

“2000- 2009-THE DECADE OF QUICK FIXES”

A. Global Warming-

1. The scientific evidence is inconclusive as to the exact measurement of the effects of global warming.
2. The argument or discussion is usually expressed in emotional terms.
3. There is a lack of meaningful analysis, long-term planning, and objective measurement of the effects/consequences of pollution,
4. In the past, World Summit Conferences have pitted the developed nations against the developing nations.
5. Because we have framed or defined a problem involving Nature and the Physical World as a political problem, and not a scientific problem, the world will not be able to reach agreement. In other words, lacking the scientific tools and knowledge required to find the answer(s), frustration, confusion, and anger fester and grow. Is this a “**One Size Fits All**” problem/solution, or is the best solution for everyone to do their part as best as they can? Do we have a Universal Formula for Combating Global Warming that is easily applicable to all parts of the world?
6. The unintended effect of thousands of people running around, going to meetings, driving, flying etc is that the environmentalists are actually making the problem worse.
7. A good solution would be for everyone to stay home, meditate, and do as little as possible.

B. Hurricane Katrina-

1. Every major report on the government’s response to this disaster has concluded that all levels of government failed to do their job.
2. After more than four years, the areas hit by this hurricane have not fully recovered.

C. Emergency Planning, Preparedness, Disaster, Crisis Contingencies-

1. Our nation’s emergency response resources are inadequate,
2. We are poorly trained to handle a major man-made or natural disaster.
3. At all levels of government and business, managers do not perform worst case scenario planning.

4. We have a big shortage in personnel, equipment, and training in this area.

D. Foreign Policy & International Relations-

1. Our State Department's policy it appears is to practice shuttle or jet diplomacy and to make short-term deals in every part of the globe.
2. Our nation is unable to view the world truly from a global perspective; instead, every conflict or disagreement is reacted to as a short-term, localized, but major crisis.
3. Our frantic attempts to mediate or negotiate agreements between warring local factions only tires us out. It does not achieve long term understanding, respect from other nations, nor does it help to establish our preeminence as World Leader. What principles are at stake and how clearly do we communicate those principles to the world? Are we willing to take an unpopular decision to practice those principles boldly and defiantly? Why are we involved in so many countries and their affairs? Are we willing to "back off," when our "help" is not asked for? Is this a U.S problem or an international problem that requires the equal involvement of more than one country? Does everybody who has plane fare need to go overseas to "represent" the United States? Maybe engaging in foreign affairs is a hobby or entertainment, a social pastime for the rich and egotistical?

All of these questions must be addressed if we are to form a meaningful long term foreign policy that is coherent and effective.

4. Without clear goals and a time table for reaching those goals, many nations wonder what we are really trying to do. Are we just meddling in others affairs or are we genuinely committed/resolved to find a long term solution to a real world problem?
5. Today we see the world without borders; similar to a vast playing field where who ever has the ball wins. However, by ignoring the fundamental purpose or meaning for rules, boundaries, limitations, customs, cultures, dialects, distance, and geography, we become unrealistic, naïve, over-reaching, impractical, and insensitive to other people and their countries.

E. 9/11 Bombings-

1. Almost from the moment after this terrible incident, our nation's leaders were in a panic mode. At first, it appeared they had no idea who planned and carried out this brazen attack. Then there was a rush to judgment, unproven assumptions became proven conclusions, and our leaders quickly jumped on the Weapons of Mass Destruction theme. Despite evidence, to the contrary, they linked Al-Quida to Sadam Hussein; they linked Iraq's erstwhile attempts to create nuclear and bio-chemical devices to grass-roots insurgent movements in the Middle East. Then the plot was launched to invade Iraq, with or without United Nations agreement, and troops were sent to war. Nearly all of our nation's leaders believed that the ordeal would be over in a matter of a couple weeks. That was nearly ten years ago, and we are still fighting in the Middle East. It has become increasingly obvious that our disregard for the culture, customs, traditions, history, political institutions, and religious overtones of the Middle East has put us in another quagmire like Vietnam only worst.

F. War on Terrorism-

1. Our U.S. Military is spread too thin throughout the world and at home.
2. We have unsubstantial reserve forces to counter direct or indirect attack on the US today.
3. We also have unsubstantial forces to handle major domestic disturbances or major natural disasters.
4. From the beginning, our "war on terror" has been piece-meal and fragmented- there wasn't any planning for a decisive victory.
5. Although the war on terror is essentially a global political-religious conflict, our leaders have reacted to it as either a short-term or a localized strive or struggle. In so doing, we fail to see the full ramifications or implications of a global spiritual battle that cannot be won by sending more troops to the Middle East.
6. The recent hyperbole over Dec 09 terrorist's attacks, and fixating on placing blame in the national intelligence community is precisely the incorrect response. It overlooks the more serious, overwhelming issue(s) that the enemy has terror cells in every country in the world. It ignores the fact that the enemy transfers and exchanges funds throughout a world-wide network of banks, other financial institutions, and an extensive array of non-profits. It

downplays the significance of the enemy's possession of a sophisticated understanding of even our most complex military weapons systems. It neglects the overriding importance that the enemy is able to recruit the poor, impoverished, uneducated, and ideological young men in many parts of the globe to advance its cause.

7. We have done a piss-poor job of infiltrating the enemy; with typical American arrogance, we assume that everyone knows, likes, and loves us. With only faint recognition of Muslim and Arabic nuances, our intelligence is amateurish at best. Our inability to place qualified Mid-east counter-intelligence officers in the field is inexcusable.
8. All of these piecemeal, quick-fix solutions have not accomplished anything of merit.

G. Our Crumbling Infrastructure-

1. Bridges- Most of the bridges in the United States have not been thoroughly inspected and plans for their repair, or replacement have not been made or budgeted for, The ***I-35 W Bridge*** in Minneapolis is a glaring example of transportation workers patching up and patching over major structural flaws and weaknesses. All too often, a short cut or a quick fix is sought negating the importance of inspections and long term replacement when required.
2. Roads- Our nation's roadways are in need of major repair, improvements, upgrades, & or replacement. Here again, road crews are sent out to cover over with asphalt deep holes, big cracks, and crumbling foundations. "When the "bucket" becomes too holey, putting another patch on it won't make it hold water; it's better to get another bucket."
3. Buildings- Most but not all of our nation's older buildings are falling apart, particularly our government buildings, schools, prisons and hospitals. In the early 1950s when our country was growing rapidly, the nation built a tremendous amount of public buildings to office the thousands of public workers who served our burgeoning society. All of these buildings and those structures built before then are in need of replacement or major repair. However, it appears that "another coat of paint," has hidden the problem for quite some time.
4. Our precarious electric grid network- The potential for massive blackouts, and brownouts still exists. Unless we all make substantial reductions in our

energy consumption at home, our energy supply will run out. This means turning out all of the lights at night, shutting down the computer, and running the big appliances once a week or less often must happen. Despite political rhetoric to the contrary, one malfunction at an electric sub-station on the East Coast can still cast darkness over the entire region. Wind farms, solar panels, and bio-diesel fuels cannot solve this problem. We need to design a fail-safe nation-wide electrical grid, with regional back-up plants, and redundancies in power supply and power distribution so that on a hot humid day when everyone has their air conditioner on, and the computers go haywire, or a squirrel bits into a transmission line, the whole country isn't paralyzed by darkness and fear. In short, we need to immediately build a completely new system of big power plants throughout the country, regardless of its power source. On the other hand, maybe you might want to disconnect your TV, computer, and dishwasher for the summer?

H. Public Health-

1. In this country, public health is practically inexistent, and so poorly funded as to be invisible in many parts of the country.
2. There is a complete lack of strong leadership in this vital area.
3. Political party preferences and medical groups' lobbying efforts have undermined the role of the Surgeon-General, the top public health official in this country.
4. Due to lack of funds and lack of leadership, public health officials have adopted an "alarmist" mentality when warning of outbreaks of illness or sickness. This is the only way they can get our attention.

I. Spread of Infectious Diseases-

1. Due to increased international travel, and a multi-cultural society without a clear understanding of cleanliness, health, or hygiene has created a biological time-bomb.
2. The importation of food and food by-products from other nations has opened the door to unique germs not otherwise found here in the US.
3. Cohabitation, mixed marriages, gay, or homosexual relationships weakens the "health-structure" of the population.

4. A sedate or inactive lifestyle increases the chance for disease to take hold. In particular, children & teenagers who vegetate, do not exercise, and participate in unsafe or unhealthy lifestyles, have a very weak immune system making them extremely venerable to disease and death.
5. Promiscuous or multiple partner sex, in lieu of heterosexual opposite gender monogamous sex for child-birth increases the probability of sickness or disease. Further, with the absence of the demands or rigors associated with raising children, adults become soft, lazy, undisciplined, and unfocused.

J. Spiritual & Moral Health-

1. Today, there are no clearly defined values, particular those values concerning right and wrong.
2. In the absence of clearly defined values (and responsibilities), matters of law and justice become perverted
3. With the absence of spiritual &/or moral health, individual and societal behavior is unstructured- no firm and fair boundaries are set governing permissible behavior in the home or in public.
4. Furthermore, the redeeming characteristics of spirituality and the discipleship required to lead spiritual life are destroyed. In other words, without discipline, practices and beliefs designed to restrict “bad” (unhealthy, or dangerous) behavior are “null and void.”

K. Rush to bring new technologies to Market-

1. Over the past decade there has been a rush to bring medicines, & nutritional products (food) to market without thorough testing, evaluation, analysis, measurement, scientific findings, etc.
2. The FDA and other regulatory bodies have fallen victim to Big Business & Big Money.
3. Poorly funded and without wisdom or leadership, most products are given the “quick once-over.” If it does not break when they try to use it; the product is usually approved by the regulatory agency.
4. Here, when testing and thoughtful analysis is perhaps the most important, the impetus for quick, hasty, and rash decisions is most apparent.

5. As a result, there have been an excessive number of “factory recalls” of food products and other products.

L. The Economy-

1. Is the economy really shrinking because we are all growing old and need fewer things, or do we just need to go to Walmart and buy more cheap stuff, and then everything will be all right?
2. Perhaps a long view of the Supply & Demand Equilibrium will shed some light on this topic; instead of “creating jobs” and “stimulating the economy,” artificially the relatively free market system might be able to adjust to changes in a gradual fashion without the radical peaks and valleys of late.
3. Our emphasis on individuality, self expression, personal “rights,” and the sense of entitlement felt by many Americans will bankrupt this country financially and morally. Nearly 90 % of our federal government’s budget goes to “entitlements” either retirement checks, social security, or public assistance, and litigation. No wonder that our Presidents promise allot on the campaign trail, but once in office they realize they cannot possibly make those promises without borrowing against our future solvency.
4. Our narrow-minded view that governments waste money, and that all taxes must be cut, only undercuts our financial stability as a nation. Can you run your house without spending money? Neither can the government. Unless you are willing to take an active part in the budgetary process at some level of government, you really will not know how your tax dollars are spent. Planning a budget, studying the income sources, balancing the many different priorities, and making adjustments in spending categories and amounts all require many hours of mental work. There is no short-cut or quick fix to having a good budget.

M. Financial Collapse of 2007-08

1. In typical knee-jerk fashion, President Bush authorized a quick bailout & federal intervention; but a thorough analysis and study was not completed. Consequently, no one was brought to trial and only a few were fired; and now we are experiencing a lingering ‘post-recession lethargy’.
2. When you think about it “**Banks Too Big to Fail,**” **are just too big.** Why did these banks have so much influence, they could thwart common-sense and the Law? Are the leaders of these banks frigging geniuses and no one else

can do their job? If Citicorp or some other big bank goes under, would it be impossible for another sounder bank to perform the international currency trading and clearinghouse functions of the fallen bank? Notwithstanding the exceptional complexity of international finance, the skills, training, and education involved are not some arcane metaphysical secret alchemy. What lies at the heart of international finance is the trust one country's finance people have for the finance officials of another country. And clearly, our top banking/finance officials could not be trusted.

3. Bank Officials and Investment Executives either knew what they were doing and should be sent to jail for creating/permitting inordinate amounts of risk; or they didn't know what they were doing and should be sent to jail for being totally incompetent. Either way, they should be sent to jail.
4. The past decade has been a decade of Bernard Madoff, Ponzi Schemes; a decade of immediate gratification at the expense of long-term savings or "health wealth."
5. It has been a decade of Best Buy Midnight Specials, Large Credit Card Debt, insatiable greed, and early morning frenzied lines to acquire the latest gizmo.
6. Despite the financial meltdown, unusual, risky, and highly speculative "investments" still abound.
7. Despite the hearings in Washington, the "oversight" of federal regulators, and the apologizes of a handful of corporate executives- there has been no real change on Wall Street, or elsewhere. It is "business as usual."
8. Since the "recovery" has been incomplete and artificial, economists can only guess if economic activity will grow near-term; the need for additional "stimulus" packages to "jump start" the economy is being voiced by some; so in reality nothing long-term has been accomplished. We have delayed the inevitable until "next week."
9. The psychological effects of not having closure (i.e.- people fired or sent to jail and having a complete audit of the nation's banks and financial institutions), has created a lingering anger, distrust, depression, and a sense of unconfidence among the American people.

N. Health Care Reform of 2009-

1. This is a very expensive piecemeal approach to guarantee all Americans health care. Unfortunately and despite the complexity of the legislation, millions of Americans will not be included. Additionally, when asked, close to half of the people in the US who do not have health insurance say they do not want health insurance. Instead of focusing on specific health problems (obesity as an example), the legislation focuses on who will pay for health expenses. In attempting to provide a "**One Size Fits All**" Program, the bill falls far short of meeting the needs of all Americans. In funding this program, our nation again borrows money. Furthermore, it tries to address inequities in billing practices by doctors & medical clinics, and the vague payment practices of insurance companies; but in the end merely glossed over these issues.
2. Finally, instead of looking at geographical and demographic problem-areas (i.e. –rural america, inner city america, and senior citizens), which could use specific funding to solve specific problems, one of the main goals seems to be forcing big and small employers to provide health insurance to all employees, regardless if the employees need or want this insurance. In so doing, disagreements will probably arise between the employer and the employee as to whether & how much the employer or the employee must sacrifice in order to comply with the law. We think that the employee will end up having a big cut out of his paycheck so that the employer is able to provide health insurance to all of his workers.

O. US Global Trade Deficit-

1. We continue to live as if there was no tomorrow, borrowing & spending irresponsibly- heedless of the consequences of being the world's greatest debtor. In so doing, other nations, third world nations, and particularly China can and will exert their influence either militarily or economically here at home, sometime in the near future.

P. Conclusions-

1. It is important to note that no one went to jail for any of these screw-ups or instances of total incompetence. Either all of us are guilty of being irresponsible or we are too weak/helpless to hold people accountable.
2. In each of the fifteen areas described above, we feel that a thorough analysis, long term planning, and response would have yielded a more satisfying outcome. Whether it is a major hurricane, a terrorist attempt, bank failure, or infectious disease- pragmatic, objective, and informed thought-processes involved in seeking long term solutions to today's problems will have greater benefits for everyone.
3. Sometimes the best solution is the most painful and direct solution. Other times the best solution requires a tremendous amount of work and the efforts of many people. The best solution in all cases is not the quickest solution- it only comes back to haunt you later on.