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By Benjamin Mateus and Patrick Martin
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New cases of COVID-19 reach a one-day high of nearly 308,000 worldwide

The World Health Organization (WHO) reported Monday a record one-day high of 307,930 new cases of COVID-19. According to all COVID-19 tracking dashboards, the globe is soon set to surpass 30 million infections. The United States, Brazil, and India have remained at the epicenter of the global pandemic for several weeks running, accounting for the majority of daily new cases.

The Worldometer COVID-19 dashboard estimates there have been almost 930,000 deaths in little more than eight months since the first victim died on January 11 in Wuhan, a 61-year-old-man who was a regular customer at the now infamous wet market. The seven-day moving average of daily deaths has exceeded 5,000 since mid-July, meaning that in approximately two weeks, the total number of deaths worldwide will exceed one million.

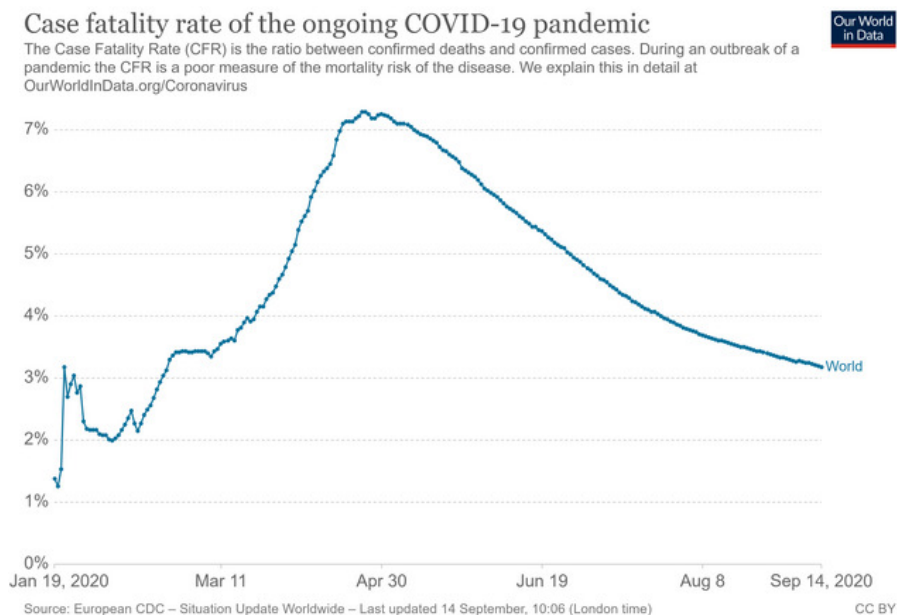


Nurses and physicians on a COVID-19 unit in Texas [Credit: Miguel Gutierrez Jr.]

The crude global case fatality rate (total deaths divided by total cases) stands at an astounding 3.18 percent. However, this also doesn't account for the excess deaths that have been consistently reported in almost every country, which would put the mortality much higher. There is no legitimate debate either over the deadliness of this contagion or the warnings of epidemiologists and other medical scientists that society's resources must be fully mobilized to contain and suppress this pandemic.

The predictions for the next several months are dire. If the working classes of every nation do not resist the policy of herd immunity that the ruling classes have thoroughly implemented to ensure the economy is operating at full speed, it will only accelerate the toll in lives and health.

It is more than six months since President Trump admitted to Bob Woodward, the senior *Washington Post* reporter, after his conversation with Chinese President Xi Jinping, "This is deadly stuff. It's also more deadly than ... even your strenuous flu ... this is five percent [case fatality rate] versus one percent and less than one percent."

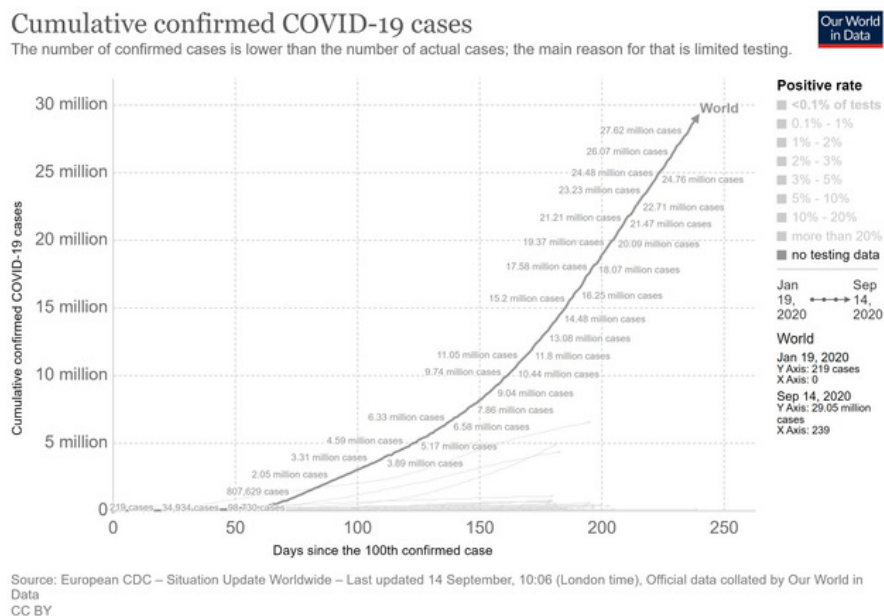


Global case fatality rate (Credit: Our World in Data)

As the WSWS noted, this conspiracy to hide the deadly nature of the pandemic involved Trump's cabinet, the Democrats and Republicans in Congress, and the media establishment. It is obvious as well that China provided similar warnings to European leaders, whose deceptive rhetoric and malign actions are nearly identical with those of the United States.

The US is poised to surpass 200,000 deaths before the week's end, which, in raw numbers, exceeds the number of American deaths in World War I, the Korean War and Vietnam combined. By the end of this year, according to a conservative projection by the University of Washington, that figure could reach 410,000, the equivalent of total US combat deaths in World War II.

Despite these harrowing figures, Trump declares that the country has “turned the corner” on the pandemic, a remark that will find a place in history alongside “light at the end of the tunnel” during the Vietnam War, or George W. Bush’s boast of “Mission Accomplished,” three months into the US invasion and occupation of Iraq.



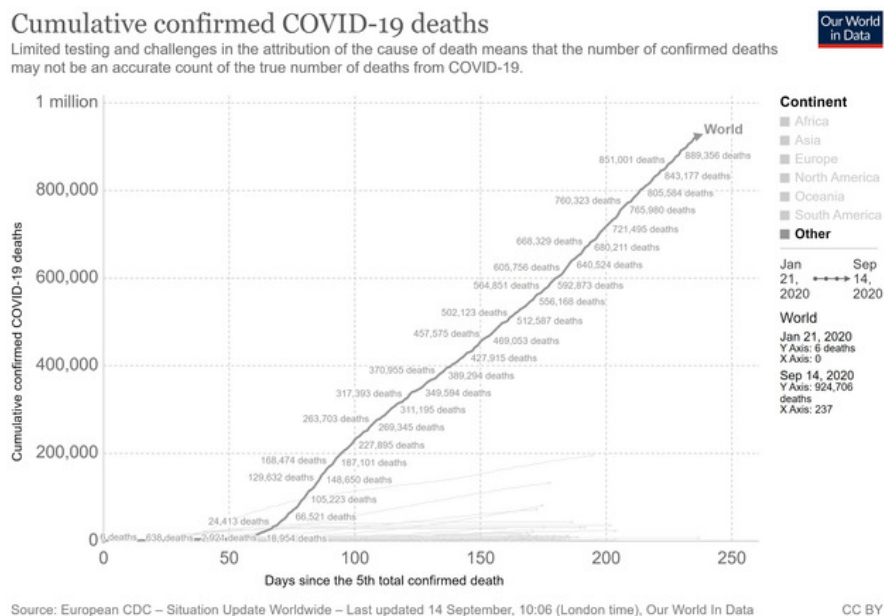
Cumulative global cases of COVID-19 (Credit: Our World in Data)

As for the Democrats, their presidential candidate hopes to profit politically from Trump’s colossal failure and obvious indifference. But Democratic governors are carrying out the same policies at the state level, promoting the reopening of factories and other workplaces, and the back-to-school campaign that has already touched off a new wave of illness and death.

And in Congress, both capitalist parties demonstrate their callousness toward the tens of millions who have been thrown out of work by the impact of the pandemic. Federal supplemental unemployment benefits expired on July 31 for 20 million workers, and neither the Democrats nor the Republicans have lifted a finger to assist them—after they

moved heaven and earth to pass legislation that gave a \$3 trillion bailout to the big corporations and banks.

The real concern of all sections of the political establishment is the mounting resistance among workers and youth to the policy of herd immunity, under which the majority of the population will be infected and millions will die or suffer major and potentially lifelong damage to their health. The focal point is now the struggle over the reopening of K-12 education and colleges, where strikes have broken out despite the effort of the unions to subordinate all actions of workers to the presidential campaign of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris.



Cumulative global deaths due to COVID-19 (Credit: Our World in Data)

While the Democrats rely on the unions to suppress the working class, the Trump administration is turning to the open use of force. Trump himself has hailed the police execution of Michael Reinhoehl, a left-wing protester against police violence, and defended the ultra-right gunman who killed two Black Lives Matter protesters in Kenosha, Wisconsin. He has repeatedly threatened to invoke the Insurrection Act of 1807 and call out the military against political opponents.

In a further sign of the fascist tendencies erupting from the Trump administration, a longtime political operative, Michael Caputo, recently installed as Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services for Public Affairs, the top communications job in that department, claimed Sunday that there was a “resistance unit” of scientists inside the

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—the main federal disease-fighting organization—who were engaged in “sedition” against President Trump.

Caputo’s seemingly deranged remarks came in a video he hosted live on his personal Facebook page, reported by the *New York Times* and then confirmed by Caputo in an interview with the *Washington Post*. The diatribe was apparently set off by media criticism of Caputo’s role in doctoring reports by the CDC and HHS on the impact of the coronavirus pandemic to make Trump’s role look better.

A former Trump employee in various business ventures, Caputo had no background in health care when he was appointed in April, in the midst of the global pandemic, to oversee HHS communications about the public health crisis.

In the course of his video, Caputo claimed that the shooting of a right-wing counterdemonstrator in Portland, Oregon last month was a “drill” in preparation for widespread left-wing violence against Trump and his supporters. He predicted that Trump would win the election, that his Democratic opponent Joe Biden would not concede, and that “armed insurrection” would be prepared.

“And when Donald Trump refuses to stand down at the inauguration, the shooting will begin,” he said. “If you carry guns, buy ammunition, ladies and gentlemen, because it’s going to be hard to get.” He went on to say that he himself felt physically threatened, and that his “mental health has definitely failed.”

Even before he was appointed to the top public relations job at HHS, Caputo had tweeted, on March 11, “For the Democrat 2020 victory strategy to work, 100,000+ Americans have to die.” It was the reopening of the US economy, promoted by Trump and carried out at the urging of governors of both parties, that drove the death toll well above that number before the end of May.

The homicidal policy of the US ruling elite in the coronavirus pandemic and the emergence of fascistic tendencies within the Trump administration are interconnected phenomena.

American capitalism is plunging into the abyss, facing intractable social, economic and political crises for which no section of the ruling elite has any solution.

As the Socialist Equality Party declared in its recent statement on the COVID-19 crisis:

The fight against the pandemic is not primarily a medical question. As with every great problem confronting the working class—social inequality and poverty, war, environmental

degradation and dictatorship—it is a political and revolutionary question, which raises the need for the working class to take power in its own hands, overthrow capitalism, and restructure all of society on the basis of social need.

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