

Trump's rush for a vaccine endangers the nation's health



By John Wojcik

The Trump administration admits it is aiming for a vaccine for COVID-19 before Election Day and that the public will joyfully rise up to reward him with a second term in the White House.

The news this week that AstraZeneca, a leading pharmaceutical giant, has halted its trial vaccine because of an “unexplained illness” in one of the test subjects is not welcome news for a president determined to have a vaccine at any cost before Americans cast their ballots on Nov. 3.

Trump has been angling for a quick “America First” vaccine ever since last March when he tried to bribe CureVac, a German company, to sell exclusive rights to a vaccine only to the United States. The German government and countries around the world reacted with revulsion and put the kibosh on Trump's scheme.

Americans now are expressing widespread fear of taking any kind of “cure” from a president who once pursued solutions to the pandemic ranging from a variety of unproven drugs and vitamins to the drinking of bleach and the injection of disinfectants. People can be expected to line up for a vaccine only if they are convinced by credible scientists and health experts that the vaccine is safe.

The problem is that the president has undermined and destroyed the credibility of the two most

important guardians of public health in the nation, the Centers for Disease Control and the Food and Drug Administration, which is pushing “emergency authorizations for use” of things the president tells them he wants. Everyone knows, of course, that the president is not a medical authority.

“When I hear things like ‘emergency authorization,’ I get very worried because we’ve never done that for a vaccine that’s going to be given to a large segment of the population,” Dr. Peter Hotez of the Baylor

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School of Medicine told the Associated Press.

Trump's vitriolic campaign against the Food and Drug Administration, which must certify that any vaccine is safe and effective, already has destroyed public confidence that the agency is following science rather than obeying an ignorant president.

His push for a pre-election miracle cure for COVID is destroying the public's confidence that any vaccine will be safe.

The reputation of the Centers for Disease Control has also been destroyed as time after time it has put out recommendations originating from Trump himself. In late August, the CDC, at the behest of Trump, suggested that people without symptoms shouldn't take the trouble to get tested for COVID-19. By caving in to Trump, they put themselves in opposition to every other reputable source in the health care field. Health experts almost unanimously argue that mass testing is key to controlling the pandemic. For Trump, however, less testing means fewer cases and, therefore, a better chance at his re-election. In short, even before a vaccine, safe or unsafe, is developed, the president's rush job is already getting more people sick and more people dead.

In a recent poll by the healthcare news website Stat, 70% of respondents said they worried that Trump's determination to be re-elected is driving the approval process, and more than 80% doubted that a fast-tracked vaccine would be safe.

The dangers of the administration's rush job grew even more in the last two weeks with the revelation that CDC Director Robert Redfield has sent a letter to the nation's governors asking them to lift their safety regulations and allow fast-track opening of vaccine centers by Nov. 1—2 days before the election.

When Republican President Gerald Ford, concerned about his re-election, similarly rushed through a swine flu vaccine in 1976, hundreds came down with a severe nerve disorder, forcing the suspension of the vaccine program, which featured the president himself, on national television, rolling up his sleeve to take the shot.

The irony is that Trump is accusing Democrats, concerned about public health and therefore opposed to the rush job, of being "anti-science" and "anti-vaccine," while it's he who has long been in league with the right-wing anti-vaxxers. New York and California have already declared that they will require solid evidence of the safety of any vaccine before they allow distribution in their states.

Cuba and China's successes against coronavirus face global media blockade

By Morning Star

Cuban scientists were first to develop a treatment for coronavirus with interferon alfa-2b drug, produced in China by a joint Chinese-Cuban company.

Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez condemned a media blackout on the country's progress against COVID-19 this weekend. Rodriguez pointed out that while Cuba is the only Latin American country with a vaccine candidate, it suffers a "media blockade" about its achievements.

"Cuban scientists share their progress with the world, show protocols against the pandemic and the results of their own vaccine candidate. However, little information about this is shared. Ignoring or censoring successes is part of the media blockade," he tweeted.

Cuban scientists were the first to develop an effective treatment for coronavirus with the antiviral interferon alfa-2b drug, produced in China by joint Chinese-Cuban venture ChangHeber. They are now conducting the first human trials of a vaccine called Soberana 01.

Though coronavirus cases continue to rise in many countries, China's epidemic was brought under control with fewer than 5,000 deaths: less than 3% of the United States' official count in a country with over four times the population. China will stage a ceremony honoring "individuals

and groups who fought bravely against COVID-19" at Beijing's Great Hall of the People on Tuesday.

Former chief epidemiologist of the Chinese Centre for Disease Control & Prevention told the Global Times tabloid that "there are many individuals and organizations who have shown dedication in labs, patient beds, and in fighting the virus day and night."

President Xi Jinping will award medals, including the prestigious Order of the Republic, to people who made "outstanding contributions." Last month it was conferred on respiratory disease expert Zhong Nanshan, medical adviser Zhang Boli, vaccine researcher Chen Wei, and Zhang Dingyu, dean of Wuhan Jinyintan Hospital, which bore the brunt of the outbreak at its height.

Lawsuit seeks redress for 1921 Tulsa massacre



By Sean Murphy

Attorneys for victims and their descendants affected by the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre filed a lawsuit in state court on Tuesday against the City of Tulsa and other defendants seeking reparations for the destruction of the city's once thriving Black district.

The group, led by Tulsa attorney Damario Solomon-Simmons, contends Tulsa's long history of racial division and tension stemmed from the massacre, during which an angry white mob descended on a 35-block area, looting, killing, and burning it to the ground. Hundreds of Black residents were killed, and thousands more were left homeless and living in a hastily constructed internment camp.

The city and insurance companies never compensated victims for their losses, and the massacre ultimately resulted in racial and economic disparities that still exist today, the lawsuit claims.

In the years following the massacre, city and county officials actively thwarted the community's effort to rebuild and neglected the Greenwood and predominantly Black north Tulsa community in favor of overwhelmingly white parts of Tulsa.

Still today, unemployment in Tulsa's Black community is more than twice that of white Tulsans, median household income for Black residents is half that of whites, Black students are nine times more likely to be suspended from school, and life expectancy for North Tulsa residents is 11 years below the life expectancy in the rest of the city, said

Tulsa attorney Steven Terrill.

The massacre received renewed attention after President Trump selected Tulsa as the location for a rally amid the ongoing racial reckoning over police brutality and racial violence. Trump moved the date of his June rally to avoid coinciding with a Juneteenth celebration in the city's Greenwood District commemorating the end of slavery.

The lawsuit was filed under the state's public nuisance law, which the state attorney general used last year to force opioid drug maker Johnson & Johnson to pay the state \$465 million in damages.

The plaintiffs want the defendants to "abate the public nuisance of racial disparities, economic inequalities, insecurity, and trauma their unlawful actions and omissions caused in 1921 and continue to cause 99 years after the massacre."

The suit also seeks a detailed accounting of the property and wealth lost or stolen in the massacre, the construction of a hospital in north Tulsa, and the creation of a Tulsa Massacre Victims Compensation Fund, among other things. It also seeks immunity from all city and county taxes and utility expenses for the next 99 years for descendants of those who were killed, injured, or lost property in the massacre.

Other defendants include the Tulsa Regional Chamber, Board of County Commissioners, Tulsa County Sheriff, and the Oklahoma Military Department.

Several of the defendants declined to comment on the lawsuit, citing the pending litigation.

Attorneys for victims and their descendants affected by the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre filed a lawsuit in state court on Tuesday against the City of Tulsa.

LOCAL NEWS

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contact@peoplesworld.org

Communists blast Erdoğan's Re-conversion of Hagia Sophia into a mosque

By Emile Schepers

Turkey's two largest communist parties have both blasted the decision of the right-wing government of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to re-convert the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul into a functioning mosque. The magnificent building, which dates to 537 A.D., was originally the main Christian cathedral of Constantinople (Istanbul), capital of the Eastern Roman or Byzantine Empire. In 1453, after the city was captured by the Ottoman Turkish Sultan Mehmed II, it was converted into a mosque. Then in 1934, the building was secularized and turned into a museum open to all visitors regardless of faith. But at the beginning of July, the conservative Islamist government of Turkey announced that the secularization order had been rescinded again, and Hagia Sophia is a mosque once more.

In reaction, the Turkish Communist Party (TKP) said that "canceling the decision of the cabinet of 1934 also meant negating the progressive values of the bourgeois revolution of 1923 [which established the current republic in the place of the Ottoman monarchy]." The TKP sees the emphasis on religion as a cover for advances by the bourgeoisie against the Turkish working class, especially given the disastrous economic straits in which the workers find themselves due to the pandemic.

Likewise, the Turkish Labor Party, EMEP, which is also a communist party, stressed the same points. It also noted that Erdoğan's right-wing forces lost the last municipal elections in Istanbul, adding that "Istanbul is always owned by its worker population and will remain so."

Carrera contra el último pulmón natural de Norteamérica

Fabián Capecchi

Ha sonado el disparo de salida. Las compañías petroleras y de gas se frotan las manos, mientras proyectan dividirse como si fuese un pastel el último refugio virgen de Norteamérica, el Refugio Nacional Silvestre del Ártico. Están convencidas que ganarán la carrera para perforar el Ártico incluso si el presidente Trump sale derrotado en noviembre.

Los esfuerzos por desatornillar las Leyes que han protegido esta zona virgen de Norteamérica han tenido éxito gracias a la administración Trump. Este refugio natural estuvo protegido los últimos 30 años, pero la codicia de las empresas petroleras, el dinero y la complicidad de la EPA acaban de darle el empujón final para comenzar la destrucción.

Las primeras concesiones para perforar en busca de petróleo y gas en el área podrían venderse a finales del 2020, según el secretario del Departamento del Interior, David Bernhardt, al anunciar formalmente hace días su programa de arrendamiento.

Según la ley de 2017, el gobierno federal debe realizar dos ventas de arrendamiento de 400,000 acres cada una para diciembre de 2024, pero el actual gobierno ha pisado el acelerador para que la primera subasta se haga a finales de este mismo año.

La medida se aplica a unos 1,57 millones de acres de la llanura costera del refugio Ártico y las operaciones petroleras en las tierras protegidas por el gobierno federal amenazan con acabar para siempre con bosques,

ríos de agua pura, costas y la llanura donde viven caribúes, osos polares, y más de 270 especies de aves migratorias y otros animales.

Una vez que se vendan los derechos de perforación, será más difícil para un futuro presidente dar marcha atrás.

Los grupos ambientalistas entre los cuales se encuentran nativos de Alaska como los Gwich'in y el Sierra Club, han interpuesto una demanda en un tribunal Federal para detener la decisión de la administración Trump de permitir el arrendamiento de petróleo y gas en el Refugio Nacional de Vida Silvestre del Ártico.

El Sierra Club que ha estado luchando para mantener las plataformas petrolíferas fuera del refugio durante más de 20 años, dijo que la administración Trump quiere conseguir que al menos una empresa presente ofertas por arrendamientos antes del final de su mandato.

La campaña del Sierra Club alcanzó un punto de inflexión en diciembre pasado, cuando Goldman Sachs se convirtió en el primer banco estadounidense importante en descartar la financiación de nuevas perforaciones en el Ártico, incluido el Refugio Ártico. Ahora, cinco de los seis bancos más grandes de Estados Unidos se han sumado a la lista de bancos importantes de todo el mundo que descartan la financiación del petróleo y el gas del Ártico. Eso deja a Bank of America como el único gran banco estadounidense que niega sumarse a esta decisión.

NATIONAL CONTACT

Editorial: (773) 446-9920 Business: (212) 924-2523
Email: contact@peoplesworld.org