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 climat- ic change is at least as fragmentary as our data,'' concedes the National Academy of Sciences report ''Not only are the basic scientific 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 see 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 gentlewoman 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.

Iran already possesses enough nuclear fuel to build two nuclear weapons. Even while negotiations were taking place, Iran continued to enrich uranium in defiance of five United Nations Security Council resolutions, increasing its supply of uranium and becoming more and more dangerous each and every day.

While there are many domestic issues that demand the attention of us in Congress, we must not forget an Iranian call for a world without a United States or an Israel. A nuclear-armed Iran threatens the safety of American troops in the region. It is a threat to Israel's existence, emboldens terrorist groups Hamas and Hezbollah and leads to a perilous nuclear arms race in the Middle East.

These are all things we cannot accept and must not tolerate.

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Passage of the Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act takes an important step to counter the Iranian threat to our national security and to that of our strong democratic ally Israel.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. EDWARDS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. EDWARDS addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

AFGHANISTAN

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

Mr. DOGGETT. Madam Speaker, President Obama is certainly to be commended for the thoughtful and thorough consideration that he has given to our alternatives in Afghanistan. In essence, given the mess that he was bequeathed there, he was asked to choose the least bad alternative.

My personal belief is that a good man made the wrong choice. But I think it is incumbent on this Congress to do as our President did and give thoughtful and thorough consideration of what our alternatives are there and whether there is a better way than dispatching another 30,000 American troops to Afghanistan to assure the security of our families.

We have had now almost a decade without a debate of Afghanistan policy in this Congress. I believe we must take a hard look at how hundreds of billions of taxpayer dollars and thousands of the lives of young Americans are being put on the line in Afghanistan and ask if this is the most effective way to defeat terrorism.

Some were, of course, pleased that the President indicated in his speech that July 2011, a period of a little more than a year and a half, would mark a point in this long war at which we would see the beginning of the end of the war and some of the troops that were being dispatched there would begin to return home.

Almost as soon as the speech ended, administration officials began to explain that deadline away. First we learned that not all the troops would get there until the fall of next year. They're not going for the weekend or a 2-week stay or a stay of less than a year. And then Secretary Gates made clear in interviews the nature of this July 2011 deadline. He said that at the time of July 2011, some ''handful,'' in his words, or some small number or whatever the conditions permit might be departing Afghanistan at that time but that we would, in his words, ''have a significant number of forces there for some considerable period of time.'' It was only a few days after that that Afghan President Hamid Karzai indicated just how long that commitment might have to be when he announced that ''for another 15 to 20 years Afghanistan will not be able to sustain a force of that nature and capability with its own resources.''

We are talking about a very extended commitment of more and more American troops and more and more American dollars, ironically, at a time that some of our allies who've been in Afghanistan, like the Canadians, like the Dutch, are making plans to withdraw their troops as our troops enter the country.

I have heard from not a few constituents expressing their concern about this decision to escalate the war in Afghanistan. Whether we agree or disagree on whether this is the best approach, we all agree that our objective is to work together to keep our families safer. One person to whom I presented the Veteran of the Year award just last month in Bastrop, Texas, Retired Colonel Bill Stanberry, twice awarded the Legion of Merit and inducted into the Infantry Officers Hall of Fame, offered this observation:

''There is no sign or promise of a viable leadership in the government in Afghanistan, an ingredient that is absolutely essential to the success of the program. We are allowing our adversaries to determine the kind of wars we fight and how we fight them. We need to find ways to exploit our strengths and not be lured into battles of war where our substantially weaker adversaries have the advantage by dictating how we fight.''

Our strategic choices in Afghanistan, I believe, are not narrowly limited to either escalating rapidly, as the President has proposed, or departing immediately, but they include more effective ways of using the resources that we have already committed to accomplish our original objectives. And apparently, our Ambassador in Afghanistan, former Lieutenant-General Karl Eikenberry, had some of the same concerns that I do. It is widely reported that he sent at least two classified cables to Washington before the announcement expressing deep concerns about sending more U.S. troops to Afghanistan without a meaningful demonstration by President Karzai, who just had stolen a million votes to stay in power, that his government would be able to tackle corruption and mismanagement that has fueled the Taliban's rise in strength.

We went to take out al Qaeda, not to change it into Switzerland. Let's keep that commitment and do it in the most cost-effective way.

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

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CUBA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, just last week we observed another Human Rights Day without freedom in Cuba.

As to be expected, the regime had its thugs out in full force to harass and attack all who dared to walk the streets in support of this important day and what it represents to the world community. For 2 days, the members of the peaceful Ladies in White group were pursued and harassed by agents of the regime. Marches and peaceful demonstrations in support of human rights and fundamental freedoms came to an abrupt end as state security forces rounded up, detained, and brutally attacked some of the participants.

Yusnaimi Jorge Soca, wife of Dr. Darsi Ferrer, was one of the many apprehended by the secret police on her way to one of the planned marches at the Villalon Park in Havana. Dr. Ferrer is an Afro-Cuban civil rights leader currently imprisoned by the dictatorship. His alleged crime? ''Illegally'' purchasing materials to repair damages to his home. The truth? Dr. Ferrer has worked tirelessly to expose the reality of Castro's apartheid health care system and the abysmal disregard for fundamental freedom and human rights. Yusnaimi was threatened on this Human Rights Day by the Cuban dictatorship, as well as her husband, in an attempt to intimidate them into submission and silence.

Those seeking freedom in Cuba, however, have shown time and time again that they will not waver in the face of repression.

The Castro tyranny does not limit the application of its repressive tactics to the oppressed Cuban people, however. For example, Chris Stimpson, Second Secretary of the British Embassy, was also pursued and chased away by the regime's mob apparatus on Thursday. And on Friday, an American