

From Politico.com October 5, 2009

[http://www.politico.com/blogs/glennthrush/1009/Pelosi\\_skeptical\\_about\\_Afgan\\_surge\\_McCrystals\\_role.html](http://www.politico.com/blogs/glennthrush/1009/Pelosi_skeptical_about_Afgan_surge_McCrystals_role.html)

### **Pelosi On Climate Change – Cap & Trade**

Speaker Nancy Pelosi, in an expansive sit-down interview with Charlie Rose:

Charlie Rose:

Let me turn to climate change for a second.

Nancy Pelosi:

I hope for longer.

Charlie Rose:

Fair enough. I want to do that, absolutely. So you got the bill that came out, the Waxman-Markey Bill came out. You've got a bill introduced in the Senate by Barbara Boxer and John Kerry. What do you think of cap and trade that came out of the House? That better than a carbon tax in your just a moment, and if so, why?

Nancy Pelosi:

Well, let's -- whatever we end up calling it, let's just put this --

Charlie Rose:

This is not just names. This is a different way of approaching it.

Nancy Pelosi:

No. It's different from a carbon tax, right. But it's what the world is doing, and so we have to fit into that regime as well.

Charlie Rose:

And have to take the lead.

Nancy Pelosi:

Well, we have to take the lead, but we've been laggards.

Charlie Rose:

Right.

Nancy Pelosi:

Now, let me --

Charlie Rose:

That's why you've got to take the lead.

Nancy Pelosi:

I'm going to brag. When I became speaker, I made climate change and energy independence my flagship issue. Of course, education, healthcare, they're everybody's issues. I wanted us to put an emphasis on this. We formed a special select committee to document what the best way was to go with this. Our committees of jurisdiction, which were like 11, worked on our energy bill

which President Bush signed, first time we've lowered cafe [spelled phonetically] standard, a standard for emissions in 32 years. I mean, that's just appalling. Anyway, now with a Democratic president who is facing the reality of climate change which it can a long time for the previous administration to even acknowledge that climate change was happening, that there was a crisis and that human behavior had an impact on it, and change in behavior could have a positive impact on it. But now we're in a different place. So we've been laggards in this. So in our legislation, seeing the necessity of a national security issue to reduce our dependence on foreign oil, as an economic issue, to have the [unintelligible] grain technologies and the green revolution, to keep us number one in the world economy on these technologies as a health issue, to reduce the emissions in the air to keep our kids healthier, and as a moral issue to pass this planet on to the next generation in a responsible way. But in addition to that, why we had the collaboration of Evangelicals was they believed, as do many of us that this planet is God's creation, and we have a moral responsibility to preserve it and to do so in a way that does not hurt the poor. That's their two-pronged attack. So we had Evangelicals and scientists at the table, business and labor environmentalists, every sector that you can imagine.

Charlie Rose:

People like Edmond R. Wilson [spelled phonetically] [unintelligible] were pushing hard for that.

Nancy Pelosi:

It was due -- and so that was why we were able to pass legislation. It's a heavy lift. It's very hard because it represents change. Some people don't like the name cap in trade because it's a mystery to people. What does that mean? But whatever -- by whatever name it is, it is the world system that other countries are operating on.

Charlie Rose:

France has passed a carbon tax. I mean, that's what we have done. And I know a lot of people in the industry feel, I mean across the board, in terms of, who have a shared idea of commitment to climate change and to reducing the emissions believe that a carbon tax is better than cap in trade.

Nancy Pelosi:

In theory -- and I think Al Gore would probably agree with that.

Charlie Rose:

Right.

Nancy Pelosi:

That's not a disagreement, but it has --

Charlie Rose:

But you can't have it in the Congress because nobody will buy into something that has tax on the title of it.

Nancy Pelosi:

Well, that's not why. I mean, if there were -- if we were the initiators, which we are the laggards, but now we're getting with it. The carbon tax is efficient. You know, it is easily understood by people, opposed by many of terms of its sound. It's a tax. So this is not to debunk what that is.

This is so say that while -- so what you say about France, the EU and many more people are -- countries are looking to how we can cap emissions, capture them and sequester them in the ground.

Charlie Rose:  
Right, right.

Nancy Pelosi:  
And then trade the credits for those emissions in order to get us to move forward in a way that will happen, that will work, and so --

Charlie Rose:  
But you seem to be saying cap in trades are better than simply a carbon tax. That seems to be what you are saying.

Nancy Pelosi:  
I'm saying it because it is more readily at work in the rest of the world.

Charlie Rose:  
Okay. Let me -- the emissions standards coming out of the Waxman Bill.

Nancy Pelosi:  
Right --

Charlie Rose:  
Are they as strong as they can be? Or you'd like to see them stronger?

Nancy Pelosi:  
Well, we always like to see them stronger. And in the Senate bill, they are.

Charlie Rose:  
Right.

Nancy Pelosi:  
They are stronger. So we would hope that they would prevail in conference. But this is what we could pass in the House. And this was historic. It was remarkable.

Charlie Rose:  
Just for the benefit of the record, what is the standard said by Waxman-Markey.

Nancy Pelosi:  
By -- by -- 17 percent by 2020.

Charlie Rose:  
Right. 17 percent of 1990 standards or 17 percent of --

Nancy Pelosi:  
Yeah, and then 20, and then the same measure in the Senate 20 percent. So anywhere, they're 3

percentage points ahead of us by the same standard. And this was a heavy lift. But everything is a heavy lift.

Charlie Rose:  
Okay.

Nancy Pelosi:  
It's all a heavy lift because you're bringing together people from all different parts of the country which view this differently. And we were able to pass that legislation. I'm very, very proud of it. And I'm excited about what the Senate is doing.

Charlie Rose:  
Do you want your president to go to Copenhagen?

Nancy Pelosi:  
Yes, of course I do.

Charlie Rose:  
He'll go?

Nancy Pelosi:  
I have no idea. I have no idea.

Charlie Rose:  
You want the United States to take the lead in this. Not -- more so than any other country in the world, that this is a responsibility that we ought to and responsibility of a country that wants to lead, to play an important part of the leadership of the world, to seize control of the climate change.

Nancy Pelosi:  
Well, to join; join with other countries in it because if we're not though, it gives everyone else an out.

Charlie Rose:  
Exactly.

Nancy Pelosi:  
It gives everyone else an out. I had a climate change visit to China, very high level visit. Met with the president, the prime minister, and we talked climate change and human rights --

Charlie Rose:  
I want to get to that, too. Go ahead.

Nancy Pelosi:  
But they never expected that we would have passed our bill out of committee, and we did the day before we left for China. We passed it out of committee and then we came back and passed it in the House. It sent a completely different signal. When they have come here in the past, they thought Congress is not going to act. The U.S. is not going to have any standard. But we do, and

we will --

Charlie Rose:

My understanding is that the Bush administration had problems with Kyoto in part because they didn't want to do anything unless they could get the Chinese and the Indians to agree, and they couldn't get them to agree and that was part of the reason the United States didn't sign on to Kyoto. Is that true or not?

Nancy Pelosi:

That goes back awhile, because Kyoto was, of course, during the Clinton administration as well.

Charlie Rose:

But the Bush people were against it.

Nancy Pelosi:

Absolutely, and the Republicans in Congress -- as a matter of fact, I'm an appropriator, that's my experience in Congress, and almost every bill we passed, the Republican majority would have an amendment that would say no funds in this act can be used to study climate change or Kyoto treaty.

Charlie Rose:

This is the difficult thing for China and India, especially China, a manufacturing economy. They are saying that there is a limit on standards, emission standards that they will support if it effects their growth.

Nancy Pelosi:

You're talking about China now?

Charlie Rose:

Yes.

Nancy Pelosi:

Now, the Chinese are doing incredible things. They are doing remarkable things.

Charlie Rose:

With wind and solar and everything else.

Nancy Pelosi:

Wind, solar, batteries.

Charlie Rose:

Coal.

Nancy Pelosi:

Coal --

Charlie Rose:

Not so good. Exactly.

Nancy Pelosi:

Coal has a place. What we want to do with coal is to sequester it.

Charlie Rose:

Right.

Nancy Pelosi:

But, you know, coal powered plants which are not environmentally sound are part of the emissions problem, so in our bill, we're very respectful that coal is abundant in the United States. It's cheap, and it is here to stay for another couple of hundred years, how do we deal with that. I'm not being disrespectful as to what they're doing with coal, but I'm saying in terms of taking the lead in other technologies.

Charlie Rose:

But in terms of batteries, solar, wind --

Nancy Pelosi:

High speed rail, how they build buildings, how they rehab buildings, and all the rest. They are really doing remarkable things.

Charlie Rose:

Could they seize the lead in this kind of a thing and so therefore, from a competitive point of view, and in prestige, we'd rather be the leader?

Nancy Pelosi:

Absolutely. No, nobody is waiting around for us to catch on.

Charlie Rose:

Exactly right.

Nancy Pelosi:

They have been in the lead on all of these technologies. I saw remarkable --

Charlie Rose:

Shouldn't we be in the lead? Isn't that --

Nancy Pelosi:

Absolutely. That's why we -- that's why the president --

Charlie Rose:

Isn't through where the stimulus program is going to go, to helping us get in the lead in those kinds of --

Nancy Pelosi:

But you've heard me say it before. I always say if you want to know our agenda, science, science, science, and science; these four words. And --

Charlie Rose:  
The president went out to the NIH the other day.

Nancy Pelosi:  
And our recovery plan, we have a biggest commitment to science ever in the president's budget, that's why these pillars are there. They're all about innovation and science, whether it's education, healthcare, or energy. And we are going to be left behind. And that's just not acceptable to the United States. We are number one, we're going to maintain that position, we're going to do it through innovation, and that begins in the classroom.

Charlie Rose:  
And granted you make a bigger speech about that than anybody else and you firmly believe that. Let me go back to China. So you go to China and you talk to --

Nancy Pelosi:  
Let me just say, Alaska is melting in our own country, in our own state. Villages are melting into the sea. The methane gas that is being released there because of what's happening to the polar cap -- we would go on and on about Alaska, but --

Charlie Rose:  
And the Arctic.

Nancy Pelosi:  
The whole Arctic. But this is a state in our union. I told the Chinese, you must go to Alaska and you will see, the glaciers are melting in the Himalayas affecting the great rivers of China. Including down to --

Charlie Rose:  
So do you think we'll get -- Secretary of State of over there asking the Chinese to join in this and to cooperate. Have we get the president going in November to China, will we get some significant cooperation on -- in emission standards and environmental issues?

Nancy Pelosi:  
I certainly hope so. That we will -- we are working in a forward direction.

Charlie Rose:  
All right.

Nancy Pelosi:  
And I think the communication is very different now.

Charlie Rose:  
How did they receive you obviously you're one of the two or three powerful people in the government of the United States. How did they receive you? Because no one or few have been tougher on the human rights record than Nancy Pelosi. It's true. Yes.

Nancy Pelosi:  
Yes.

Charlie Rose:

It's true. So what do they say to you?

Nancy Pelosi:

I hope there are other people who are tough but I'm pretty tough.

Charlie Rose:

Few. That's right. So what do they say to you when you come in around you talk -- then you say let's talk about human rights. What do they say?

Nancy Pelosi:

Well, let me say they made a decision somewhere along the way that they were going to extend a hand of friendship to me. They came and invited me to China at the beginning of this -- earlier spring.

Charlie Rose:

Shows you they know something about the American political system.

Nancy Pelosi:

Yes, and they -- the invitation was from the highest level with a -- for a head state --

Charlie Rose:

So you saw Hu Jintao?

Nancy Pelosi:

That's right.

Charlie Rose:

Right.

Nancy Pelosi:

I spent a good deal of time with him.

Charlie Rose:

So what came out of this? When you say to him, "Mr. President, how about human rights? Let's have a serious conversation here."

Nancy Pelosi:

Basically their statement is usually the same. This is an internal matter. I hope that we can discuss it with respect for each other's different systems and the rest. It took a little bit of a different approach this time in terms of talking about environmental justice because I started to tell you about the glaciers melting in the Himalayas. 750,000 people approximately die in China each year from auto emissions, from the -- tens of millions of people do not have access to clean water. Clean air. The --

Charlie Rose:

Clean water a serious problem.

Nancy Pelosi:

Serious problem. The Gobe Desert is encroaching on the rest of China. There are sand storms in Beijing. They know that there is something that has to be done about climate change and environmental protection, so my pitch to them is there has to be environmental justice, as you develop, and as you compete. You can't leave people behind. And so what we have been saying about human rights in China of late is that it's about transparency, and openness, and accountability, and justice in terms of how they move forward on climate change.