

FALLUJA, Iraq, Nov 23 (*Reuters*)

“Braving snipers, Falluja residents walked past demolished homes to an aid distribution centre on Tuesday but American granola bars and Frosted Flakes cereal failed to raise hopes of a brighter future...”

PART I



the test of time

“The age is ending, the house is coming down
– all the rafters, all the towers, all the clocks.
It was built of a dream. The dream closes.”

— *Allen Wheelis*

SUMMER, 2008.

A record number of American children are being diagnosed with asthma, obesity, Type 2 diabetes, and bipolar disorder. Along with surging food and medical costs, Americans must come to grips with declining life expectancy — now 37th in the world.

According to the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, the number of American children who became overweight tripled during the 1980s. Type 2 diabetes followed apace.

Today, 65 percent of all Americans are overweight or obese — more than 25 million are diabetic.

Health insurance premiums are climbing too as trillions are spent for disease management — not cures. Aghast at the number of Americans without health insurance, well meaning politicians are calling for universal

health care, even though, after decades of food warring, our medical and scientific communities can't even agree on what constitutes a healthy breakfast.

The “low fat diet,” first promoted by the nonprofit American Heart Association in 1961, came with the promise to end heart disease:

“If everyone were to [lower their fat intake], coronary bypass surgery would be rare by the end of the century.”¹

In 1977, the federal government adopted the American Heart Association's “low fat” diet. We reduced fat, increased grains and cereal, and switched to the recommended vegetable fats.

Bacon, butter, chicken skin, coconut oil, egg yolk, creamy lard, and red meat were fingered as the cause of everything!

Unrelenting media attacked traditional foods. The soybean-oil-friendly Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) launched their “Anti-Saturated Fat Attack” against coconut oil and butter in movie theatre popcorn. Replaced by

— you guessed it — partially hydrogenated soybean oil and imitation butter.

In 1987, the medical elite announced their long-awaited “War on Cholesterol,” launching what has become the Titanic of needless medical interventions. In his book *Heart Failure*, Thomas J. Moore describes it this way:

“Like some ponderous prehistoric beast, the National Cholesterol Education Program just slowly surfaced from the bureaucratic swamps at the heart institute.”³

By decree, 25 million Americans were battling a new enemy — *high cholesterol*. That same year, Merck's Lovastatin, the first cholesterol-lowering statin drug, was approved in record time — 12 weeks.

Dr. Scott Grundy, American Heart Association board member and paid consultant to Merck, wrote a favorable nine-page article about Lovastatin in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. Doctor-consultants like Grundy helped make the “War on Cholesterol” a big success.

But, instead of victory, heart disease remains the number one killer, and slow, suffocating heart failure is the number one Medicare expenditure. And, as an example, since the year 2000, five new specialty heart hospitals have opened just in the Minneapolis and St. Paul metro area.²

The decades-old War on Cholesterol became a great, everlasting marketing opportunity for the giant U.S. cereal businesses — all founding members of the National Cholesterol Education Program.

For a fee, *high glycemic* breakfast bars, sugary Pop Tarts®, and Yogurt Burst Cheerios® could earn the American Heart Association's *low fat* seal of approval.

Now, in a time of war, is it unpatriotic to ask whether the medical and business elite have let us down and put their personal and financial interests ahead of everything else, like our health?

Very possible, says award-winning science writer Gary Taubes, author of *Good Calories, Bad Calories*. The curtain is falling on “low fat,” says Taubes, and what we have now is the test of time...

“And, the idea that eating less fat makes for a healthier and longer life has only become less compelling over time.”⁴

Cereal Killer is a history of the low fat era. Dry boxed cereal is a metaphor for all that's gone wrong with our food supply. As Americans suffer from a balkanized scientific establishment, the big cereal and pharmaceutical industries enjoy record profits.

But the chickens will come home to roost, and the *unintended consequences* are filling up the hen house.

