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Vaccine Nationalism Will Prolong the Pandemic
A Global Problem Calls for Collective Action
By Thomas J. Bollyky and Chad P. Bown, December 29, 2020

For the second time in two decades, an international crisis looms over access
to medicines. A small number of wealthy nations, including the United States,
have spent billions of dollars locking up early supplies of the most promising
novel coronavirus vaccines. If the United States exercises its option to buy 500
million more doses of the Pfizer and BioNTech vaccine, 94 percent of the
projected supply of the first immunization authorized for public use will be
spoken for through the end of 2021. By one recent estimate, nations
representing just one-seventh of the world’s population have already reserved

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cooperation among nations, rich and poor alike, on common threats to health
and toward aid-driven initiatives and public-private partnerships to solve the
problems of other people—mostly in low-income countries.
The shortcomings of this approach have long been evident in the failure of
global health institutions to mobilize effectively against many of the collective