

1 **Why don't Americans believe in global warming?**

2 original at:

3 http://www.economist.com/blogs/democracyinamerica/2011/02/climate_change

4 Although a majority of Americans (58%) do think climate change is a
5 serious problem, the United States is less exercised about climate change
6 than a lot of countries. It's also one of the few places where you can turn
7 on the television and catch a debate between mainstream figures about
8 whether climate change is even real. Why does America lag behind in the
9 fight against climate change? I think there are four reasons.

10 Psychological: The consequences of climate change are too awful to think
11 about. Therefore, we're denying the issue, as we used to deny monsters
12 in the room by hiding under the blanket. If you don't look at it, it can't
13 look at you.

14 Economic: The costs of a large-scale effort to fight global warming are too
15 steep to bear. Therefore, we're trying to ignore the issue, or pretend it
16 doesn't exist, or we believe that the economy (including development) is
17 more important.

18 Political: The fact that Democrats are always hammering on about climate
19 change and Republicans aren't suggests that this is a political issue, not a
20 scientific one.

21 Epistemological: Why should we believe in climate change? Where's the
22 evidence? All we know is what scientists say, and scientists are sometimes
23 wrong. And don't even get me started on Al Gore.

24 Metaphysical: God isn't going to let millions of people die in an epic
25 drought.

26 I suspect the metaphysical denial is quite rare—but given the comparative
27 religiosity of American culture and the stereotypes thereof, it gets a lot of
28 air time. The other explanations are more common: according to a poll,
29 most people think that there is a conflict between environmental
30 protection and economic growth.

Questions

- 1) Do all Americans believe that global warming does not exist?
- 2) What are 'mainstream figures' (line 7)
- 3) Paraphrase 'The costs of a large-scale effort to fight global warming are too steep to bear' (line 14-15). What does this belief lead to according to the text?
- 4) What makes Americans think that global warming is a political issue?
- 5) Paraphrase 'And don't even get me started on Al Gore' (line 23).
- 6) Why does the metaphysical argument get so much attention in America?
- 7) Do Americans generally think that fighting climate change will boost the economy?
- 8) What is your opinion on climate change? Do you think it is a political issue? Do you think that Czech Republic (and the world as a whole) should do more to tackle it? Or do you think there are more immediate problems that currently require our attention?

Vocabulary

lag behind (line 8) – to move or develop more slowly than others

deny (line 11) – to state that something declared or believed is not true

air (line 28) – to broadcast a programme on television or radio

poll (line 28) – an attempt to find out what the public think about something, especially about a political subject

You can find additional explanation and more examples to help you understand and use English words and phrases at <http://dictionary.reference.com>, <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/> or <http://www.ldoceonline.com/>

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