Homeland Security Should Protect Us From Diseases

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Media headlines are blaming the House leadership for preventing passage of the giant Intelligence bill designed to restructure homeland security, but negotiations bogged down on the question of what to do about illegal aliens. How can we protect homeland security unless the government stops the invasion of illegal aliens?

Senate negotiators refused to agree to stop the entry of 4,000 illegals a day across our southern border, including OTMs (Other Than Mexicans) from the Middle East. This refusal to face reality makes ridiculous the regulations that immigrants, in order to enter our country legally, must show proof that they are free from communicable diseases and drug addiction.

I'm indebted to medical attorney Madeleine Pelner Cosman, Ph.D., J.D., for her expose of some of the health threats and costs of the diseases brought in by illegal aliens. She is president of Medical Equity Inc., a national medical law consultancy since 1980.

Tuberculosis had virtually disappeared from the United States, thanks to our excellent hygiene and modern medications. A new TB called Multi-Drug Resistant Tuberculosis (MDR-TB), until recently endemic only to Mexico, is expanding rapidly in our country as each alien infects 10 to 30 others.

TB suddenly had a 17 percent increase in Virginia in 2002, and TB in Prince William County rose 188 percent. Public health officials traced this rise to illegal aliens from Mexico.

The Centers for Disease Control ascribes 50 percent of all new TB cases to "foreign born" persons, with 66 percent of those coming from Mexico, the Philippines and Vietnam. The Queens, New York health department attributed 81 percent of new TB cases in 2001 to aliens, and other TB outbreaks have occurred in Minnesota, Maine and Florida.

Chagas, known as the kissing bug disease because the parasite favors infection on the face, infects 18 million people in Latin America and causes 500,000 deaths annually. There is no effective cure, and up to 40 percent die when their hearts or intestines explode.

Unknown in the United States until recently, Chagas has infiltrated America's blood supply and hundreds of blood recipients may already be infected. In 2001, three people received Chagas-infected organ transplants, two of whom died.

The U.S. has always been practically free of Leprosy, that fearful disfiguring disease known since Biblical days. Suddenly, 7,000 cases of leprosy have appeared, especially in the northeastern states, brought in by illegal aliens from India, Brazil, the Caribbean, and Mexico.

Dengue Fever, another very rare disease, recently had a virulent outbreak in a Texas county on our southern border.

West Nile Virus was unheard of in the United States prior to 1998. Brought to our country from Africa, this mosquito-borne disease now infects tens of thousands of people in 21 states, and many have died.

Malaria had been obliterated from the U.S., but is now reemerging in Texas. Since 1991, the U.S. hasn't had a case of a native-born American getting polio (except from the oral polio vaccine) but aliens are bringing back polio, too.

E-coli intestinal parasites are widespread in Latin America and are now coming into the United States. A restaurant worker in Pennsylvania exposed 3,000 people to Hepatitis A, and two died.

Over 50 percent of Hepatitis B cases in the U.S. are found among Asian-Americans. Yet, nearly all American newborns are inoculated with the Hepatitis B vaccine, subjecting low-risk babies to possibly dangerous side effects.

Think about the entry into our country of these deadly and expensive time-bomb diseases every time you breathe the air in public places or are attacked by mosquitoes in your backyard. Think about this every time you pay the income and property taxes you are forced to pay because of Congress's unfunded mandate (EMTALA, Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act) that all hospitals treat all illegal aliens who show up at the Emergency Room.

Think about these costs when you find the maternity wards filled by illegal pregnant women giving birth to "anchor babies" who are granted instant U.S. citizenship plus generous welfare benefits for the newborn and the whole illegal family. Think about these foreign diseases when you knock on the door of any of the dozens of hospitals that have closed because they can't cover the costs of these non-paying illegal patients.

In Los Angeles County alone, 10 trauma centers and 18 emergency rooms have closed. Arizona's Cochise County Health Department spends 30 percent of its annual budget on uncompensated care of illegal aliens.

Then ask your two Senators why they tried to exclude border security from the homeland security bill. And thank your Representative for standing firm against such deception.