

How To Fight Ebola...And We Are Not Doing It

We are presented with an outbreak of disease that could be legendary in its potential for catastrophe. But our nation's leaders and bureaucracy appear to be clueless as to how to prevent the spread of infection and to protect our nation. The number one job of the US government is to protect the people of the United States of America. Behind this job, no other comes even a close number two. Unfortunately, our response to this monstrous threat has been inept and ultimately very dangerous for our citizens.

Since the beginning of time, the most effective means of limiting disease has been isolation and quarantine. The word quarantine comes from the Italian, *Quaranta* which stood for the forty days a ship coming to port had to stay isolated to prevent the importation of the Black Death or plague in Europe hundreds of years ago. Medicine was not very advanced in those times, but even they realized that to prevent disease spread, travelers needed to be isolated during that period they could infect the citizenry.

The director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Tom Frieden will not restrict travel between the US and West Africa. He stated it "may" backfire. Through his convoluted logic, he said it would make it harder for health officials to root out the virus. He stated that if we tried to close the border, it would not work and that people have the "right of return". Evidently, according to the director, there are now 11 rights in the Bill of Rights. The last and most recent states that if you go to a country plunged into a highly contagious, highly fatal epidemic, you have the right to return without any quarantine measures or isolation techniques. I admit, I am a physician and not a constitutional scholar, but despite my best research I have not found this additional Right. Why not just call it the right for national suicide.

We are told we have screening in place. After all we are checking temperatures of those people who fly into our country. Sean Kaufman, an infection control specialist, states that the fever screening instruments run low and aren't accurate. People can simply take ibuprofen, Tylenol or a number of fever reducers to pass screening. It costs pennies and you buy a ticket to infect the USA where you can get medical care paid for by the USA. Not only that, but, we are relying on the failed governments of W. African nations to do the screening of their citizens and travelers. We are depending on third world untrained individuals to be the bulwark for the USA to prevent mass death. This should not bring comfort to the ears of American citizens.

To date, all the techniques promised to be so effective have failed. Despite reassurances from President Obama that it was highly unlikely Ebola would reach our shores, we now have 100 people under watch in Texas and new potential cases are sprinkling the country as this article is written. Any one of these index cases could turn into a blossoming nightmare if it is not caught and isolated in time. It is very well understood that one should not panic the citizenry. But the citizens are adults and will have less panic if they understand that all measures are being taken, rather than telling the public what we are not going to do. Please stop telling the American citizens that we are not going to be pro-active. Stop with this policy that we are not going to limit air travel and we are going to enforce "the right of return"

Doctors Without Borders stated we are losing the war of containment. They informed the press that the world leaders have failed to come to grips with the global threat. This international organization is interested in increasing resources to stricken countries, an admirable goal. But we need to be very reasonable in our approach. Let's put political correctness aside and deal with reality.

Our number one goal is to prevent disease in the United States of America. Our largest resources should be reserved for the people of America. I am sure that some will find this approach "selfish", but my first concern is for my fellow citizens. Let's discontinue any regular flights from West African Countries. If an individual wishes to exercise his "right of return" he must undergo a 21 day quarantine period, before re-entry into the United States. Any individual who has been in the affected West African nations will not be allowed in country unless they similarly undergo such quarantine. Aid workers who travel to West Africa, similarly must undergo quarantine. Individuals in the United States who are exposed to the virus must obey the same rules. We must have an active plan in place to isolate large populations in the unlikely outcome of mass infection in the country. Drawing proper plans now will save countless lives later.

Our number two goal is to help those countries who are the source of infection. It happens that these countries on a whole have failed governments and are unable to cope with the mass effects of this catastrophe. We must set up large containment/isolation areas. We must pour medical resources into those countries within the isolation areas to best help their citizens. In this way, we aid these individuals residing in these countries as well as helping ourselves prevent lower transmission at home.

It cannot be stressed enough that this is not a political issue. It is not the time to limit our response because someone might be offended. We must speak truth and not fear that a panicked citizenry will act unreasonably. The fastest way to panic is through misinformation and the lack of information. This country has an amazing ability to come together in crisis. Let's act now!

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