

Polio Returns to Countries Needing Regime Change  
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The world almost eradicated polio forever. The UN\342\200\231s World Health Organization has struggled to reach every remote corner of the globe to provide babies with the few drops of medicine that could make the world free of what was once a frightening and crippling disease.

So, why hasn\342\200\231t it been finished? Some very stupid and obviously evil Muslim clerics have ordered mothers to reject the polio campaign, which they claim is designed by the west to make Muslim girls sterile. They have not only spread this ridiculous rumor, but have also taken to killing medical aide workers trying to carry out their duties.

In considering any possible reason for such irresponsibility, it can only be sheer ignorance. Then again, since most of the people living in these backwaters have no access to information aside from rumor and conspiracy theories, it is no wonder that the clerics have such credibility with them. People do not know better.

The consequence of this \342\200\234fatwa\342\200\235 has been a resurgence of polio with its crippled survivors (not to mention those who die of it). These backwater regions thus have a new supply of beggars on the streets, cripples who have no other way to survive. But even worse, these new hosts carrying the polio virus travel, go on pilgrimage to Mecca, or migrate for work, spreading the probability of new outbreaks of polio in regions once free of it. The developed world will have to reissue polio vaccines.

Strategic Forecasts (STRATFOR) in 2013 reported on the status of polio resurgence. In comparing the number of reported cases from 2012 to 2013, Pakistan\342\200\231s increased from 58-63. (Is this really all? Is anyone counting in the Tribal Regions?)

Countries considered endemic (where polio has never been fully eradicated) are Pakistan, Nigeria, and Afghanistan, all countries with fanatical, ignorant Islamist clerics. Worldwide, moreover, polio cases outside these three increased in 2013 compared to 2012.

The worst outbreak is in Somalia, which grew from no cases in 2012 to 183 in 2013. Syria, which had no cases, now reports 13 (lack of medical care because of the civil war). Ethiopia and Kenya have also gone from zero to 6 and 14 cases, respectively. Al Shabab, the vicious Al Qaeda group in Somalia has nixed immunization, resulting in this explosion of cases. But viruses do not stay in one place. Now the entire region, from Niger all the way to the Horn of Africa, is experiencing outbreaks.

Saudi Arabia, host to the annual religious pilgrimage to Mecca, is alarmed that pilgrims could be bringing outbreaks of not only polio, but other diseases as well. This has always been a problem with the Haj, but is even more so today, considering that the Saudi population is relatively healthy.

Israel, with an immunization rate of more than 95%, has nonetheless seen evidence of the virus, probably introduced by refugees from Sudan. They have reactivated additional vaccination campaign to children under the age of 10. It is alarming that adults can be silent carriers of this virus, having no symptoms themselves, but with an effect on small children.

We can no longer think that diseases like polio are someone else\342\200\231s problem. As for the Islamist clerics worried about girls being rendered sterile by inoculations, the consequences will be a lot of dead or crippled girls whose fertility rate will, indeed, be nullified.

As we wring our hands (at least the UN workers do) over the terrible backwardness of so much of the Muslim world and wonder why the Middle East is in a state of \342\200\234failure to thrive,\342\200\235 we must acknowledge that no effort from the outside can fix things. Change will come, as former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger once noted, \342\200\234when they become countries, not causes\342\200\235 (militant Islam). And another Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, also noted that change will come when countries realize

that women's rights are human rights. In these medieval cultures, women are only family property.

There is no cure for stupidity, but we have to try.

NOTE: Rotary International and Dr. Jonas Salk, the developer of the polio vaccine who took no monetary benefit from it, were pioneers in the global campaign to eradicate polio. They began this in the 1980s. Congratulations to such good people.

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