Finding Terrorists Inside The United States

November 14, 2001

The Bush Administration's announcements that it will delay indefinitely the admission of refugees from terrorist countries, and that it will find and deport foreigners who are illegally in the United States because their visa terms have expired, are two moves in the right direction. The question remains, however, why did it take seven weeks to initiate such obvious safety measures?
The Administration has set up a Foreign Terrorist Tracking Task Force to study all policies and procedures relating to noncitizens. Instead of more study, how about announcing that all illegals have 30 days to leave the country or they will be prosecuted when located?

In announcing this Task Force on Halloween, Attorney General John Ashcroft stated that it will ensure federal coordination to bar from the United States all aliens who are members or supporters of terrorist organizations, who are suspected of engaging in terrorist activity, or who provide material support to terrorist activity. Since those characteristics were not bars to getting a visa prior to October 31, it looks like the terrorists have been playing trick or treat for years.

If you wonder why such dangerous characters were not denied visas prior to October 31, look to the 1990 Immigration Act, sponsored by Senator Ted Kennedy (D-MA). Under that law, advocating terrorism, or even belonging to a group that engages in terrorism, could not be used as grounds for denying a U.S. visa.

Senator Kit Bond (R-MO) inserted in the PATRIOT (Anti-Terrorism) Act, signed October 26, a provision ordering the Attorney General to report to Congress on the feasibility of enhancing an Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System in order to identify aliens who may be wanted in a criminal investigation. It should be a matter of conscience for Ashcroft to rapidly implement this long-awaited entry-exit system to keep track of aliens entering and leaving our country.

The United States grants 250,000 visas a year to aliens from the Middle East, which includes Iraq, Libya, Algeria, Syria, Egypt, Afghanistan, and "Multiple Use" two-year visas to applicants from Saudi Arabia. How about cutting the quota from 250,000 to 2,500 while the Task Force is doing its studying and until it comes up with the technology to screen out and track the dangerous travelers?

It's not very reassuring to be told that Attorney General Ashcroft has detained 1,000 aliens. More terrorists could be landing at U.S. airports every day on planes from the Middle East and even attending flight school.

We should refuse to let any Saudi Arabian airplane land in our country unless it provides our immigration and customs officials in advance with the names and passport numbers of its passengers. Other foreign airlines provide these lists as a matter of course, but the United States lets Saudi Arabia get by with this impudence even after we learned that 15 of the 19 hijackers got their visas in Saudi Arabia.

The U.S. Census Bureau has repeatedly increased its estimate of the swelling population of illegal aliens in the United States, and in October announced a new figure of 8 million. Most observers think the number is closer to 11 or 12 million, but even the Census Bureau's figure means that the net increase during the 1990s was nearly a half- million a year, i.e., a half million aliens per year violating our laws with the government doing nothing about it.

It's time for the American people to wake up to the fact that the problem of illegal aliens and residents who don't share our worldview comes not merely from people sneaking across our borders, and not even just from people overstaying their tourist, student or worker visas. America is also endangered by the incredible increase in numbers of legal immigrants, especially from Third World countries, that resulted from the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965.

Legal immigration averaged 178,000 per year from 1925 to 1965, increased to 507,000 per year from 1966 to 1989, and increased further to more than 800,000 per year in the 1990s. It's now nearly a million a year, five times the traditional numbers, mostly people from non- Western countries who don't share our respect for the Rule of Law and don't learn how to speak English.

The 1990 Kennedy Immigration Act further discriminates against Western Europe and in favor of the Third World by admitting 50,000 Diversity Immigrants through a lottery system open primarily to non-Western countries, including all seven countries listed by our State Department as "state sponsors of international terrorism" (Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Cuba, North Korea and Sudan). Applicants from England are not eligible, and this year's lottery winners are 95% from non- Western countries.

Our Immigration Service is so swamped that it is unable to do the processing necessary to screen out those with criminal records, communicable diseases, and relationships with terrorist groups, and can't find 250,000 illegals it has already identified for deportation. We urgently need to call a moratorium on immigration until we identify the terrorists, and find out how they got here and how we can get rid of them.