

SHOULD Americans Believe that Ebola isn't a Threat to Them?



There was a time when I'd roll my eyes whenever I'd hear the media hype a possible yet highly improbable health epidemic hitting the United States. A few years ago, we were all worried about the H1N1 flu virus (aka the Swine Flu). Before that, it was the feared Bird (Avian) Flu. Remember SARS, the mysterious respiratory illness out of China?

I used to give my friends a hard time when they'd express their fears about sending their children to school or stepping into crowded, public venues. I used to tease them when they'd bring up surgical masks and quarantines.

With the Ebola scare now filling up headlines and leading off news programs, the American public is predictably worried again. Some on social media are in near hysterics, now that a man in Texas has tested positive for the disease and over 100 people that he came in contact with have been isolated and are being monitored. The media, of course, is thriving off the fear. Why? The truth is that health epidemics are great for viewership and readership. Health epidemics actually get people to pay attention to the news, unlike so many other stories that potentially affect their lives.

Part of me wants to once again shake my head, sigh, and conjure up some professorial statement to the people I know about why their Ebola fears are unwarranted. I want to assure them that the CDC and our leaders in Washington know what

they're talking about when they tell us that the disease does not pose a serious health danger within the United States. After all, that's what I personally believe. The problem is that I just I can't bring myself to give the federal government the benefit of the doubt on practically *anything* anymore.

I'm certainly not alone in this feeling. Recent national polls have shown that the public's trust in the federal government is at an all-time low. And really, how couldn't it be? While government has *always* been prone to inefficiency, corruption and dishonesty, what we've seen in recent years has been absolutely breathtaking incompetence, and an outright *refusal* of our leaders in Washington to level with the American public on *anything* that reflects poorly on Washington and the White House.

One has to only watch videos from two years ago to see multiple members of the Obama administration mercilessly mock their political opponents for making prediction after prediction about Russia and the Middle East that have since come true.

If you go back one more year, you'll hear our president bragging about pulling our troops out of Iraq and declaring that we were leaving behind a "sovereign, stable, and self-reliant" country. And then once a terrorist group, that our president likened to a *junior varsity* team, killed thousands of Iraqis, took over multiple cities in Iraq, and beheaded American journalists, we found ourselves listening to our president claim it wasn't even his decision to remove our troops from Iraq in the first place. Somehow his military advisers and intelligence agency directors remember that differently. Regardless, we're involved in another war in the Middle East – one that *everyone* except the guy in charge understood we'd be in, if we pulled *all* of our troops out of Iraq.

We've learned recently that we can no longer put our faith in the Secret Service, which has long been one of the most admired agencies in the U.S. government. We've seen that, during a time of war, some guy (in broad daylight) can run across the White House lawn with a knife, and actually make it deep inside the home of the leader of the free world. We've learned that an armed man with a criminal record can ride in elevator beside our president and go undetected. We've also learned that the Secret Service is more than willing to cover up such incidents.

We've learned that a government transformation of 1/5 of the U.S. economy was predicated on the lies of Americans getting to keep their health plans and doctors, as well as the lies of lower costs, lower deductibles, and better access. And we've learned that once such lies are exposed to the public, the President of the United States is perfectly at ease insisting that he never made such false promises in the first place.

We've learned that the federal government can spend an estimated \$1 billion on an interactive website that doesn't actually work, before pretending for month after the month that it's impossible to tell what the enrollment numbers through that website are.

We've learned that in the run-up to a presidential election, it's more convenient for an administration to make up a story for the public about a YouTube video being responsible for the deaths of four American patriots, than it is to take responsibility for an inadequate security in Libya.

We've learned that jobs numbers that seem too good to be true often *aren't* true.

And of course, we've learned that "not even a smidgen of corruption" in the IRS, after the targeting of conservative groups, means IRS directors pleading the fifth, the purposeful deletion emails, and a cataclysmic event of hard-drive

crashes.

So at this point, when my friends are speculating that the U.S. government may not be leveling with us on the Ebola threat, or don't have a handle on the severity of it, who am I to try and insist that they're wrong? This government routinely tells us what we *want* to hear... or rather what *they* want us to hear. They rarely tell us what we *need* to hear.

As American citizens, we would like to believe that our elected leaders (and those public servants whose job it is to protect us) are actually looking out for our best interests – especially when it comes to our safety. That should be our expectation in the democratic republic we live in. But these days, how can we have *any* faith in the federal government at all?

Let's hope that the Ebola disease truly poses no significant threat to Americans; I believe that's the case. But at this point in American history, that's really just *blind* hope. Trust is something that has to be earned... and our leaders in Washington aren't even trying anymore.