Twitter Censorship Contributed To Destructive Pandemic Policies And Is Criminal, Says Former White House COVID Adviser

BY TYLER DURDEN　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　FRIDAY, DEC 16, 2022 - 12:46 PM

Authored by Eva Fu via The Epoch Times,

The recently revealed censorship that has plagued Twitter in recent years is "criminal," according to former White House COVID adviser Dr. Scott Atlas, as it allowed "lies to be imposed on the public" during a pandemic that wrought untold damage worldwide.

> ***"When correct science policy is blocked, people die, and people died from the censorship,"*** Atlas, a special coronavirus adviser during the Trump administration and contributor to The Epoch Times, said in an interview.

Atlas was speaking days after Elon Musk, the new owner of Twitter, released troves of internal files showing how the previous Twitter team built a blacklist to limit disfavored tweets' visibility without the knowledge of those using the platform. Among those flagged was Dr. Jay Bhattacharya of Stanford, whose tweet criticizing pandemic lockdowns shortly after joining the platform last August got him on the "trends blacklist" preventing the amplification of his tweets.

But such revelations, Atlas said, are "only the tip of the iceberg."

> *"There's a far larger story here that we need to hear," he said, which he considers "far more nefarious and more systemic than isolated tweets being pulled down."*

> *"This seems to be criminal behavior, and I think it needs to be investigated in the courts," he said.*

The Censorship of 2020

Atlas wants to direct attention back to 2020, when health officials followed in the Chinese Communist Party's footsteps to implement blanket COVID-19 lockdowns.

In November of that year, while Atlas was still on the White House's coronavirus task force, Twitter took down his post that argued mask-wearing was not effective in curbing the spread of the virus—a decision celebrated by some proponents of the measures, including fellow task force member Dr. Deborah Birx.

> *"One would think that the American public should hear what the adviser to the president is saying during the pandemic of 2020. Yet Twitter decided to simply block that discussion from the public,"* he said.

Both Twitter and Facebook that August also removed a video from President Donald Trump in which he said children are "almost immune" to COVID-19. That same month, Facebook said it had deleted 7 million pieces of content it deemed to be COVID-19 misinformation over the second quarter of 2020.

Despite most states having a mask mandate until early this year, a number of studies found children and teenagers to be at a far lower risk of getting or dying from COVID-19, even with the emergence of new variants. But the "censorship of 2020," be it deleting individual tweets, suspending accounts, or blocking the amplification of posts, had done its damage.

"When decisions were being made in 2020 and imposed upon the public, that's when censorship counted the most," Atlas said.

The absence of alternative viewpoints manipulated not only the public, but government officials as well, Atlas said.

> *"It created this illusion that there was a consensus among science and public health policy experts that lockdowns should be imposed; it created and perpetrated lies that if you were opposed to lockdowns, you were choosing the economy over lives, and that if you were opposed to lockdowns, you were somehow calling for letting the infection spread without any mitigation whatsoever,"* he said.

> *"They absolutely contributed to policies that killed massive numbers of people and destroyed children and low-income people, who are the most vulnerable. That's why it's criminal."*

Atlas has been a vocal critic of COVID-19 lockdowns since early on in the pandemic, saying that "targeted protection was the logical, safer, and ethical way to manage the pandemic." In May 2020, he wrote an article for the Hill warning about the "millions of years of life" such policies would cost Americans.

Learning loss aside, the pandemic restrictions led to an explosion of child abuse, drug overdoses, mental health issues, and obesity among youth, who were deprived of normal social interaction and forced to continue schooling through remote learning.

Collectively, America's social media and legacy media, "coupled with incompetent bureaucrats running the policy and ignorant university professors have left a sinful legacy of damage," said Atlas—the reason for the massive loss of trust in public health agencies that people depend for guidance in future crises.

Former Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey recently said his "biggest mistake" while at the company was to "invest in building tools for us to manage the public conversation, versus building tools for the

people using Twitter to easily manage it for themselves," a decision he said has "burdened the company with too much power."

Late last month, Musk announced an end to the COVID-19 "misleading information" policy, which has resulted in 100,000 pieces of content cut from the platform and more than 11,000 account suspensions.

Atlas welcomed the gesture but thought that more individuals need to "rise up" for real change.

> **"There should be a public outrage that is massive,"** he said.

He believes those the American public elected to represent them haven't done their part.

> *"Where are our elected officials in this, where are they?" he asked. "If they can't act, simply for ensuring free speech, they should all step down."*

'Distortion' Around Vaccine Mandates

A recent study published in Nature of over 15,000 citizens across 21 countries shows that people who have received COVID-19 vaccines are far more likely to be prejudiced against the unvaccinated than the other way around, which Atlas saw as yet another illustration of how social media censorship has shaped public opinion through suppressing critical information.

More than 5.47 billion people worldwide have received at least one dose of one of the COVID-19 vaccines, accounting for roughly 70 percent of the world population, despite a "thorough, detailed understanding of efficacy and side effects from the vaccines," Atlas noted.

But because of the lockdown mandates, which he called "pseudo-scientific," throngs of workers in healthcare, education, and the military lost their jobs and hospitals suffered staffing shortages, causing backlogs of patients needing vital treatment for other non-COVID-19 diseases.

In perpetrating a "false narrative," social media platforms have deviated from their promised role as a digital town hall and a visible source of information, and instead allowed themselves to be a tool for harm, said Atlas.

> *"We are living in an Orwellian society if this sort of censorship is allowed to keep going."*

Atlas faced considerable pressure in 2020 for airing his views on COVID-19 and resigned after four months of repeated clashes with other members of the task force. But he said this "character assassination" won't stop him from doing what he believes is right.

He quoted English writer G. K. Chesterton: "Right is right even if nobody does it. Wrong is wrong even if everybody is wrong about it."

Thousands from around the world, he said, have written to him encouraging him to keep speaking up, including some "whose family members had committed suicide from the lockdowns and many in the health profession who said they were "afraid to step forward."

"We need people with integrity to rise up when the pressure is on, and when you do that, you empower other people to speak up."

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