

Congress needs to debate this critical issue. Our men and women in uniform, and every other American we represent, deserve no less.

[From the New York Times, Dec. 3, 2009]
OP-ED COLUMNIST; JOHNSON, GORBACHEV,
OBAMA

(By Nicholas D. Kristof)

Imagine you're a villager living in southern Afghanistan.

You're barely educated, proud of your region's history of stopping invaders and suspicious of outsiders. Like most of your fellow Pashtuns, you generally dislike the Taliban because many are overzealous, truculent nutcases.

Yet you are even more suspicious of the infidel American troops. You know of some villages where the Americans have helped build roads and been respectful of local elders and customs. On the other hand, you know of other villages where the infidel troops have invaded homes, shamed families by ogling women, or bombed wedding parties.

You're angry that your people, the Pashtuns, traditionally the dominant tribe of Afghanistan, seem to have been pushed aside in recent years, with American help. Moreover, the Afghan government has never been more corrupt. The Taliban may be incompetent, but at least they are pious Muslim Pashtuns and reasonably honest.

You were always uncomfortable with foreign troops in your land, but it wasn't so bad the first few years when there were only about 10,000 American soldiers in the entire country. Now, after President Obama's speech on Tuesday, there soon will be 100,000. That's three times as many as when the president took office, and 10 times as many as in 2003.

Hmmm. You still distrust the Taliban, but maybe they're right to warn about infidels occupying your land. Perhaps you'll give a goat to support your clansman who joined the local Taliban.

That's why so many people working in Afghanistan at the grass roots are watching the Obama escalation with a sinking feeling. President Lyndon Johnson doubled down on the Vietnam bet soon after he inherited the presidency, and Mikhail Gorbachev escalated the Soviet deployment that he inherited in Afghanistan soon after he took over the leadership of his country. They both inherited a mess—and made it worse and costlier.

As with the Americans in Vietnam, and Soviets in Afghanistan, we understand the risk of a nationalist backlash; somehow Mr. Obama has emerged as more enthusiastic about additional troops than even the corrupt Afghan government we are buttressing.

Gen. Stanley McChrystal warned in his report on the situation in Afghanistan that "new resources are not the crux" of the problem. Rather, he said, the key is a new approach that emphasizes winning hearts and minds: "Our strategy cannot be focused on seizing terrain or destroying insurgent troops; our objective must be the population."

So why wasn't the Afghan population more directly consulted?

"To me, what was most concerning is that there was never any consultation with the Afghan shura, the tribal elders," said Greg Mortenson, whose extraordinary work building schools in Pakistan and Afghanistan was chronicled in "Three Cups of Tea" and his new book, "From Stones to Schools." "It was all decided on the basis of congressmen and generals speaking up, with nobody consulting Afghan elders. One of the elders' messages is we don't need firepower, we need brainpower. They want schools, health facilities, but not necessarily more physical troops."

For the cost of deploying one soldier for one year, it is possible to build about 20 schools.

Another program that is enjoying great success in undermining the Taliban is the National Solidarity Program, or N.S.P., which helps villages build projects that they choose—typically schools, clinics, irrigation projects, bridges. This is widely regarded as one of the most successful and least corrupt initiatives in Afghanistan.

"It's a terrific program," said George Rupp, the president of the International Rescue Committee. "But it's underfunded. And it takes very little: for the cost of one U.S. soldier for a year, you could have the N.S.P. in 20 more villages."

THE COOLING WORLD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, we debate throughout the world the concept of global warming, but we don't call it that any more; we call it climate change. All the big leaders of the world are in Denmark talking about how they can figure out a way to control man, to make sure that man, the evildoer, the polluter of the world, does not continue to pollute our wonderful climate.

The consensus has been for some time that global warming, climate change, continues because man is the perpetrator. Now we are beginning to learn that may not be true, that there is not a consensus that there is global warming or climate change. We now have heard about Climategate, where the expert scientists hid emails in England that disagreed with the so-called consensus that there is global warming and global climate change. We have heard now new evidence that even NASA is involved in not revealing evidence that contradicts climate change.

I think a history lesson is in order, Madam Speaker, and I would like to read from a couple of well thought of, in the science community, a couple of magazine articles. One of them is under the Science section of Time magazine. It's dated June 24, but the year is 1974. The article begins with this comment, "Another Ice Age?" So much for global warming.

As they review the bizarre and unpredictable weather patterns of the past several years, a growing number of scientists are beginning to suspect that many seemingly contradictory events are occurring in global climate upheaval. The weather widely varies from place to place and time to time.

When meteorologists take an average of temperatures around the globe, they find that the atmosphere has been growing gradually cooler the last three decades and the trend shows no indication of reversing. Let me repeat that. According to scientists in 1974, the trend shows no indication of reversing the cooling trend.

Scientists are becoming increasingly apprehensive, for the weather aberrations

they are studying may be the harbinger of another Ice Age.

If we were to live in 1974, and, you know, I actually lived in 1974, I read this article then, I believed it. I believe we were all going to freeze in the dark. It goes on to say that a part of the problem is man polluting the atmosphere with farming. Because man farms and the dust gets up into the air, that blocks the sun rays from coming to Earth, and that actually cools the Earth. Maybe that's another new idea of carbon emission cooling that was in 1974.

The following year that notable news magazine, Newsweek, April 28, 1975, under its Science section in the back, talks about the cooling world. There are ominous signs that the Earth's weather patterns have begun to change dramatically and that these changes may be bringing a drastic decline in food production throughout the world.

To scientists these dramatic incidents represent the advanced signs of a fundamental change in the world's whether. The central fact, you got that word, fact, is that after three-quarters of a century of extraordinarily mild conditions, the Earth's climate seems to be cooling down. And that's from Newsweek.

Here is a chart they put in their expert scientific article, and it's entitled—I think it's nice they put it in the ice-blue color—Newsweek, "The Cooling World," and it shows that average temperatures are getting colder. Of course, it goes off the chart, colder and colder, April 28, 1978.

Like I said, Madam Speaker, I believed we were all going to freeze in the dark. The scientists told us that we were going to freeze in the dark because of the weather patterns. Climates do change, Madam Speaker. In the 1970s it was getting cooler. Now they say it's getting warmer. Now they just say it's climate change.

Climates do change. That's what seasons are. Most of the world up here in the north has seasons. Now, we don't have seasons in Houston. We have two seasons—we have summer, and we have August. Other than that, the seasons change. In most parts of the world they get warm, they get cold.

We are going to try to trust the world's climate predictions to a group of people from the 1970s and now, 2000, to a group of people who can't even predict correctly tomorrow's weather. You know, people in the weather industry are the only people I know who consistently can be wrong and keep their jobs. But yet, these same people who can't predict tomorrow's weather are trying to predict the weather from now on, that climate change is occurring because man is the culprit.

And that's just the way it is.

[From Newsweek, Apr. 28, 1975]

(By Peter Gwynne)

THE COOLING WORLD

There are ominous signs that the earth's weather patterns have begun to change dramatically and that these changes may have

drastic decline in food production—with serious political implications for just about every nation on earth. The drop in food output could begin quite soon, perhaps only ten years from now. The regions destined to feel its impact are the great wheat-producing lands of Canada and the U.S.S.R. in the north, along with a number of marginally self-sufficient tropical areas—parts of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indochina and Indonesia—where the growing season is dependent upon the rains brought by the monsoon.

The evidence in support of these predictions has now begun to accumulate so massively that meteorologists are hard-pressed to keep up with it.

In England, farmers have seen their growing season decline by about two weeks since 1950, with a resultant over-all loss in grain production estimated at up to 100,000 tons annually. During the same time, the average temperature around the equator has risen by a fraction of a degree—a fraction that in some areas can mean drought and desolation. Last April, in the most devastating outbreak of tornadoes ever recorded, 148 twisters killed more than 300 people and caused half a billion dollars' worth of damage in thirteen U.S. states.

Trend: To scientists, these incidents represent the advance signs of fundamental changes in the world's weather. The central fact is that after three quarters of a century of extraordinarily mild conditions, the earth's climate seems to be cooling down. Meteorologists disagree about the cause and extent of the cooling trend, as well as over its specific impact on local weather conditions. But they are almost unanimous in the view that the trend will reduce agricultural productivity for the rest of the century. If the climatic change is as profound as some of the pessimists fear, the resulting famines could be catastrophic. "A major climatic change would force economic and social adjustments on a worldwide scale," warns a recent report by the National Academy of Sciences, "because the global patterns of food production and population that have evolved are implicitly dependent on the climate of the present century."

A survey completed last year by Dr. Murray Mitchell of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reveals a drop of half a degree in average ground temperatures in the Northern Hemisphere between 1945 and 1968. According to George Kukla of Columbia University, satellite photos indicated a sudden, large increase in Northern Hemisphere snow cover in the winter of 1971-72. And a study released last month by two NOAA scientists notes that the amount of sunshine reaching the ground in the continental U.S. diminished by 1.3 percent between 1964 and 1972.

To the layman, the relatively small changes in temperature and sunshine can be highly misleading. Reid Bryson of the University of Wisconsin points out that the earth's average temperature during the great Ice Ages was only about 7 degrees lower than during its warmest eras—and that the present decline has taken the planet about a sixth of the way toward the Ice Age average. Others regard the cooling as a reversion to the "little ice age" conditions that brought bitter winters to much of Europe and northern America between 1600 and 1900—years when the Thames used to freeze so solidly that Londoners roasted oxen on the ice and when iceboats sailed the Hudson River almost as far south as New York City.

Just what causes the onset of major and minor ice ages remains a mystery. "Our knowledge of the mechanisms of climatic change is at least as fragmentary as our data," concedes the National Academy of Sciences report "Not only are the basic sci-

entific questions largely unanswered, but in many cases we do not yet know enough to pose the key questions."

Extremes: Meteorologists think that they can forecast the short-term results of the return to the norm of the last century. They begin by noting the slight drop in over-all temperature that produces large numbers of pressure centers in the atmosphere. These break up the smooth flow of westerly winds over temperate areas. The stagnant air produced in this way causes an increase in extremes of local weather such as droughts, floods, extended dry spells, long freezes, delayed monsoons and even local temperature increases—all of which have a direct impact on food supplies.

"The world's food-producing system," warns Dr. James D. McQuigg of NOAA's Center for Climatic and Environmental Assessment, "is much more sensitive to the weather variable than it was even five years ago." Furthermore, the growth of world population and creation of new national boundaries make it impossible for starving peoples to migrate from their devastated fields, as they did during past famines.

Climatologists are pessimistic that political leaders will take any positive action to compensate for the climatic change, or even to allay its effects. They concede that some of the more spectacular solutions proposed, such as melting the arctic ice cap by covering it with black soot or diverting arctic rivers, might create problems far greater than those they solve. But the scientist sees few signs that government leaders anywhere are even prepared to take the simple measures of stockpiling food or of introducing the variables of climatic uncertainty into economic projections of future food supplies. The longer the planners delay, the more difficult will they find it to cope with climatic change once the results become grim reality.

IN MEMORY OF DR. JOHN SHEARER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to fondly honor my friend, Dr. John Shearer, who passed away on November 18, 2009, at the age of 77 in Petaluma, California.

Publicly, John was a powerful advocate for children's health care and health care reform. He preferred a single-payer system and privately he was a kind, selfless man of great integrity.

As a physician, he was expert, compassionate, and gentle, the kind of doctor you would want to have care for your sick child. I should know, because John Shearer was our family doctor, and my family adored him.

A native of Kokomo, Indiana, John moved with his family to Detroit and originally trained as a pharmacist. Then he earned his medical degree from Wayne State University in 1962.

John moved his wife and his children to Petaluma in 1964, where he started El Rose Medical Clinic with three other doctors. His son, David Shearer, recalls that his father made a lot of house calls with his black doctor's bag in the early years of his practice. In those days, you see, there were no OB-GYNs, so he delivered hundreds of babies in Petaluma.

Dr. Shearer was very active in community and social issues. He was involved in Physicians for Social Responsibility, an organization dedicated to preventing nuclear war and proliferation, and halting global warming and toxic deprivation of the environment. In 1972, he was a part of a grassroots Save Our Schools, or SOS, that I also worked on with him in Petaluma to raise money to keep Grant Elementary School, which was located in Petaluma, open when it was threatened with closure.

In the 1980s, he was the head of Physicians for Social Responsibility in the North Bay. He also began the Children's Health Initiative to ensure that all uninsured children in Sonoma County would have health care.

Dr. Shearer served as medical director of the Jewish Community Free Clinic in Cotati and Rohnert Park. He was the chief of the medical staff at Hillcrest Hospital from 1974 to 1975, and president of the Petaluma Valley Hospital medical staff from 1986 to 1987.

He also served as chairman of the Petaluma Valley Hospital ethics committee for many years. He served as president of the California Physicians' Alliance, an organization of physicians advocating for single-payer national health insurance.

John is survived by his wife, Donna Brasset Shearer of Petaluma; his son, David Shearer of Gig Harbor, Washington; his daughter, Annette Moussa of Petaluma; and two grandchildren.

Madam Speaker, even as John Shearer was a tender man with impeccable manners, he was a bold and fearless activist for justice and health care. He did not hesitate to advocate for a single-payer system among his physician peer group. He was a prince of a man who was loved and respected by many and will be genuinely missed.

John, I thank you for your friendship, your counsel, and for making my family feel like they were part of yours.

REAL THREAT OF NUCLEAR IRAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Madam Speaker, over the past several years, I have worked hard to remind my colleagues in Congress and the Americans that they represent of a real threat of a nuclear Iran. The Obama administration has been engaged in discussions with Iran during the last several months.

As many of us expected, the President's open hand to Tehran was met with a clinched fist. Despite international efforts to negotiate with Iran, Iranian leaders continue to be devious and defiant. Enough; now is the time for Congress to act. Fortunately today the House of Representatives did.