Unsafe Life On The Border

by Phyllis Schlafly Apr. 28, 2004

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The television news media bring us daily, graphic reports from Iraq, where valiant Americans are battling danger, death and destruction of property. So why don't we get coverage about similar dramatic and scary confrontations taking place on the U.S. border?

The compelling truth about the danger and devastation on America's southern border is crying out to be told. Americans need to hear from the likes of Erin Anderson, whose family homesteaded in Cochise County on the Arizona-Mexico border in the late 1880s.

Ms. Anderson says these American pioneers can't live on their own property any more because it's too dangerous. They can't ranch it. They can't sell it.

It isn't safe to go on their own property without a gun, a cell phone, and a two-way radio. Their land has been stolen from them by illegal aliens while public officials turn a deaf ear.

Cochise County in the Tucson sector is the major smuggling route for illegal aliens and drugs, and literally thousands cross every night. The Border Patrol admits to apprehending one out of five illegals, but many think it's only one out of ten.

The number of illegal aliens apprehended on the southern border jumped 25 percent in the first three months of 2004 compared with last year. In Tucson the increase was 51 percent, in Yuma, it was 60 percent.

The news of President Bush's amnesty proposal spread like wildfire as far south as Brazil. After Border Patrol agents reported that the illegals said the amnesty proposal had prompted them to come, U.S. agents were told not to ask the question any more.

Ms. Anderson says that American landowners watch in horror as their lands, water troughs and tanks, and animals are destroyed. The daily trampling of thousands of feet has beaten the ground into a hard pavement on which no grass will grow for the cattle.

Places that the illegals use as layover sites, where they rest or wait for the next ride, are littered with mountains of trash, garbage, open latrines, and plastic bags, diapers and wrappers of all kinds. When indigenous wildlife and cattle eat the plastic and refuse, they die, so the residents try to clean up the sites as often as they can.

The large number of discarded medicine wrappers indicates the prevalence of disease among the illegals. It is estimated that 10 percent of all illegals are carriers of Chagas, a potentially fatal disease that is widespread in Central America.

Sometimes the Americans who clean up the sites pick up pocket trash: scraps of paper with the name and phone number of the illegal alien's destination in the United States. This indicates that these border crossings are a very well organized migration.

Other suspicious items picked up by local residents include Muslim prayer rugs and notebooks written in both Arabic and Spanish. These items came from OTMs (Other Than Mexicans) and a subcategory called Special Interest Aliens, who are illegals coming from terrorist sponsoring countries.

The increased crime rate is frightening. Arizona has the highest rate of car theft in the nation, and residents risk home invasion and personal attacks.

The increase in violence is very intimidating to American residents. They are afraid to speak out because someone takes note of who they are and where they live, and gives that information to smuggler cartels in Mexico.

People-smuggling by men known as coyotes has piggybacked on the already well established drug smuggling networks and infrastructure, and has become the third largest source of income for organized crime. Drug smuggling and human smuggling are now interchangeable.

Smuggling has become a recognized industry in Mexico. The smuggling route is very mechanized, and some northern Mexican villages have become known as smuggling industry towns.

Illegals fly or take a bus from anywhere in Mexico or Central America to an industry town like Altar in the northern region. They are driven to the Arizona border, walk a few miles across the border, and then are picked up by shuttle buses which take them north to Tucson or Phoenix.

Shuttle buses are common carriers, so they are not required to ask for citizenship ID as the airlines do. Often the coyotes take their passengers to stash houses in Phoenix and then hold them for ransom even though they have already paid their smuggling fee.

People smuggling is so lucrative and pervasive that it is corrupting some local American high school kids. Youngsters can make thousands of dollars a week by picking up illegal aliens on the road and driving them to the Phoenix airport.

When is the Bush Administration going to put troops on our southern border to stop these crimes, and when are the media going to interview Erin Anderson and other Arizonans so the American people can know what is really going on?