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The Obama Flu?

by Patrick J. Buchanan ([more by this author](#))

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Because of the peril of swine flu, Joe Biden said yesterday, he would urge his family to stay out of "confined places" like airplanes and subways here in the United States.

Yet, the Obama administration will not consider closing the United States to airplanes and buses coming in from the epicenter of the epidemic, Mexico City.

Does this contradiction make sense?

America, at this writing, has recorded fewer than 100 cases of the swine flu. One victim has died, a 2-year-old Mexican boy. He was flown out of Mexico City to Matamoros, crossed over with his parents into Texas, was taken to a hospital in Brownsville, terribly sick, then transferred to a Houston hospital. There he died.

Clear from this is that Mexicans, seriously ill, may head for the United States, where the medical care is known to be far superior and also free for the indigent.

This is understandable.

What is not is the United States conducting business as usual on the Mexican border, when tourists are fleeing Cancun, cruise ships refuse to put in to Mexican ports, Texas is closing schools, Europeans are shutting airports to flights from Mexico City and Obama is telling parents to pull the kids out of school if the flu shows up.

Is this a serious medical menace to Americans or not?

Some scientists claim this is a mild hybrid strain of the flu that visits every season, no big deal. But the World Health Organization has raised the threat level of H1N1 swine flu to Category 5. This means the world is at imminent risk of a pandemic. Yet, the death toll, as of now, is only one in the United States, and 159 out of 2,500 sickened in Mexico.

Still, the political fallout here could be immense.

According to Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano, in a normal flu season, 35,000 Americans die. Thirty-five thousand! That is more than 10 times the number who died on 9-11 and about as many as we lost in the Korean War.

And if this Mexican flu is anything like the Hong Kong flu that killed 33,000 Americans in 1968-69, or, Lord forbid, the Spanish Flu that killed 25 million to 50 million worldwide in 1918-19 -- more Americans died from it than all the Americans killed in World Wars I and II combined -- this administration is dangerously behind the curve.

Back in 1980, Gov. Jerry Brown's refusal to use the pesticide malathion on the Mediterranean fruit fly almost killed his career. For the Medflies made it over the mountains into the Central Valley and ravaged California's crops and orchards. And we were only talking then about farm produce, not tens of thousands of lives possibly lost.

Obama's coolness may prove correct.

But if he is perceived at having refused to close the border to buses bringing in sick Mexicans, or airports to planes coming in from Mexico City, so as not to offend the open-borders crowd, and a deadly epidemic ensues, full responsibility will be his. And he will pay a far greater price than George W. Bush did for being AWOL in Katrina.

For a president's first duty is not to the NAFTA-mandated free flow of goods and people between the United States and Mexico, but to protect the health and lives of the American people.

In the 1940s, it was not uncommon, when there was an outbreak of measles, mumps, chicken pox, scarlet fever or polio, for homes and families to be quarantined until it could be demonstrated to health authorities that everyone in the house was free of the disease.

Today's political correctness means we cannot discriminate against individuals who may bring in infectious diseases like AIDS.

Under NAFTA, GATT and globalization, America threw open her doors to mass immigration and accepted an invasion of illegal aliens that brought 12 million to 20 million into the country.

With them has come a raft of diseases never seen here before, or eradicated years ago: multiple drug resistant tuberculosis, malaria, leprosy, measles, syphilis, Chagas disease, dengue fever and new strains of hepatitis. Even bed bugs have invaded half the

American states.

However "mild" Mexican swine flu may prove to be, it is wreaking havoc in Mexico. And, already, that country is suffering from a collapse in the price of oil it sells to the United States, a reduction in the remittances sent back from Mexican workers in the United States due to the downturn here and a collapse in tourism due to the cartels war that took 6,000 lives last year.

Now, with tourists fleeing, hotels emptying out and athletic events being canceled, Mexico could be hit with a second devastating economic blow, from which she does not soon recover.

In January, the U.S. Joint Forces Command identified two large nations in real danger of "rapid and sudden collapse."

One was Pakistan, the other Mexico.

Unfortunately, the boys at the JFC seem to have gotten it right.

Mr. Buchanan is a nationally syndicated columnist and author of [Churchill, Hitler, and "The Unnecessary War": How Britain Lost Its Empire and the West Lost the World](#), ["The Death of the West,"](#) ["The Great Betrayal,"](#) ["A Republic, Not an Empire"](#) and ["Where the Right Went Wrong."](#)

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