

Biden: With Defense Production Act, enough vaccines by end of May

By John Wojcik

President Joe Biden made history in the nation's fight against the coronavirus Tuesday by announcing that the United States will have enough vaccine supply to vaccinate all American adults for coronavirus by the end of May, two months earlier than the end-of-July date he had previously rolled out.

Biden credited the stepped-up timetable to his ongoing use of the Defense Production Act and the establishment of a partnership between 2 long-time corporate rivals, Merck and Johnson and Johnson.

The two companies will drop their rivalry for the time being and, according to Biden, begin a 24-hour-a-day operation in all of their facilities to produce Johnson and Johnson's single-dose vaccine.

The rollout announced by the president is expected to increase weekly vaccine doses to 15.2 million, a rate surpassing anything going on right now anywhere in the world. A major pharmaceutical company working around the clock to produce a vaccine created by one of its rivals is also something never seen before.

Biden said the country is in a "war" against the virus, justifying his sweeping measures against it.

"We're now on track to have enough vaccine supply for every adult in America by the end of May," Biden told the nation Tuesday at the White House.

He did not shy away from criticizing the Trump

administration for having done an inadequate job of preparing to vaccinate the U.S. population.

"When we came into office, the prior administration had contracted for not nearly enough vaccine to cover adults in America. We rectified that," the president declared yesterday.

Biden coupled his dramatic announcement with a strong warning to Americans not to let up their guard. He said, "we are too close to success to let up now in a way that will set us back." He pointed

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to the dangerous coronavirus variants that are circulating and said letting up on mask mandates, social distancing, and business restrictions would be foolish and dangerous at this point.

Immediately after the president made that plea to all Americans, the Republican governor of Texas,

Ignoring the president's plea for continued vigilance, Texas governor ends mask rules and opens everything 100 percent.

Greg Abbott, announced that he was ending all mask mandates in Texas and that in one week businesses in that state will be allowed to open 100%.

Abbott's announcement was met with shock and horror by mayors and local leaders in Texas. In Houston, for example, there are now four variants of the coronavirus circulating in that city alone. Texas has within its borders 11 of the 20 counties in the U.S that have the highest rates of transmission, hospitalization, and death due to the virus.

The moves by Abbott immediately put essential workers in the retail, dining, entertainment, and health sectors—among others—at unnecessary risk. Service industry workers—already some of the most overworked and underpaid in society—will now be forced to interact with unmasked customers for hours on end and in crowded settings, or face employer disciplinary action.

Republican responses after Biden's good news Tuesday demonstrated yet again that nothing, not even blowing up the success of the vaccination

program, is beyond the pale for them in their effort to increase the nation's pain and suffering as part of a perverse political comeback plan.

First, the Republican governor of one huge state announces he will ignore the president's pleas for caution and end mask mandates and open his state. Then, the Republican governor of another big state, Ron DeSantis of Florida, instead of welcoming the announcement and honoring Biden's request to remain cautious, bragged that his state will continue to be an "oasis of freedom against COVID restrictions."

The cause for optimism, however, is that the people's movements have removed these types of misleaders from the White House. The occupants there now are pursuing a course of fighting the virus that, when it finally succeeds, will strengthen the progressive movements going forward. The pandemic nightmare isn't over, but it's getting smaller and smaller in the rear-view mirror.

Sky-high levels of fracking chemicals detected in children's bodies

By Climate Nexus

While the hazards of fracking to human health are well-documented, first-of-its-kind research from Environmental Health News shows the actual levels of biomarkers for fracking chemicals in the bodies of children living near fracking wells far higher than in the general population.

The research fills a gap in the science between the health harms experienced by those living near fracking and the known harms caused by fracking chemicals: whether fracking chemicals were actually in people's bodies. They are. Of the southwestern Pennsylvania families who participated in the study, those who lived closer to fracking wells had higher levels of fracking chemicals or their biomarkers than those who lived far away.

A 9-year-old boy had biomarkers for toluene, which can damage the nervous system or kidneys, 91 times higher than the average American. The research is part one of a multi-part series by Environmental Health News exploring the multifaceted "body burden" of fracking.

As reported by Environmental Health News: In Texas, researchers found that babies born near frequent flaring—the burning off of excess natural

gas from fracking wells—are 50% more likely to be premature. In Colorado, the state Department of Health found that people living near fracking sites face elevated risk of nosebleeds, headaches, breathing trouble, and dizziness. In Pennsylvania, researchers found that people living near fracking face increased rates of infant mortality, depression, and hospitalizations for skin and urinary issues. Studies of fracking communities throughout the country have found that living near fracking wells increases the risk of premature births, high-risk pregnancies, asthma, migraines, fatigue, nasal and sinus symptoms, and heart failure; and laboratory studies have linked chemicals used in fracking fluid to endocrine disruption—which can cause hormone imbalance, reproductive harm, early puberty, brain and behavior problems, improper immune function, and cancer.

"We have enough evidence at this point that these health impacts should be of serious concern to policymakers interested in protecting public health," Irena Gorski Steiner, an environmental epidemiology doctoral candidate at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, told Environmental Health News (EHN).

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Biden inaction on Saudis' Khashoggi assassination angers News Guild



By PAI

Democratic President Joe Biden's decision to take no action, including no sanctions, against Saudi Arabia's de facto supreme ruler, Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, for ordering the assassination of journalist Jamal Khashoggi has angered TNG.

A Bin Salman-sent hit squad murdered and dismembered Khashoggi, a contributing writer for The Washington Post, when he entered the Saudi consulate in Ankara, Turkey, to get a visa for his fiancée in 2018.

U.S. intelligence concluded Salman, also known as MBS, was responsible. The squad included members of MBS's personal staff. Khashoggi had criticized Saudi Arabia's monarchy and repression and advocated more democracy in the key oil-rich Middle Eastern country.

"The Crown Prince viewed Khashoggi as a threat to the kingdom and broadly supported using violent measures if necessary to silence him," the intelligence report's summary, released Feb. 25, said.

The Washington-Baltimore News Guild, TNG-CWA Local 32035, represents workers at the paper, though not outside writers such as Khashoggi. His assassination angered both the local and then-News Guild President Bernie Lunzer, who demanded a formal investigation and sanctions.

Pitched towards guaranteeing profits for oil firms and weapons companies and headed by a White House occupant with a marked affinity for tyrants,

the GOP Trump regime turned a deaf ear to protests over the Khashoggi assassination and sat on the probe's findings.

"The Washington-Baltimore News Guild is profoundly disappointed in President Joe Biden's decision not to penalize the Saudi Arabian government for its role" in Khashoggi's murder, WBNG said. Current News Guild President Jon Schleuss endorsed the statement.

"Despite this evidence, our nation's leadership declined to hold Khashoggi's murderers accountable. He was killed for simply exercising press freedom and his killers will not be punished. Khashoggi's death, and our government's tacit acceptance of his murder, sends a signal that journalists are free targets for aggression and violence around the world.

The Society for Professional Journalists was also unhappy. A media newsletter published by the Columbia Journalism Review, though not the Review itself, issued a blistering denunciation. It said Biden wasn't much better than Trump on the matter of Saudi Arabia, putting economic interests first.

SPJ President Matthew Hall called the intelligence summary "too little, too late."

SPJ is demanding Biden soon impose one of "the range of actions" it's planning against the Saudis, "to send the message to Saudi Arabian leaders and people everywhere that the killing of a journalist is unacceptable anywhere on this planet... We will continue to demand justice for Jamal Khashoggi."

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LOCAL NEWS

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Myanmar military coup leaders target trade unions for destruction

By Industrial

For weeks, hundreds of thousands of people have been participating in peaceful mass demonstrations across Myanmar in the wake of a coup led by the Army. As the peaceful civil disobedience movement continues to protest against the military takeover, authorities are resorting to violence and cracking down on civilians—including trade unions and their leaders.

Police have issued arrest warrants for 20 union leaders, the majority from the Industrial Workers Federation of Myanmar (IWFM), including the union vice president, Soe Lay.

According to reports from the union, plain clothes police are trying to find the union leaders who participated in a nationwide strike last Monday.

To date, more than 100 elected parliamentarians and chief ministers, including the former government leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, have been arrested by the military.

“Unions play an important role in the fight to return democracy to Myanmar. We give our unequivocal solidarity support to our affiliates in the country and call for a return to the civilian-led government elected by the people,” said Valter Sanches, general secretary of the global union federation IndustriALL. The IWFM is an affiliate of the group.

Labor activists in Myanmar are asking for statements of solidarity and support from unions and workers internationally.

Protestas contra congresistas republicanos en el sur de California

ANTONIO GARCÍA

Las manifestaciones contra los congresistas republicanos Kevin McCarthy (castaño 23) y Mike Garcia (castaño 25) se llevaron a cabo tal como se había planeado este viernes pasado 26 de febrero.

Las acciones tomaron lugar en las ciudades de Santa Clarita, Lancaster y Bakersfield.

En Santa Clarita, inmediatamente los manifestantes fueron confrontados con miembros del alguacil.

Pues la oposición contra García ha incrementado tremendamente y las oficinas del alguacil están localizadas enfrente de las oficinas del representante. Los organizadores fueron Santa Clarita Demócratas, y la Alianza Democrática.

En Lancaster una docena de automóviles se estacionaron enfrente de las oficinas de García, llevando pancartas reflejando las demandas—de que los alguaciles dejen de hostigar fuertemente a las comunidades de afroamericanos y latinos. Los alguaciles no se metieron contra los militantes.

La manifestación en Bakersfield fue más bullosa, atrayendo a más de 20 automóviles que pitaban fuerte sus claxones frente a las oficinas de McCarthy.

Desgraciadamente aquí en Bakersfield los apoyantes de Trump hostigaron y rodearon la manifestación y también la casa de Julie Soliz, la principal organizadora de las manifestaciones. La policía no defendió a Soliz.

La organización Our Revolution fue también una de las principales organizadoras de las manifestaciones.

Dice Alexander Wade, figura central del movimiento, que deben de continuar la presión con temas importantes que representan las necesidades de la comunidad.

Tom Lackey, miembro de la Asamblea estatal de California, hizo una llamada a los activistas para juntarse con ellos para discutir sus demandas. Lackey es un socio cercano a García.

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