

"TB or not TB"

by
Tom Holbrook

6/16/07

There is much in the news these days concerning the challenges facing our country in keeping unwanted aliens from crossing our borders illegally and the threat that many who come across pose for our citizens through terrorist activities. However, a more subtle but substantially greater danger has seemingly been overlooked or at least under reported by both our lawmakers and the mainstream media.

One hesitates to write on this subject, not wanting to be accused of spreading fear for political gain, however, I view this information as necessary facts for our nation's citizens to have so as to properly prepare for impending danger.

In the past few weeks there has been outrage vented for the poor handling of an Atlanta lawyer, Andrew Speaker, who has the extremely drug-resistant TB, or XDR TB, which is the most dangerous form of the illness. Mr. Speaker flew on several trans-Atlantic flights after he discovered he had the highly infectious disease and re-entered the United States via a rented car through a Canadian/American border crossing. His passport had been flagged in the system but authorities either dismissed or ignored the order to hold and contact the Center for Disease Control. It is said a Senior United States Congressional representative was ranting about the slipshod way this individual was allowed to come and go as he pleased without being stopped.

"Tuberculosis (TB) is now the world's single largest cause of death from a single agent, with one third of the population latently infected and 3.1 million deaths in 1995, up 13 percent from the previous year," so said the World Health Organization in 1996. They also claimed, "At the rate TB is spreading, it could claim over 100 million lives over the next 50 years. The association of TB with the AIDS epidemic is one of the main reasons for the increase."

Dr. Lee Reichman, executive director of New Jersey's Medical School's National Tuberculosis Center, said, "We sit on the edge of potential catastrophe. Government won't take this problem seriously, doctors don't treat it, and the public thinks TB isn't sexy enough to merit attention. As it spreads, it will get our attention. Unfortunately, the new strains are resistance to all known antibiotics. It'll take at least seven years to develop drugs."

Joel Africk, Chief Executive Officer of the American Lung Association of Metropolitan Chicago, agrees with Reichman and stated, "Although cases of tuberculosis among U.S. born residents have been steadily decreasing, tuberculosis remains a significant worldwide disease among our foreign-born population. TB cases among foreign-born people in this country are increasing. Without effective TB prevention and control programs, the disease can be transmitted throughout our population."

It's not just TB that is raising its ugly head in the United States. According to various NY Times and Time Magazine's reports on world health problems over the last six years, over 7,000 new cases of leprosy (Hansen's disease) have been brought into America by newcomers to our shores, primarily from places rife

with leprosy, i.e., Brazil, the Caribbean and India. That's up from 900 over the previous 40 years. Dr. William Levis, who was attending physician at Bellevue Hospital's Disease Clinic, in Bellevue, Washington has been quoted as saying, "Those are the ones we know about. There are probably many, many more."

The last century saw the American people, through aggressive medical research and strict monitoring and control over disease infected individuals stamp out most of the former life threatening diseases that use to run rampant in this country. Diphtheria, Typhoid, Smallpox, Measles, Polio, to mention a few, were conquered and essentially eradicated from our daily vocabulary with mandatory quarantines of those people with the diseases and exciting discoveries from the research done to produce powerful antibiotics and immunizations.

Unfortunately, we have fallen complacent and forgotten what types of conditions contributed to the spread of disease in our past. Consequently, through our non-existent prevention of illegal aliens from the Third World countries who send their unwanted citizens over our borders, we not only are unable to screen them for the potential infectious diseases they carry into this country, we refuse to take any steps to find out who and where they are so we can place obligatory controls over their activities such as eating and living habits. As evidenced by their discarded belongings along the trails they use to enter our country, and the homes in which many of them live, dozens to a room, they are bringing the same filthy, unhealthy habits with them.

Frosty Wooldridge, an environmental science lecturer and author, has said, "Strains of TB once only found in Mexico have moved into the border States of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California. Since three years ago 16,000 people living in the US developed TB. In 2001, nearly 40 percent of MDR TB cases erupted in New York and California. TB won't stay put for long. It's found in overcrowded city conditions, but again, immigrants take jobs in the travel industry and fast foods. One illegal in Denver last fall at a fast food restaurant affected over 1,000 patrons with Hepatitis A. No telling how many he would have infected if he carried TB or leprosy."

"In the Santa Barbara News Press on April 25, 2004, the lead story titled 'Anatomy of an Outbreak' recorded that one illegal alien spread his TB to 56 other people. If you stand in line at Wal-mart, Kroger's, Safeway, Target, eat at fast food or go to the movies, you are inches away from those carrying the disease. If they sneeze, cough, laugh or touch your food, you and your children are at risk. To date, over 15 million illegal aliens walk around in our communities across America. We know that at least 16,000 of them carry TB. How many live in your community and won't go to the hospital for fear of being caught?"

Are all immigrants infected with a deadly disease? Probably not, but are you willing to continue to allow this country to be dragged back into the 19th century, third world conditions, from which many of these illegals come? It's shameful that members of Congress aren't just as angry and disturbed about the literal hundreds of thousands of potential disease infected individuals who cross into this country illegally every single month? I don't understand... do you? Lock down and quarantine are way over due!