The Inhumanity Of Not Closing Our Southern Border

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How many illegal aliens will die before the Bush Administration realizes that the most humane act it can take is to close our southern border to illegal traffic and eliminate the incentive to unscrupulous smugglers to take the calculated risk that financial profits outweigh the costs of getting caught? This month's death from dehydration and heatstroke of 19 people out of 100 crammed into a tractor-trailer near Houston is only the latest in a long series of similar tragedies.
The profitable racket of smuggling illegals into the United States in sealed trucks has been going on for years, and only death makes it newsworthy. Trucks ought to be inspected when they cross the border, for the illegal aliens' protection as well as for American sovereignty.

Smugglers reap millions of dollars in profits. They collect their fees up front, then often abandon their clients in desert areas without food or water, or hold them hostage in "drop houses" for ransom from relatives ($800 to $2,500 per person was quoted in Phoenix).

Last year, 145 illegals died horrible and painful deaths in the Arizona desert. Smuggling is accompanied by a huge increase in violent crimes, including murder, rape, robbery and kidnapping.

Yet, only 140 new federal agents were assigned to the U.S.-Mexico border in Arizona this year. That's a pitiful response compared to tens of thousands who invade our territory every year.

Congress and the Administration are toying with plans to use state-of-the-art technology to monitor the activities of law-abiding Americans, and are now using camera-equipped, unmanned spy planes in Afghanistan to hunt for terrorists. When are we going to use our advanced technology on our border, including surveillance planes, electric fences, and, yes, U.S. troops to protect the states against "invasion" as required by Article IV of the U.S. Constitution?

The leader of a ring that smuggled about 900 illegal aliens during the 1990s was convicted in April after two of his passengers died in a sweltering tractor-trailer near Dallas. Each week, the smuggler would bring up to five loads of aliens to safe houses in El Paso where they would be picked up to be hauled to eager U.S. employers nationwide.

A Florida farm labor contractor was sentenced in April for luring illegal aliens into a smuggling operation that left 14 dead and 11 others to suffer in the Arizona desert after they were abandoned by their "coyote." Last year, 94 people were prosecuted in Colorado for smuggling illegal aliens.

A Tijuana restaurant owner pled guilty to running a smuggling ring that brought illegal aliens, mostly from Lebanon, through Mexico into San Diego. People-smugglers are bringing people from Pakistan and the Middle East into the United States for as much as $30,000 a person.

The leader of a ring that smuggled over a thousand Ukrainians into the United States through Mexico was sentenced in March to 17 years in prison. The smuggling operation began in Kiev, Ukraine, where people (referred to as "merchandise") paid fees of $5,000 to $7,000 each, were provided with Mexican tourist visas, coached to say "United States citizen" without a Russian accent, flown to Mexico and escorted to Los Angeles.

Accidents are a common occurrence, even on highways far from the border, when vans carrying illegal aliens crash because of high speeds, incompetent drivers going the wrong way or inability to read English signs. The injured have to be cared for in local hospitals at the taxpayers' expense.

In San Diego in December, 6 illegals were killed and 16 injured in a wrong-way lights-off head-on crash on the interstate, and two were killed and 20 injured in another crash in March. In Bowie, Kansas, in February, a van rolled over killing 3 and hospitalizing 15.

Near Fort Smith, Arkansas in March, 5 aliens were hospitalized after a head-on crash. Last week's crash when a tractor-trailer driven by an illegal alien jackknifed in the new Boston Big Dig tunnel will cost the taxpayers $500,000.

In populated areas of California and Arizona, the illegal traffic often moves through tunnels, of which U.S. officials say there may be "at least 100, if not several hundreds." A truck will park over the U.S. end of the tunnel, and bundles of drugs are handed up through a hole in the trailer's floor.

On April 4 in a parking lot near San Diego, U.S. authorities found a sophisticated tunnel with electricity, ventilation and a million- dollar pulley system. It was the fifth secret passageway discovered along that county's border in the past 14 months.

The federal government has appropriated $695,000 to clean up the trash and waste in southeast Arizona to cope with the environmental damage caused by this human traffic. Arizonans say they need $62.9 million and 93 more employees to repair the damage and to protect against the threat of wildfires from mountains of trash.

We certainly can't depend on Mexico to stop this invasion of illegals. U.S. authorities estimate that smugglers will spend $500 million this year in bribes and payoffs to Mexican military and police to protect this illicit traffic.