

Fighting a war while mistaking an enemy for an ally

by Julian Sereno

The mass murders in Paris cast a pall over the civilized world as what turned out to be World War III has metastasized into Western Europe. As appears to be the case everywhere, the Jihadis are locals. The attackers in Paris were born and raised in France or Belgium. An Egyptian ground crew is suspected of planting the bomb that brought down the Russian passenger jet. Malian gunmen attacked the hotel in Bamako.

In this asymmetrical war, ISIS, Al Qaeda and their cohorts use the internet as the great equalizer. They use it tactically to plan and execute their attacks. They use it strategically to entice recruits and to broadcast their barbarity.

One thing that all of these diverse Jihadis have in common are links to Jihadist websites on their computers/cellphones/tablets. Those electronic devices all remember which websites were visited, for how long and how frequently. Internet providers would also have this information.

That gives a pretty good indication who the next Jihadis are likely to be.

So why not outlaw Jihadist propaganda and treat it the same as child pornography — make evidence of it on computers punishable by lengthy prison sentences. It is every bit as pernicious as child pornography and considerably more lethal. In France,

it would mean that authorities could lock up approximately 2,000 suspected Jihadis that the police had here-to-fore tracked unsuccessfully.

The next step after criminalizing Jihadist websites and their visitors is to criminalize the underlying ideology/theology, its practice and dissemination. That ideology/theology is called Wahhabism and it is preached and practiced by our “staunch ally” Saudi Arabia.

Which brings us to an ugly but unavoidable paradox at the heart of this hideous war. Saudi Arabia, which has kept the US flush with the inexpensive gasoline that has made the economy hum for the past half century or so, has also been spreading that fundamentalist form of Islam that calls for Jihad — which these days means Jihad against the west. They sell us cheap oil and we allow them to call for our destruction.

The House of Saudi's legitimacy as the protector of Mecca, the holiest site in Islam, comes from its embrace of Wahhabism, the fundamentalist faith of the local clergy. It earns the Saudi royal family the clergy's support.

As a result, Saudi Arabia is one of the most intolerant countries on earth. The Saudi government's laws aren't a whole lot different than those of ISIS. Beheadings and lashings for apostasy and blasphemy are the rule of the day. Women have no rights. Possess a Bible and you'll get a whole lot more than the

book thrown at you; even members of US Armed forces, some of whom have lost their lives in the defense of these intolerant bigots, are not permitted bring their Bibles with them. If the Rev. Billy Graham tried to hold a revival there, he'd get his head cut off.

While Saudi Arabia has not accepted a single Syrian refugee, it has generously offered to build mosques throughout Western Europe for them, so the children of the refugees can be taught to hate their hosts.

Saudi Arabia's wealthy citizens pay for the Madrassas in Pakistan where students from mostly poor families are taught — through chants and repetitions — to hate anyone with different beliefs than their own. These Madrassa graduates went on to become the Taliban.

Saudi Arabia's less wealthy citizens volunteer to wage Jihad for ISIS and Al Qaeda and have filled their ranks. It should be no wonder that 15 of the 19 September 11 hijackers were Saudi citizens.

Until the United States finally recognizes that our “staunch ally” Saudi Arabia is our mortal enemy and confronts it head on, we will not prevail.

Julian Sereno is editor and publisher of Chatham County Line.

History lessons needed

by Don Lein

Across the world claims are being made that are simply not credible, based upon the most cursory study of history. In no other area does delusion play a greater role than in the climate change, nee global warming hysteria. Christiana Figueres, UN's climate chief states boldly that the aim of the upcoming climate talks in Paris is “to change the economic development model that has been reigning for at least the last 150 years, since the industrial revolution.” Let's look at history — life expectancy during that time has more than doubled to 71 years from fewer than 30 years, while those living in poverty have declined from 75 percent to less than 10 percent. A number of skeptics would like to be convinced that she has a credible plan to better that history.

A number of pathologies that exist in our black communities are being blamed upon a “legacy of slavery”. It would be ludicrous to argue that slavery had no effect nor that greed, discrimination and income equality do not exist. However, let's look at the record. The chief problem is the breakdown of the black family. In 1950 female headed households were only 18 percent, today it is closer to 70 percent. In the late 1800s, post-slavery, there were only slight differences between black family groups and other ethnic groups. In 1925, in New York City 85 percent of black

households were two parent households. In 1938 only 11 percent of black children were born to single mothers; today it is more that 75 percent, with some cities/neighborhoods exceeding 80 percent. Faced with the evidence that black families were healthier only a generation or two from slavery, surely it is not credible to attribute the breakdown of the black family and its affiliated pathologies to the “legacy of slavery”.

Another crippling problem in the black community is unemployment, particularly among black youth. Nationally, black youth unemployment is nearly 40 percent, with some cities being over 60 percent. However, high black youth unemployment is an entirely new phenomenon that cannot be attributed to either discrimination, nor to “legacy of slavery”. In 1948 black youths were more active in the labor force than their white counterparts with unemployment rates of 9.4 vs 10.2 percent, respectively. Today the black teen labor force is a fraction of the white. Why?? Was a society that tolerated Klans in the 1940s less discriminatory, did the black youths have greater skills? One could certainly argue that black youths are denied opportunities because educational opportunities are denied to them. New York City is a prime example. Charter schools were established and were providing superior education in many ghetto areas, but a weak mayor under pressure from the teacher's unions was seeking to close them

down. The irony of this situation is that the political party that is the party of the unions who are doing so much harm to the black youth is the one that the black community overwhelmingly supports — go figure.

Still another lesson from history that could/should be used relates to the unrest on our college campuses. Current unrest is minimal when compared to the 1960s, when the spoiled children of the “greatest generation” enrolled in college. Although their moms/dads helped win WWII, when it came time for them to serve, physical cowardice was very prominent on campuses across the fruited plain. These demonstrations disappeared when the draft ceased and these protesters no longer were in danger — much hyperbole, little substance. Few colleges were immune. A fine example of leadership was illustrated by the Rev. Theodore Hesburgh of Notre Dame. While recognizing the “validity of the protest” he warned that rational dialogue would be pursued. He gave them 15 minutes to meditate and those who chose a rational dialogue would be chatted with, whereas those who chose to persist in demonstrating would have their IDs confiscated and would henceforth be “suspended from this community”. He added that “everyone was responsible to obey the laws of the community and land”. Otherwise “there was no guarantee of civilization versus the jungle or mob rule, here or elsewhere.” Amen, Father!!

The final group of advocates who would benefit from learning history would be the redistributionists/egalitarians/progressives who keep advocating policies that are all alike in that they have failed consistently. As Murray Rothbard would argue, egalitarianism is a revolt against nature and therefore is doomed to failure and history has proven him right, repeatedly. Despite the dismal track record of the egalitarian experiments, seldom/never is the ideal challenged — it sounds so good. Writers have tried to capture the horrors of “equality”. L. P. Hartley in his novel “Facial Justice” created a world where all girl's faces are equally pretty, necessitating the state perform operations on girls to beautify or uglify them so that they all would become equally pretty. In Kurt Vonnegut's story, “Harrison Bergeron” he envisions a fully egalitarian society in 2081, where everyone was fully equal in looks, brains, strength, quickness, etc. He attributes this equality to the 211th, 212th and 213th Amendments to the Constitution and the unceasing vigilance of agents of the U. S Handicapper General. Yes, totalitarian methods of coercion are necessary to reach the laudable goal of “equality.” Is it worth it??

Don Lein is a regular contributor to Chatham County Line. A Chatham resident, he is involved in a variety of civic organizations.

Greg Fishel champions science, civility in changing climate

by Gary Simpson

As 2015 draws to a close, I'll look back upon it as the year Greg Fishel emerged from the murky pond of ideological partisanship, skepticism and rancor to become central North Carolina's champion of science and civility in an age of climate change controversy.

Almost every Triangle region North Carolinian with a TV or smart phone feels like they've known Greg Fishel forever. But in 2015 WRAL News' long-time chief meteorologist has become better known both near and far through his social media posts. In these heartfelt, informative essays we've become privy to the kind of personal makeover that nature reveals in the transformation of caterpillar into butterfly. As a weather scientist and former climate change skeptic now turned climate change realist, Greg has undergone a personal epiphany, a spiritual and scientific “Damascus Road experience” if you will.

From hard-nosed ideologue beating on the same partisan drum as the Rush Limbaugh's and Sean Hannity's of the world according to FOX, Greg has seen the light of a new day break in upon him. He's consciously and courageously opened his eyes and mind to the hard science and moral veracity staring him in the face. He's opened the closet door of doubt and denial, misinformation and disinformation and stepped out into the light of reality to assume the role of the prophetic pied piper of climate change. It's a gutsy, genuine and inspiring about face for any public figure to make. For that U-turn, and for the manner in which he has navigated it, he deserves a large measure of admiration and gratitude.

Greg is now boldly piping a new and enlightened tune, kindly inviting others to leave partisan ideology behind and march

with civility and humility into the real world of global climate change. In an October 24 post, Greg spoke openly from head and heart when he stated:

“For those that say global warming is not based on science, I do have to say as respectfully but boldly as I can, you're wrong. But in fairness, I have an advantage.

“My degree is in a science field, and I have access to those who have published hundreds of peer-reviewed papers on this subject. I can't be bothered by what Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity, and others say about the science. Now if you have a valid scientific argument that challenges ideas that have been accepted for almost 200 years, I and the rest of the scientific community are all ears. You would truly be the Galileo of the modern age.”

It has been both fascinating and encouraging over this past year to behold the changes in Greg Fishel. It has been for me a breath of fresh air in an otherwise stagnant and corrosive political climate that fails for all the wrong reasons to respond in a timely and productive manner to the chaotic warming of the planet caused by the burning of fossil fuels and subsequent build up of green house gases over the past two centuries. Greg is breathing new life into the cause of global climate change mitigation and adaptation, and new hope into its advocates (like me) who have been on board the global warming/climate change train since Dr. James Hansen's seminal testimony before Congress nearly three decades ago.

Since that 1988 testimony describing the unparalleled escalation of green house gases in the atmosphere and Hansen's warning of the consequences of inaction in the face of global warming, this planet, our home, has daily lost ground because of our corporate and political determination to “stay

the course” and doggedly conduct “business as usual.” Now in the throes of a climate crisis that threatens to precipitate a deluge of social upheaval never before experienced in the course of human history, civilization is in dire need of fact-based critical thinkers. We desperately need smart and honest mediators who are both willing and able to promote intelligent and civil discourse about the greatest threat and loftiest moral challenge that humanity has ever faced.

The new (and improved) Greg Fishel appears to be the right man at the right time to tackle the critical and controversial job of climate change champion, prophet and shepherd for the diverse flock of sheep and goats in central NC pastures that too often waste time butting heads and marking their territory rather than coming together to attack the common problem for the common good. For any and all who will pay attention to Greg's truth telling, he promised in his October 24 post to continue his climate change quest in the years to come:

“So in closing... I will share with you from time to time scientific evidence as well as some more personal thoughts. For those of you who in large part agree with me, that's great. For those who disagree but are able to express that disagreement in a civil and respectful manner, that is great as well. For those of you who choose to attack me and make all sorts of assumptions about my motives, your comments will fall on deaf ears. I cannot say I believe in one approach and then engage in another.

Sage advice for all from a true champion of science and civility!

Gary Simpson is a Fishel Fan and advocate for global climate change mitigation and adaptation living in Pittsboro.