

Predicting the Future

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It is remarkable that both public and governments should be so forcefully pushing for the drastic upheaval of the economy, based on extremely long term meteorological forecasts, whereas very short term weather predictions are blatantly unreliable, and, for that matter, no public prediction has ever proved right along the centuries.

Myriads of examples abound. Let us consider only the advent of portable telephony.

Which public, which government was able to predict but a few years ago that a single ubiquitous small handheld device would in no time substitute nearly anywhere on the planet for telephones, high definition still image and film cameras and storage, sound recorders, record collections and record players, newspapers, radio and television, movie theaters, books, libraries and bookstores, geographic maps, Global Positioning System, airplane instrumentation, the post office, visits to the grocery store, gambling, alarm clocks and watches, calculators, computers, astronomical charts, remote controls for our appliances, cash and chèques, even guidance for cannons, bombers, and missiles?

If anything, when they saw novel telephony on the horizon, which they dreaded would challenge their price gouging monopolies on communication (not that they imagined anything beside voice), governments initially thwarted its development, and of course failed, because politicians seem to be unaware that they are unable to control ideas and endeavors of eight thousand million people, especially when they hardly understand them.

Experience should teach us that not only are we incapable of imagining the future with any degree of reliability, be it in the short or long term, but also every technological prediction we made in the past proved silly, so we should refrain from promoting revolutionary policies based on predictions which are most likely and/or obviously erroneous, since they always have been.

Except for the prediction of the approximate time of sunrise tomorrow morning, but then, with a sigh of relief, we can be confident that no government or business magnate will try to interfere, at least for the time being.

Another silly prediction could be as follows:

Considering that, a mere twenty-one days after a lone sample had been tested, the first nuclear bomb was dropped over Japan, and then a second only three days later, thus expending within a few days 100% of the arsenal existing at the time, let us predict with self-assured certainty that no nuclear weapon will ever be dropped again anywhere on the planet, bearing in mind that the current arsenal contains 5,000 times as many nuclear heads, with a destructive power about 200,000 times as great, and that nine times as many nations possess them, some reportedly rogue, and some blatantly delusional and unreasonable.

Some prediction.

One could muse that perhaps are we not assessing correctly the relative importance of various urgencies.

But then myths are much preferable to reality, are they not?