Self-Government Is In Peril From The SPP

by Phyllis Schlafly September 12, 2007

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It's now leaking out that there was more going on than met the eye at the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) Summit in Montebello, Canada in August. The three amigos, Bush, Harper and Calderon, finalized and released the "North American Plan for Avian & Pandemic Influenza."

The "Plan" (that's what they call it, with a capital P) is to use the excuse of a major flu epidemic to shift powers from U.S. legislatures to unelected, unaccountable "North American" bureaucrats.

This idea was launched on September 14, 2005 when Bush announced the "International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza." He was then speaking to the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

We might have thought that idea had some merit because the Influenza Partnership called for "transparency in reporting of influenza cases in humans and in animals" and the "sharing of epidemiological data and samples." That's very different from the SPP, where transparency has always been conspicuously avoided like the plague.

This year's SPP summit in Canada morphed the Influenza Partnership into the North American Plan. Now we discover that the Plan is not only about combating a

flu epidemic but is far-reaching in seeking control over U.S. citizens and public policy during an epidemic.

The Plan repeatedly features the favorite Bush word "comprehensive"; it calls for a "comprehensive, coordinated North American approach." The Plan would give authority to international bureaucrats "beyond the health sector to include a coordinated approach to critical infrastructure protection," including "border and transportation issues."

The Plan is a wordy 44-page document, much of which sounds innocuous. It is helpful to exchange information about disease and take precautions against letting foreign diseases enter the United States.

However, self-government and sovereignty are at risk when control over these matters is turned over to a newly created North American body headed by the representative of another country. It's an additional problem when the entire Plan is a spin-off of the Security and Prosperity Partnership, an arrangement created in secret solely by White House press releases, without Congressional approval or even oversight.

The 2007 Plan acknowledges that it is based not only on the Influenza Partnership, but also on the guidelines, standards and rules of the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

The Plan sets up a "senior level Coordinating Body to facilitate the effective planning and preparedness within North America for a possible outbreak of avian and/or human pandemic influenza under the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP)." The Plan identifies this SPP Coordinating Body as "decision-makers."

The Plan then (ungrammatically) states: "The chair of the SPP Coordinating Body will rotate between each national authority on a yearly basis." Thus, a foreigner will be the "decision-maker" for Americans in two out of every three years.

What powers will this foreign-headed Coordinating Body exercise? The Plan suggests that these include "the use of antivirals and vaccines; ... social distancing measures, including school closures and the prohibition of community gatherings; ... isolation and quarantine."

Will this foreign-headed Coordinating Body respect the First Amendment "right of the people peaceably to assemble"? Or will the rules of the Plan, SPP, WHO, OIE, WTO, and NAFTA take precedence?

In evaluating the Plan, it is instructive to recall the Model State Emergency Health Powers Act (EHPA), an anti-epidemic plan launched by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on October 23, 2001. Designed to be passed by all state legislatures, the model bill was primarily written by Lawrence O. Gostin, a former member of Hillary Clinton's discredited Task Force on Health Care Reform, and was promoted by the Bush Administration during its first year.

The proposed EHPA would have given each governor sole discretion to declare a public health emergency and grant himself extraordinary powers. He would have been able to restrict or prohibit firearms, seize private property and destroy it in many circumstances, and impose price controls and rationing.

Governors would have been given the power to order people out of their homes and into dangerous quarantines. Children could have been taken from their parents and put into public quarantines.

Governors could even have demanded that physicians administer certain drugs despite individuals' religious or other objections. EHPA was based on the

undemocratic concept that decision-making by authoritarian bosses and unelected bureaucrats is the way to go in time of crisis.

EHPA roused a nationwide storm of protest because it was an unprecedented assault on the constitutional rights of U.S. citizens, as well as on our principles of limited government, and so it never passed anywhere in its original text. Will similar totalitarian notions now bypass legislatures and be forced upon us by SPP press releases?