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**Threat to humanity**

Covid-19 knows no national boundaries. It does not discriminate by race or religion or ideology. The pandemic poses a threat to humanity, not to any one country. Our response must be as encompassing as the threat: we cannot end the threat here without ending it everywhere.

Today, India is suffering a brutal second wave of the disease. A staggering 400,000 new cases are counted a day; the actual number is surely higher. Medical facilities run out of oxygen, ventilators, and beds. Thousands die a day, increasing numbers from oxygen shortages. The crematoriums are overwhelmed. In some cities, the dead are burned overnight in parking lots; the sun dawns on the ashes left behind.

Across the global South, the pandemic rages. South Africa is the epicenter in Africa, with 1.6 million infected and only 500,000 fully vaccinated. Brazil is second only to the US in diseases, but unlike the US where 70 percent will have at least one shot of vaccine by July 4, in Brazil less than 8 percent have been fully vaccinated.

With the US well on the way to beating the pandemic at home, we must lift our sights to join in combating it across the world. Public Citizen estimates that for $25 billion, we could buy 8 billion doses of vaccine, enough to vaccinate one-half of the planet. For far less, we could help countries build manufacturing facilities and enable them to manufacture the vaccine themselves.

Is our vision expansive enough to meet the challenge posed by Covid-19? Our vision was big enough to help save Europe after World War II with the Marshall Plan. Is it big enough to help save the global South – and ourselves today?

On the evening of April 15 in Indianapolis, a gunman opened fire in a FedEx facility where he had worked. He knew it was overwhelmingly staffed by Sikhs, Indian-Americans. Four of the eight people killed were Sikhs. He specifically targeted Sikh employees, with one employee reporting that the gunman “told a white woman running toward him to get out of the way, after having just shot a Sikh man in the face.”

The massacre took place just a month after the targeting of Asian American spas in Atlanta which left eight people dead, including six Asian women. Violence against Sikhs and against Asian Americans spiked after 9/11, and now it is spiking again in the wake of the pandemic, which originated in China. Today, a generation after 9/11, Sikhs are five times more likely to be targets of hate than they were before 9/11.

With Covid-19 we do not have the luxury of hate. We need to rise above our divisions to join to defeat the pandemic. It is long past time for the US to help mobilize a far bolder global initiative to ensure the rapid vaccination–and the adequate supplies for treatment – across the world. We need to help save Indians and South Africans and Brazilians to help save ourselves. We need to join with China and Russia and our allies to address the needs, not compete with them as if this were a fight over markets or influence.

Excerpted: ‘Covid-19 Is a Global Threat to Humanity—and Requires an International Response’

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