day as Biden's speech, 801 Americans officially died from COVID-19 and the seven-day average of daily new deaths rose to 440, up 67 percent from the trough reached on June 21, while hospitalizations approached 44,000, a three-fold increase in the past three months.

Biden stated early in his speech, "the reality is that BA.5 means many of us are still going to get COVID even if we take the precautions. That doesn't mean we are—we were doing anything wrong. Unfortunately, this COVID is still with us, as it has been for two and a half years."

Later, he falsely claimed: "Over the past 18 months, my administration has left no stone unturned in our fight against this pandemic. None. We brought down deaths by nearly 90 percent since I took office because of the help of all the people in this Rose Garden. Businesses and schools responded. Grandparents are hugging their kids and grandkids again."

In reality, due to the abandonment of mitigation measures during last winter's Omicron BA.1 surge, the seven-day average of daily new deaths reached 2,654 per day on February 1, 2022, only 13 percent less than the daily death toll when Biden was inaugurated. Despite the roll-out of life-saving vaccines, over 610,000 Americans have died from COVID-19 since Biden took office, 39 percent more deaths than took place under Trump. Over 200,000 parents and grandparent caregivers have been killed by COVID-19 in the US, the majority under Biden, whose relentless pursuit of school reopenings led to mass viral transmission among children and their families.

Biden declared, "You can now prevent most COVID deaths. And that's because of three free tools my administration has invested in and distributed this past year: booster shots; at-home tests; easy-to-use, effective treatments." He reiterated this, stating, "You can live without fear by doing what I did: Get boosted, get tested, and get

treatment.”

All of Biden’s claims about the pandemic are false and unscientific, meant to serve as soporifics to disarm the public in the face of the looming dangers that lie ahead. His administration’s pragmatic pursuit of a vaccine- and Paxlovid-only strategy, combined with its refusal to stop viral transmission, has set American society on a course towards disaster.

An interview published Thursday in *New York* magazine with scientist Dr. Eric Topol completely upends the delusional fantasy presented by Biden and reaffirms the warnings made by numerous scientists—and consistently reported only by the WSWS—that ongoing mass infection allows SARS-CoV-2 to evolve into more dangerous variants that can be increasingly transmissible, virulent, immune-evasive, and resistant to treatments such as Paxlovid.

Regarding resistance to Paxlovid, Dr. Topol states: “It’s inevitable. We’re going to see resistance to this drug, which, after the vaccines, is the second-most-important advance that we have had to take on the virus. But it may be short-lived, it could be that by year’s end or the beginning of next year, we won’t have Paxlovid as a remedy or rescue anymore.”

Commenting on booster shots with existing vaccines, Dr. Topol points to recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) showing that each new Omicron subvariant has progressively eroded existing vaccines’ ability to prevent hospitalization. He notes: “To drop down almost 40 points in effectiveness against hospitalizations with only two shots—this should be a signal that something is going on with our vaccine protection. But you don’t see anybody raising concerns about this. All you hear is happy talk that we have great protection from hospitalizations and deaths. I don’t know about that. These data don’t support that.”

Mehring Books, the publishing arm of the Socialist Equality Party (US), is proud to announce the publication in epub format of Volume 1 of *COVID, Capitalism, and Class War: A Social and Political Chronology of the Pandemic*, a compilation of the *World Socialist Web Site’s* coverage of this global crisis.

Dr. Topol states that his greatest concern is: “The known unknown, which is that this virus still has many more ways to become more resistant to our immune response—and we should plan on that. We keep thinking we’ve reached some kind of limit. But the most important lesson from BA.5, to me, is that it’s worse... the only reason BA.5 doesn’t look horrific right now is because BA.1 had built up the immunity wall. More than half of Americans have had BA.1 or BA.2. And we’re now seeing in BA.5 the most innovation, the most growth advantage, the most fitness of the virus yet—and we’re just not dealing with it.”

He concludes: “If you’re just taking odds, and you have all these different routes and tens of millions of people that are immunocompromised around the world, are you going to bet against the virus evolving into something that’s more challenging than what we have today? I don’t think so.”

Dr. Topol and renowned Yale University immunologist Dr. Akiko Iwasaki have called for an “Operation Nasal Vaccine—Lightning speed to counter COVID-19” to massively fund next-generation vaccines that could potentially stop infections altogether. Since 2020, leading scientists have warned that the current vaccines would not stop transmission and that new variants would continue to evolve, but after two years, virtually no funding has been invested in the US in developing and producing more effective intranasal or mucosal vaccines.

Despite recent posturing by the Biden administration, there is no prospect for such vaccines to be mass produced in the US this year, and potentially for far longer. Drs. Topol and Iwasaki warn that even if ongoing clinical trials for mucosal vaccines are successful, “there will be substantial delays in manufacturing at scale, regulatory approval, and distribution.”

It is virtually guaranteed that a more dangerous variant will evolve by this fall, prompting yet another massive surge of infections, hospitalizations and deaths. With each new wave of infections and reinfections, progressively larger sections of the population will develop lingering symptoms known as Long COVID, which can affect nearly every organ in the body and cause profound debilitation in roughly a third of all patients.

Already, over 20 million Americans are suffering from Long COVID in the US alone, with hundreds of millions more worldwide. Despite the provision of \$1.3 billion to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to study Long COVID, not a single therapeutic trial has been initiated in the US.

The open acknowledgment of the horrific policy of “forever COVID” coincides with the unprecedented spread of monkeypox throughout the US and globally. On the same day as Biden’s speech, the CDC announced a record 1,048 monkeypox cases, shattering all previous global records. Despite the fact that the World Health Organization (WHO) proclaimed monkeypox a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) last Saturday, the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has refused to declare such a state of emergency in the global epicenter of the outbreak.

The same abandonment of the basic principles of public health is taking place internationally. This is a central component of the broader structural breakdown of the world capitalist system, which is tobogganing towards nuclear world war, economic collapse, ecological catastrophe, and now multiple pandemics.

In direct proportion to the deepening crisis of capitalism, the international working class is entering into struggle against increasingly unbearable living conditions. The fight for the global elimination of SARS-CoV-2, which entails the simultaneous deployment of all public health measures to stop viral transmission once and for all, will be central to the developing global movement of the working class. Only through world socialist revolution will it be possible to vastly expand public health worldwide, rid global society of myriad infectious diseases, and raise the culture of mankind to new heights.



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