

Vaccine Nationalism Will Lead to Global Chaos

News:

Recently, the British Minister for Vaccine Deployment, Nadhim Zahawi confirmed that there were 4,000 variants of Covid-19. He also expressed his confidence in the ability of the vaccines to combat the virus. He said, "It is very unlikely that the current vaccine won't be effective on the variants whether in Kent or other variants especially when it comes to severe illness and hospitalization." [[Khaleej Times](#)]

Comment:

However, various reports about the performance of vaccines to combat different strains of Covid-19 seems to undercut Zahawi's confidence. The Oxford/AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine does not appear to offer protection against mild and moderate form of the disease caused by the South African variant. [[ft.com](#)] A British study echoed similar concerns about the efficacy of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine against the South African variant. [[arabnews](#)] While the efficacy of vaccines against different variants is a moot point, doubts continue to linger about the effectiveness of vaccines against the original Covid-19 strand in certain segments of the population. Germany has raised questions about the efficacy of the Pfizer vaccines for over 65s, and Norway reported 29 deaths amongst the elderly after receiving the Pfizer shot. [[scroll.in](#)] The foregoing concerns also raise pertinent questions about bringing the pandemic under control and returning life to normality.

To make matters worse, vaccine nationalism threatens to severely undermine the work done so far to fight the coronavirus. Vaccine power appears to follow in the footsteps of the five permanent members of the Security Council (P5). The P5 have led efforts to produce and deploy vaccines not only for their own populations but also use "vaccine diplomacy" to curry favours from less fortunate countries. Leaving aside the security competition between the P5 over vaccine supremacy, rich countries run the grave risk of prolonging the pandemic even further. According to the BBC, rich nations represent just 14% of the world's population, they have bought up 53% of the most promising vaccines so far. [[BBC](#)]. The World Economic Forum (WEF) estimates that vaccine nationalism could slow the global economic recovery, costing high-income countries \$119 billion per year. [[weforum.org](#)] Against this loss it only costs \$25 billion to inoculate low-income countries. [[rand.org](#)] The math is straightforward. Yet despite the obvious, the P5 and rich countries continue to hoard vaccine doses and increase the risk of prolonging the pandemic. The RAND Corporation has estimated the cost to the global economy of this folly at \$1.2 trillion a year in GDP terms. [[rand.org](#)] This is not surprising at all. To ensure global herd immunity against Covid-19 and its many variants at least 80% of the global population must be vaccinated.

At the outset of the pandemic, some scholars of IR foresaw a golden era of global cooperation in defeating the pandemic and then applying newfound solidarity to address pressing issues such as climate change, nuclear proliferation, world poverty, and global terrorism. However, the reality of security competition between the P5 and global Capitalism has fueled vaccine nationalism to such a degree that nation states driven by hyper-nationalism and profits of their multinationals will surely bring an end to the Long Peace.

The world needs a new security paradigm, where precious resources such as vaccines can be effectively used to stamp out the disease without putting profits or the health of the rich before the rest of mankind. Only Islam under the protection of the Khilafah Rashidah (rightly guided Caliphate) upon the method of Prophethood can provide global security, where pandemics are quickly stamped out, world poverty is eradicated, the world is free of nuclear weapons and humans live in harmony with their environment. Allah says ﴿وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَن ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا وَنَحْشُرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَعْمَى﴾
"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." [TMQ Taha:123-124].

Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by

Abdul Majeed Bhatti