

Headlines:

- **A Global Vaccine Apartheid is Unfolding. People's Lives Must Come Before Profit**
- **Pakistan Wants Closer Engagement with US for Regional Stability**
- **These Three Pacific Military Flashpoints could Shape Biden's China Strategy**

Details:

A Global Vaccine Apartheid is Unfolding. People's Lives Must Come Before Profit

Nine months ago world leaders were queueing up to declare any Covid-19 vaccine a global public good. Today we are witness to a vaccine apartheid that is only serving the interests of powerful and profitable pharmaceutical corporations while costing us the quickest and least harmful route out of this crisis. I am sickened by news that South Africa, a country whose HIV history should have taught us all the most appalling life-costing consequences of allowing pharmaceutical corporations to protect their medicine monopolies, has had to pay more than double the price paid by the European Union for the AstraZeneca vaccine for far fewer doses than it actually needs. Like so many other low- and middle-income countries, South Africa is today facing a vaccine landscape of depleted supply where it is purchasing power, not suffering, that will secure the few remaining doses. Nine out of 10 people living in the poorest countries are poised to miss out on a vaccine this year. Production delays put even this figure in doubt. Unjustifiably high prices block access and threaten to push more countries into an ever-deeper debt crisis. If we continue to pursue the vaccine model we have, we will fail to get this pandemic under control for years to come. Failure to change course will come at the cost of millions of lives and livelihoods around the world; to our progress on tackling poverty; to businesses, including those represented here at the World Economic Forum this week; and to our collective public health and economic security. Make no mistake, the costs of vaccine inequality will not be confined to those living in the poorest countries. The longer the virus is allowed to continue in a context of patchy immunity, the greater the chance of mutations that could render the vaccines we have and the vaccines some people in rich countries have already received, less effective or ineffective. Research commissioned by the International Chamber of Commerce published this week predicts that delays to vaccine access in poorer nations will also cost the global economy an estimated \$9tn (£6.6tn), with nearly half of this absorbed in wealthy countries such as the US, Canada, Germany and the UK. We cannot rewind the past nine months or the failure so far of governments to enact their pledge to make Covid-19 vaccines global public goods. But we can and must act now to change the otherwise catastrophic trajectory of this pandemic. The vaccine science, knowhow and technology, paid for in large part by more than \$100bn of taxpayers' money, can no longer be treated as the private property of pharmaceutical corporations. Instead, these must be shared openly, via the World Health Organization's Covid-19 technology access pool, so that more manufacturers can be brought on board and a global plan put in action to scale up vaccine production. [Source: The Guardian]

The predictable behaviour of global Capitalism—create a two-tier world, where the super-rich protect their world and interests at the expense of the rest. The world desperately needs Islam to save humanity from the evils of the global capitalists and their blood-thirsty servants!

Pakistan Wants Closer Engagement with US for Regional Stability

Pakistan last week emphasised the need for a closer engagement with the United States for regional stability. Foreign Office spokesman Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri, at the weekly media briefing, said that Islamabad valued its ties with Washington, which had helped maintain regional peace and stability. "We have achieved a lot by working together in the past. The logic for continued engagement and coordination is even more compelling in the context of shared geopolitical and security challenges," he said while replying to a question about the strategy to engage the new US administration. "We look forward to working with the new administration to further strengthen our bilateral ties to make it multifaceted, sustainable and mutually beneficial and continue our partnership to achieve peace, stability and prosperity in the region," the FO spokesman said. He recalled that Pakistan and the US had cooperated for peace in Afghanistan. Mr Chaudhri noted the progress made in the peace process during last one year, including signing of the US-Taliban Agreement, start of the

intra-Afghan negotiations and agreement on the rules and procedures for the talks. "We believe that the intra-Afghan negotiations have now advanced into an important phase where all the negotiating sides are required to show continued commitment and responsibility for moving forward towards reaching a comprehensive political settlement. It is important for Afghans to seize this historic opportunity," he said. The spokesman said Pakistan has been calling on all sides for taking measures for reduction in violence leading to ceasefire. He, however, pointed out that the progress in this regard was linked to forward movement in the intra-Afghan negotiations. Regarding Kashmir, he said Pakistan would continue to sensitise the international community, including the US, about India's continued defiance of the international law and consistent UN Security Council resolutions. He urged the international community to take forceful action on India's egregious human rights violations in the occupied territory and denial of right to self-determination of the people of Kashmir. The spokesman refused to comment on the Supreme Court's verdict in the Daniel Pearl case. "We have seen the media reports. The detailed judgement of the court is still awaited. I am not in a position to offer any further comments," he maintained. [Source: The Dawn].

Instead of turning the tables on America, Pakistan's leadership is enamored with Washington, and is looking for pointers from Biden to strengthen America's relationship with Pakistan. America has nothing good for Pakistan, and will weaken the country's economy and armed forces until Pakistan becomes a province of India.

These Three Pacific Military Flashpoints could Shape Biden's China Strategy

Any suggestion that the departure of former US President Donald Trump from Washington would provide a temporary pause in US-China tensions has been swiftly dispelled. In the short time since President Joe Biden was sworn into office, China has flown more than two dozen combat aircraft near to the self-ruled island of Taiwan and passed a law allowing its coast guard to fire on foreign vessels. Meanwhile, the US Navy has sent an aircraft carrier strike group into the South China Sea. Analysts say such moves are likely only the beginning of what is expected to be a potentially uneasy initial relationship between the new Biden administration and Beijing. "China often uses a series of 'tests' to determine a competitor's intentions or willingness to respond to China's actions," said Carl Schuster, a former director of operations at the US Pacific Command's Joint Intelligence Center. Next steps from Beijing could include large-scale military exercises near Taiwan or in the South China Sea, or stopping foreign vessels in the name of enforcing Chinese maritime regulations, Schuster said. Beijing will be trying to determine where the Biden administration's "red lines" are, added Schuster. But incoming Biden Cabinet secretaries have made clear where his administration will stand on Chinese territorial claims in the Indo-Pacific. "I think China is our most challenging, our most significant challenge going forward," new Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin told his confirmation hearing last week. The Defense Department would focus on convincing China, or any adversary, that taking on the US military would be "a very bad idea," Austin said. Taiwan returned to the forefront of US-China tensions last weekend when Beijing sent more than two dozen warplanes into the self-governing island's air defense identification zone in a 48-hour period. While the frequency of such drills has increased in recent years, the timing and the composition of the latest formations -- mostly fighter jets and bombers -- appeared intended to send a message to the new administration in Washington. Though the US has remained a decades-long ally of Taiwan following the island's split from mainland China in the wake of a civil war, American policymakers have traditionally refrained from overt displays of support since Washington established formal diplomatic ties with Beijing in 1979. China continues to view the self-governing democracy of almost 24 million people as an inseparable part of its territory, and has vowed to unify the island with the mainland. For decades an uneasy status quo governed cross-strait relations. But in recent years, under President Xi Jinping, China has reasserted its perceived claims to the island, threatening military action and even "war" in response to what it considers to be growing calls for formal independence. Beijing now asserts its military aircraft can operate freely around the island, owing to it being "Chinese airspace." [Source: CNN]

It is unlikely that China will take any serious action against Taiwan. Beijing needs the Khilafah Rashidah (rightly guided Caliphate) on the Method of Prophethood to give it confidence to seize Taiwan and end America's primacy in the Asian Pacific.