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2010

**Big Oil Makes War on the Earth
The Gulf Coast Joins an Oil-Soiled Planet**
By [Ellen Cantarow](#)

If you live on the Gulf Coast, welcome to the real world of oil — and just know that you're not alone. In the Niger Delta and the Ecuadorian Amazon, among other places,



your emerging hell has been the living hell of local populations for decades. Even as I was visiting those distant and exotic spill locales via book, article, and YouTube, you were going through your very public nightmare. Three federal appeals court judges with financial and other [ties](#) to big oil were [rejecting](#) the Obama administration's proposed drilling moratorium in the Gulf of Mexico. Pollution from the BP spill there was seeping into Lake Pontchartrain, north of New Orleans. Clean-up crews were discovering that a once-over of beaches isn't nearly enough: somehow, the oil just keeps reappearing. Endangered sea turtles and other creatures were being [burnt alive](#) in swaths of ocean ("burn fields") ignited by BP to "contain" its catastrophe. The lives and livelihoods of fishermen and oyster-shuckers were being destroyed. [Disease warnings](#) were being issued to Gulf residents and alarming toxin levels were beginning to [be found](#) in clean-up workers.

None of this would surprise inhabitants of either the Niger Delta or the Amazon rain forest. Despite the Santa Barbara oil spill of 1969 and the Exxon Valdez in 1989, Americans are only now starting to wake up to the fate that, for half a century, has befallen the Delta and the Amazon, both ecosystems at least as rich and varied as the Gulf of Mexico.

The Niger Delta region, which faces the Atlantic in southern Nigeria, is the world's third largest wetland. As with shrimp and oysters in the Gulf, so its mangrove forests, described as "[rain forests by the sea](#)," shelter all sorts of crustaceans. The Amazon rain forest, the Earth's greatest nurturer of biodiversity, covers more than [two billion square miles](#) and provides this planet with about 20% of its oxygen. We are, in other words, talking about the despoliation-by-oil not of bleak backlands, but of some of this planet's greatest natural treasures.

Flaming Mangroves

Consider Goi, a village in the Niger Delta. It is located on the banks of a river whose tides used to bring in daily offerings of lobsters and fish. Goi's fishermen would cast their nets into the water and simply let them swell with the harvest. Unfortunately, the village was located [close to](#) one of the Delta's many pipelines. Six years ago, there was a major spill into the river; the oil caught fire and spread.

Nnimo Basse, Nigerian head of Friends of the Earth, International, visited soon after. "What I saw" he reported in a recent [radio interview](#), "was just a sea of crude, burnt out mangroves, and burnt out fishponds beside the river... All the houses close to the river were burnt... It was like a place that had been set on fire in a situation of battle, of war. The people were completely devastated."

Nigeria's biggest oil producer, Royal Dutch Shell, insisted that it cleaned up the village, but Basse just laughs. "One thing about oil incidents: you cannot hide them. The evidence is there for anybody to see. This was in 2004; I've been there two times this year. The devastation is still virtually as fresh as it was then. You can still see the oil sheen on the river. You can see the mangroves that were burnt, they've not recovered. You can see the fish ponds that were destroyed. You can see the fishing nets and boats that were burnt. They're all there. There's no signs of any clean-up." Though the local inhabitants are still there, struggling for survival, notes Basse, they can't depend on fishing anymore. "The last time I went there, there was a little boy who came with a plastic container... [He and his father had gone] to look for shrimps all night. And what they came back with was a paltry quantity of crayfish that could

barely cover the bottom of the plastic container...The container was covered with crude and the crayfish itself was covered in crude oil. So I was wondering what they were going to do with it, and he said they were going to wash the crayfish, and then they would feed on it.”

Now people in Goi have to buy fish from traders. The fish are not very fresh, and often smoked. More important, buying fish is a luxury, given that [70%](#) of Nigerians subsist on less than a dollar a day.

Fifty years ago, Shell sank its first 17 wells in the Delta. The rest is history written as nightmare: unparalleled government corruption, ecocide, impoverishment. [One estimate puts](#) spills in the Delta over the past half century at 546 million gallons — nearly 11 million gallons a year. If it’s hard to wrap your mind around those figures, maybe [this](#) is easier to grasp: more oil is spilled from the Delta’s pipeline maze each year than has been lost so far in the Gulf of Mexico.

Through [photographs](#), you can glimpse life in the Delta under the shadow of big oil. Derelict shacks slouch on river banks amid an extravagance of garbage and waste. Children bathe in lifeless ponds. People live and work in the heat and amid toxins released by flames roaring from [flare stacks](#). Flaring is universally agreed to be [wasteful](#), but is also a way of maximizing oil production on the cheap. Much of the gas burned could be used productively, but in places like the Niger Delta big oil just doesn’t want to spend the money necessary to reclaim it. The flames [belch toxins](#) and methane, a powerful greenhouse gas. The U.S. prohibits such flaring. Officially, Nigeria does, too, and scheduled its first “flare-out” for 1984. To date, however, its governments still [keep eternally postponing](#) the deadline for stopping the practice. The sheen, sludge, and slime of crude oil that Americans living on the Gulf coast are just beginning to get used to have been omnipresent facts in the Delta for so long that most people know little else. Average life expectancy in the rural Delta, says Bassey, “has never been lower than it is now” — 48 years for women, 47 for men, and 41 if you escape subsistence farming and petty trading by becoming an oil worker. In other words, years shaved off lives are the personal sacrifice those in the region make to big oil.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, Nigeria nationalized its oil, but Shell still ruled production. The state organized large public works projects and long-term plans for development, only to abandon them under powerful international financial pressures — the “free market” doing what it does best when truly unchecked. Nigeria’s leaders have raked in [\\$700 billion](#) in national oil revenues since 1960. One percent of Nigeria’s population, in other words, has pocketed over 75% of its energy wealth. In part thanks to the unwanted sacrifices of the Nigerian majority, America’s gas tanks remain well-filled at relatively reasonable prices,

since [40%](#) of U.S. crude oil imports come from the Delta.

Indigenous inhabitants of the Delta like the Ogoni people have suffered disaster without even the oil-money equivalent of trickle-down economics touching their lives. “In recovering the money that has been stolen from us I do not want any blood spilt, not of any Ogoni man, not of any strangers amongst us,” Ken Saro-Wiwa, Nigeria’s legendary nonviolent activist, [told](#) an audience of his people in 1990. “We are going to demand our rights peacefully, nonviolently, and we shall win.” The movement he

launched adopted the tactics of South Africa's anti-apartheid movement, promoting divestment from Shell and staging peaceful demonstrations.

Shell soon took notice. So did Nigeria's military government, which also felt threatened by a movement in the Delta region dedicated to regaining some share of pillaged local wealth. In 1995, that government hanged Saro-Wiwa and eight other nonviolent leaders. A case brought by the Center for Constitutional Rights on behalf of Saro-Wiwa's son and other plaintiffs resulted in a [\\$15.5 million](#) out-of-court settlement by Shell, a veritable drop in the bucket for the giant company.

Since Saro-Wiwa's execution, a rebellious spirit has spread widely in the region, but his pacifist approach has long since been rejected. The rebel Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) has become remarkably disruptive and powerful through sabotaging pipelines, kidnapping foreign oil workers, and even piracy. It has, in fact, come close to bringing the oil industry [to a standstill](#) there. Shell has shut down its major operations in the Delta, where 36% of young people interviewed in a 2007 World Bank study showed a "willingness or propensity to take up arms against the state."

Tropical Crudities

Oil corporations have penetrated vast parts of the Amazon rain forest in Ecuador, Peru, and Brazil. Consider just one part of that Amazonian immensity, [the Oriente region](#) of Ecuador in the Amazon basin. Humberto Piaguaje of the Secoya people still [remembers](#) how life there used to be. With a staggering abundance of birds, plants, animals, and foliage, with streams and tributaries winding through a humid lushness to the Amazon River, the region seemed like a blessing rather than something that could be owned by anyone.

"Own" wasn't even a notion: the endless stretches of rain forest were literally [common wealth](#). The oil beneath the ground, [says](#) Piaguaje, was "the blood of our grandparents — our ancestors." The rain forest was a university that conferred its knowledge on those who lived there and their shamans. Its medicinal plants made it the people's hospital; its vegetables and animals made it their marketplace.

For Texaco, however, the jungle invited domination. Emergildo Criollo of the Cofan people remembers how it all began. In 1967, when he was eight years old, a helicopter suddenly appeared in the sky. He'd never seen anything like it and thought at first it was some strange bird. Later, even stranger sounds came from within the jungle itself as Texaco set up shop. Within six months, the first oil spill appeared in a stream near where his family lived. After he grew up, Criollo lost two children: an infant stopped developing after he was six months old, and an older child who bathed one day in the oil-polluted river, swallowed some of the water, and later began vomiting blood. He died the next day. Criollo sums up his sorrow in 13 stark words: "They came and spilled oil, they contaminated the river, and my children died."

In its first 25 years, Texaco [pumped](#) 1.5 billion barrels of oil out of the Oriente region. [According to one estimate](#), the company discharged 345 million gallons of pure crude oil into Ecuador's rainforest and waterways. In 2009, Amazon Rights Watch [reported](#) that the company, by its own estimates, had dumped 18 billion gallons of toxic wastewater directly into the environment. Next to its hundreds of wells, Texaco [dug](#) into the forest floor at least twice as many unlined waste pits. That it intended the

filth from the pits to flow into forest streams is clear, because it installed drainage pipes that allowed for just such run-off. “Pits,” by the way, is a euphemism for oil-sewage swamps, as is evident both in this [photograph](#) and this [video](#).

Forty years of oil exploration and production have translated into the slow poisoning of Oriente’s land, its people, its animals, and its crops. With no other water source, local tribes are forced, as in the Delta region in Nigeria, to use contaminated water for drinking, bathing, and cooking. A Harvard medical team and Ecuadorian health authorities [have described](#) eight kinds of cancer that result from this sort of contamination. Birth defects are legion in the region, as are skin diseases, which torment even newborns.

In 1993, 30,000 indigenous Ecuadorians brought a class-action lawsuit against Texaco (which merged with Chevron in 2001 to become Chevron-Texaco, the world’s fourth-largest investor-owned oil company). “60 Minutes” [called it](#) “the largest environmental lawsuit in history.” The plaintiffs are seeking \$27 billion in compensation for their suffering and for the restoration of their world. The lawsuit is still pending.

Last month, some Ecuadorian indigenous leaders visited the Gulf Coast to [show solidarity](#) with another indigenous people, [the Houma](#) of Louisiana. A joint group then [took a boat tour](#) through bayous where the Houma have fished for generations. Mariana Jimenez, from Ecuador’s Amazon, reached over the side of the boat into gray water, grasping a handful of once-verdant marsh grass. It drooped lifelessly in her hand, leaving dark brown blotches of crude oil on her palm. “I see it,” she said. “It’s just like Ecuador. They talk about all the technology they have, but when there’s a situation like this, where’s the technology?”

“I think all of this is a terrible contamination for the Houma people,” commented Humberto Piaguaje. “It’s a cultural contamination. Their fishing and shrimping that was their livelihood is ending now. They need to be asking BP for compensation for the next generation.”

Big Oil Blowback

Here’s the simple, even crude, lesson these ambassadors offer: whether Americans like it or not, we are all connected in new ways — and not ways the advocates of “globalization” once promised — now that we’ve entered what resource expert Michael Klare calls the age of [extreme energy](#). Think of it as a new kind of blowback. Our addiction to oil is now blowing back on the civilization that can’t do without its gushers and can’t quite bring itself to imagine a real transition to alternative energies. Humberto Piaguaje might say that the wound BP gashed in the floor of the Gulf of Mexico has unleashed the wrath of the Earth’s millions-of-years dead. Put another way, corporations presume that it’s their right to control this planet and its ecosystems, while obeying one command: to maximize profits. Everything else is an “[externality](#),” including life on Earth. “What we conclude from the Gulf of Mexico pollution incident,” [says](#) Nnimo Bassey, “is that the oil companies are out of control. In Nigeria, they have been living above the law. They are now clearly a danger to the planet.”

Think of oil civilization in its late stages as a form of global terrorism.

Ellen Cantarow is a journalist whose work on Israel/Palestine has been published widely for 30 years including at [TomDispatch](#). She is now working on climate change

and big oil, which have much to do with the Middle East, Israel, and Palestine, as well as the rest of the planet. Recent phone conversations with her stepdaughter Kim — she and her husband have a [scuba-diving business](#) in the Florida Keys — led indirectly to this story. To catch Cantarow discussing what led her to this piece, listen to Timothy MacBain's latest TomCast audio interview by clicking [here](#), or to download it to your iPod, [here](#).

[**Note on sources:** Douglas Yates of the American University of Paris let me read part of the manuscript of his book, *The Scramble for African Oil* (forthcoming next year from Pluto Press), an invaluable overview of the political economy of big oil in the Niger Delta. An essential primer on the Delta is the remarkable photo-essay anthology, [Curse of the Black Gold: 50 Years of Oil in the Niger Delta](#), by Michael Watts and photographer Ed Kashi. Joe Berlinger's award-winning documentary [Crude](#) is a must-watch with its focus on the Ecuadorian lawsuit against Texaco, as well on the lives of the plaintiffs. Ermegildo Criollo's story comes from that film.]

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Bush's AIDS 'gift' has been seized by industry giants

Justice News

Posted by Administrator

Thursday, 22 January 2004 03:21

Guardian: Fighting Aids was supposed to show George Bush's softer side. "Seldom has history offered a greater opportunity to do so much for so many," he said in his State of the Union address in January. He has since reconsidered, deciding instead to offer a few more opportunities to the few. First he handed the top job of his global Aids initiative to a Big Pharma boss, then he broke his \$3bn promise of Aids relief. And now there are concerns that he may sabotage a plan to send cheap drugs to countries ravaged by Aids.

Now the US may block the provision of cheap generic drugs for Africa

Naomi Klein

Monday October 13, 2003

The Guardian

In August, the World Trade Organisation announced a new deal on drug patents that was supposed to give poor countries facing health problems the right to import generic drugs. But the deal seemed unworkable: the United States, at the behest of the pharmaceutical lobby, had successfully pushed for so many conditions that the agreement exploded from a straightforward 52 words to a sprawling 3,200-word maze. Countries wanting to import cheap generics must jump through multiple hoops to prove they are truly in need, unable to afford patented drugs and incapable of producing the medicines domestically. Meanwhile, there is no guarantee that there will be a sufficient supply of drugs for them to buy, since the deal also puts up hurdles for countries

wanting to export. “A ‘gift’ tightly bound in red tape,” declared a coalition of NGOs, including Médecins Sans Frontières and Third World Network.

Perhaps that’s why US trade representative Robert Zoellick praised the agreement. So did Harvey Bale, the premier spokesman for Big Pharma and director general of the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Associations. Bale, who had lobbied against the deal, told Reuters that the latest neutering resulted in “a fairly balanced text” that “adds clarity”.

But now something unexpected is happening. The Canadian government, under intense pressure from Aids activists and the United Nations, is trying to put the WTO agreement into practice. In September, the government announced plans to amend its patent law to allow the manufacture of generic versions of patented drugs exclusively for export to poor countries.

African Aids groups have hailed the plan as a breakthrough, especially if it spurs more countries to suspend patent protections to export generic drugs to countries in need. And the need is huge. Of the roughly 30 million Africans with HIV, 4.1 million need antiretroviral drugs, yet only 50,000-75,000 have access to them. The World Health Organisation has pledged to get 3 million people into treatment by 2005. That would require a minimum of 6 million pills a day, a demand that cannot be met by the current generic drug suppliers alone.

All of a sudden, Harvey Bale is not pleased. The agreement he praised when it was just a feel-good press release is now, according to Bale’s recent statements, a “dead end” and “window dressing”, resulting in a “negative black eye for Canada”.

Bale has pulled out all of Big Pharma’s favourite myths: Africa doesn’t need cheap drugs, it needs infrastructure (it needs both); brand name companies have already slashed their prices to compete with generics (discounted brand versions are still at least twice as expensive); weakening patents will hurt corporate profits and destroy the incentive for new research (Africa accounts for roughly 1% of the \$400bn pharmaceutical industry’s total sales).

Now that the pharmaceutical lobby has let its opposition be known, all eyes are on Washington. Will the United States try to block the Canadian initiative or water it down – and if so, how?

Canadian officials say they fear that the Bush administration’s weapon will be the North American Free Trade agreement. Nafta permits governments to suspend drug patents if the drugs are “predominantly” for domestic purposes, but makes no explicit allowances for exports to other countries.

For the past two years, US trade negotiators have haggled over the details of the WTO drug deal, eventually signing it. If the United States now uses Nafta to kill or weaken the plan just when promises are turning into medicines, it would be a staggering display of bad faith, even by Bush standards.

Any government considering joining the Free Trade Area of the Americas should be hearing deafening alarm bells right now. The patent protections in the draft FTAA agreement are even tougher than those in Nafta; if it is adopted, as the Bush administration hopes, the United States could try to block affordable drug exports anywhere in the Americas. Put simply, the administration is rigging bilateral and regional trade deals to undermine any attempt by poor countries to exercise their rights in the multilateral sphere.

Canada could well win a Nafta challenge, but there is no indication that Ottawa is up for the fight. Paul Martin, the man set to become Canada's next prime minister, has stated that Canada's "number one challenge is keeping that American border open". If it looks as if the Aids drug initiative would place that goal in jeopardy, the Canadian government's newfound courage could quickly evaporate.

At a press conference last week, Zoellick left the door open for a Nafta challenge, calling Canada's plan a "very fine step", but adding: "We, of course, would expect that Canada would maintain the rules we agreed on."

Bush's Aids strategy is far less ambiguous. His \$3bn a year Aids pledge has been whittled down to \$2bn, and possibly much less. And on October 3, the Senate approved Bush's choice to head up his global Aids initiative: Randall Tobias, former CEO of drug giant Eli Lilly, charter member of the industry group leading the charge against the Canadian plan.

Tobias's appointment is a bit like trusting the CEO of ExxonMobil to lead a government effort to promote solar power. The Bush administration insists that Tobias, who is holding on to his Eli Lilly stock, will not use the job to do Big Pharma's bidding and will support the use of generics if they are cheaper.

The first test will be whether Tobias joins his old friend Harvey Bale to declare war on an initiative that could save millions of lives.

Link at:

<<http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,3604,1061634,00.html>><http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,3604,1061634,00.html>

Guardian Unlimited ? Guardian Newspapers Limited 2003

Last Updated on Saturday, 10 April 2010 12:18

Take Back Our City: Welcome the 2010 Olympic Torch with Free Games, Free Food and Free Speech!

Thursday, 11 February 2010 07:54

Take Back Our City: Welcome the 2010 Olympic Torch with Free Games, Free Food and Free Speech!

– the Olympic Resistance Network- Media release

Last Updated on Saturday, 24 April 2010 04:33

USA Number 1? America by Numbers.

Written by Administrator

Monday, 11 April 2005 10:10

USA Number 1? America by Numbers.

Austin Chronicle: No concept lies more firmly embedded in our national character than the notion that

the USA is “No. 1,” “the greatest.” Our broadcast media are, in essence, continuous advertisements for the

brand name “America Is No. 1.” Any office seeker saying otherwise would be committing political suicide.

In fact, anyone saying otherwise will be labeled “un-American.” We’re an “empire,” ain’t we? Sure we are.

An empire without a manufacturing base. An empire that must borrow \$2 billion a day from its competitors

in order to function. Yet the delusion is ineradicable. We’re No. 1.
Last Updated on Saturday, 24 April 2010 04:36

High Cost of Anti-terror Efforts

Written by Administrator

Thursday, 01 October 2009 18:09

Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin speaks outside the precedents of the Supreme Court of Canada....

Oct 1, 2009

Terrorism and its associate, the war on terrorism has been used to justify torture and other ignoble acts. It

has led the world into two nasty, prolonged wars, the curtailment of civil, political and human rights and the labelling of communities in our diverse society with some measure of responsibility for the problems created far from our shores.

Last Updated on Sunday, 25 April 2010 22:56

What we must learn from India: People Power, Land Reform and

the Origins of Tree Hugging

Written by Administrator

Tuesday, 30 October 2007 08:51

What we must learn from India: People Power, Land Reform and the Origins of Tree Hugging

PEJ News – chycho – A true democracy can only be identified when the citizens of a Nation join together

to affect the laws under which they are governed. India, [the most populous democracy in the world](#), has in

its brief history repeatedly shown us how the poorest of the poor can join together and become a force to be

reckoned with.

In a country with a population of 1.1 billion, 25,000 people marching together have been able to force the

government to promise to pass legislation to protect farmers. How is it then that [tens of thousands of people](#)

[marching in the United States](#), with a population of only [303 million](#), have failed to stop their government

from funding a [war of aggression](#)? Which country would an outside observer recognize as a true democracy?

[chycho](#)

www.chycho.com

Last Updated on Sunday, 25 April 2010 23:08

Things To Do Before Lunch

Written by Administrator

Saturday, 23 August 2008 18:11

Things To Do Before Lunch

PEJ News – Here are 42 things that I summarized from a hypothetical Presidential speech by *Dr. Robert M. Bowman, Lt. Col., USAF, ret.* I think if each of us just picks one of these to work on as a personal project we could finish off this list in short order.

www.PEJ.org

http://www.thepatriots.us/pg_02_speech.html

Last Updated on Thursday, 29 April 2010 22:57

Writers Wanted Blogs

Posted by Administrator

Thursday, 08 July 2010 12:40

PEJNews is looking for progressive minded volunteer writers (ie No Rush Limbaugh types please).

PEJNews' vision is to raise awareness of the world and local issues, in particular issues related to environment, progressive politics, local and international news of the day. We have 700,000 + visitors per month.

If you are inspired to make a difference as a writer for Peace Earth & Justice News please contact me Jim Wight ecocentral@gmail.com

Volunteer Writers Wanted

Blogs

Posted by Administrator

Thursday, 08 July 2010 12:44

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If you are inspired to make a difference as a writer for Peace Earth & Justice News please contact me Jim Wight ecocentral@gmail.com

Last Updated on Monday, 15 November 2010 18:27

Donations for Peace, Earth and Justice News

Written by Administrator

Saturday, 24 July 2010 00:00

Please mail donations by check to:

Peace, Earth and Justice News,

C/O Daniel L. Rubin,

2474 Bowker Ave.,

Victoria, BC V8R 2G1

Checks should be made out to "Prometheus Institute" with the notation "for PEJNews"

Thank you for your help.

Peace, Earth and Justice News communications contact

Jim Wight – Webmaster – ecocentral@gmail.com

Last Updated on Tuesday, 16 November 2010 02:25

Israeli Deputy Defense Minister Defends Holocaust

Saturday, 01 March 2008 23:04

Israeli Deputy Defense Minister Defends Holocaust

IMEMC News – Ghassan Bannoura – March 01, 2008 – On Friday Matan Vilnai, Israeli deputy Defense Minister said Palestinian president deeply condemned the Israeli attacks and said it's threatening the peace efforts.

Abbas made his comments during a meeting for the Palestinian Liberation Organization's executive committee in the central West bank city of Ramallah today.

As the Israeli army continued its military offensive targeting Jabalyia refugee camp, in the northern part of the Gaza Strip, Palestinian medical sources reported that the death toll in the Gaza Strip stood at 33 by Saturday midday.

According to the Gaza Ministry of Health the death toll in Gaza due to Israeli attacks since last Sunday now stands at 77, including 17 children.

Last Updated on Saturday, 11 December 2010 23:18

2011

EyeBuyDirect

Written by Administrator
Monday, 03 January 2011 08:54

Before you buy eyeglasses online from EyeBuyDirect.com you may want to read this review. I purchased progressive anti-scratch, anti-glare glasses in titanium frames. The offer was for "Buy one and get one free". I only got the one pair of glasses and no extra frame. The frame proved to be very weak and easily broke. They wanted \$95.37 more to basically replace the frame although they had a tricky way of doing it. They wanted me to send the broken frames and lens(the lens was fine) and they would send me a complete new pair. I wasn't about to pay \$95.37 for what basically amounted to a new frame which they were selling on their site for \$49.95

I am finally offered a 10% discount coupon for any new purchase as their only other offer. They then followed up with a \$100 voucher offer for \$50.00 I bought the voucher and figured that I could get two frames for the price of one. I could use one frame for my old lenses and the other frame would have a standard set of free reading lenses, plus I would have an extra set of reading lenses that would come in the second frame.

Well not so fast. Even though I have a \$100 dollar voucher, a coupon worth 10% and \$2.50 ;oyalty points it seems they still want me to pay them more money. It seems now that they won't honor their coupon and voucher in the same order. So here we have a second fraud. Not honoring their own coupon or voucher that I paid for. There was no stipulation that only one could be used in an order when I got them. The first fraud was that they only sent one of the 2 pair of glasses originally ordered.

To make things impossible they have removed the frames from their site so that it has become impossible for me to complete the order even if I only used one of the coupon or voucher. I suppose they think I will buy a whole new set from them. Well I may have been foolish to think I could get a deal by buying online but that doesn;t mean you should follow.

UPDATE:

The story continues. Someone writes and says they still have the correct frames in stock so I use the voucher and pay the shipping for 2 pair or reading glasses in the correct frames. So they sent me only one frame and it is the wrong frame. Not slightly the wrong frame but completely the wrong frame. A mistake nobody could make by accident. I could have gotten the 3.00 reading glasses and of better quality at the corner dollar store for \$3.00.

So I have written them back asking them to make it right..... to be continued

Last Updated on Friday, 28 January 2011 19:55

2012

The World Is Over-Armed And Peace Is Under-Funded – OpEd

[Peace News](#) Friday, 31 August 2012 22:14

By Ban Ki-moon

Last month, competing interests prevented agreement on a much-needed treaty that would have reduced the appalling human cost of the poorly regulated international arms trade. Meanwhile, nuclear disarmament efforts remain stalled, despite strong and growing global popular sentiment in support of this cause. The failure of these negotiations and this month's anniversaries of the atomic bombings at Hiroshima and Nagasaki provide a good opportunity to explore what has gone wrong, why disarmament and arms control have proven so difficult to achieve, and how the world community can get back on track towards these vitally important goals.

Many defence establishments now recognize that security means far more than protecting borders. Grave security concerns can arise as a result of demographic trends, chronic poverty, economic inequality, environmental degradation, pandemic diseases, organized crime, repressive governance and other developments no state can control alone. Arms can't address such concerns.

Yet there has been a troubling lag between recognizing these new security challenges, and launching new policies to address them. National budget priorities still tend to reflect the old paradigms. Massive military spending and new investments in modernizing nuclear weapons have left the world over-armed — and peace under-funded.

Last year, global military spending reportedly exceeded \$1.7 trillion – more than \$4.6 billion a day, which alone is almost twice the UN's budget for an entire year. This largesse includes billions more for modernizing nuclear arsenals decades into the future.

This level of military spending is hard to explain in a post-Cold War world and amidst a global financial crisis. Economists would call this an “opportunity cost”. I call it human opportunities lost. Nuclear weapons budgets are especially ripe for deep cuts. Such weapons are useless against today's threats to international peace and security. Their very existence is de-stabilizing: the more they are touted as indispensable, the greater is the incentive for their proliferation. Additional risks arise from accidents and

the health and environmental effects of maintaining and developing such weapons. The time has come to re-affirm commitments to nuclear disarmament, and to ensure that this common end is reflected in national budgets, plans and institutions. Four years ago, I outlined a five-point disarmament proposal highlighting the need for a nuclear weapon convention or a framework of instruments to achieve this goal. Yet the disarmament stalemate continues. The solution clearly lies in greater efforts by States to harmonize their actions to achieve common ends. Here are some specific actions that all States and civil society should pursue to break this impasse. Support efforts by the Russian Federation and the United States to negotiate deep, verified cuts in their nuclear arsenals, both deployed and un-deployed. Obtain commitments by others possessing such weapons to join the disarmament process. Establish a moratorium on developing or producing nuclear weapons or new delivery systems. Negotiate a multilateral treaty outlawing fissile materials that can be used in nuclear weapons. End nuclear explosions and bring into force the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Stop deploying nuclear weapons on foreign soil, and retire such weapons. Ensure that nuclear-weapon states report to a public UN repository on nuclear disarmament, including details on arsenal size, fissile material, delivery systems, and progress in achieving disarmament goals. Establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Secure universal membership in treaties outlawing chemical and biological weapons. Pursue parallel efforts on conventional arms control, including an arms trade treaty, strengthened controls over the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, universal membership in the Mine Ban, Cluster Munitions, and Inhumane Weapons Conventions, and expanded participation in the UN Report on Military Expenditures and the UN Register of Conventional Arms. Undertake diplomatic and military initiatives to maintain international peace and security in a world without nuclear weapons, including new efforts to resolve regional disputes. And perhaps above all, we must address basic human needs and achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Chronic poverty erodes security. Let us dramatically cut spending on nuclear weapons, and invest instead in social and economic development, which serves the interests of all by expanding markets, reducing motivations for armed conflicts, and in giving citizens a stake in their common futures. Like nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, such goals are essential for ensuring human security and a peaceful world for future generations. No development, no peace. No disarmament, no security. Yet when both advance, the world advances, with increased security and prosperity for all. These are common ends that deserve the support of all nations.

Ban Ki-moon is the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Last Updated on Friday, 31 August 2012 22:29

In Bike-Friendly Copenhagen, Highways For Cyclists

[Earth News](#) Saturday, 01 September 2012 22:18

by ELEANOR BEARDSLEY

Every day, one-third of the people of Copenhagen ride their bikes to work or school. Collectively, they cycle more than 750,000 miles daily, enough to make it to the moon and back. And city officials want even more people to commute, and over longer distances.

So a network of 26 new bike routes, dubbed “the cycling superhighway,” is being built to link the surrounding suburbs to Copenhagen.

Lars Gaardhoj, an official with the Copenhagen capital region, says the routes will be straight and direct.

“It will be very fast for people who use their bike,” he says. “This is new because traditionally cycle paths have been placed where there is space for them and the cars didn’t run. So now the bike is going to challenge the car.”

The first highway, to the busy suburb of Albertslund some 10 miles outside the city, was completed in April.

To test it, I got a rental bike and went out for a ride.

No Place For Slowpokes

One of the first things you learn about these bike lanes is that you have to move in fast. This is not leisurely biking — this is serious stuff in Copenhagen.

It’s a parallel world of transportation: You’ve got the cars on the roads and the people on their bikes. There are thousands and thousands of people on their bikes here in this city.

As commuters pour into Copenhagen on the new highway, I stop biker Cona Endelgo at a red light. Endelgo says he used to drive his car to work, but biking is better.

“It gives you more exercise and motion, and it’s more free, and it’s quicker. When I pass the harbor, I wave to the cars,” he says.

Each mile of bike highway will cost about \$1 million. The project is to be financed by the city of Copenhagen and 21 local governments. And in a country where both right- and left-leaning politicians regularly ride bikes to work, it has bilateral support.

Addressing The Needs Of Bikers

Several innovations are being tested, like “green wave” technology, which times traffic lights to suit bikers. If you maintain a certain pace, you can ride all the way through into the city without stopping. There are also footrests with bars to lean on at traffic lights, and a bike pump every mile in case you have a flat.

Outside the city, the pace is slower and people talk to each other as they ride. Jacob Messen, 33, is on his way to a water park with his kids. He says support for the project runs deep.

“Bicycles are a very essential element in most people’s lives in Denmark,” he says.

“We have them as small infants and all the way up through the ages.”

He’s not kidding. Another rider, 83-year-old Soulva Jensen, is using the highway to visit her daughter in a neighboring town.

“The trains are too much trouble at the moment, so I thought it was easier to take the bike,” she says.

Once the highway network is completed, an estimated 15,000 additional people will switch from driving to biking. And that, say officials, will have a direct impact on the environment, public health and finances. The bike highway alone is expected to save Copenhagen’s health care system some \$60 million a year.

Last Updated on Saturday, 01 September 2012 22:40

For Immediate Release

Wednesday, September 12 (Vancouver) — Over 80 influential leaders from the business, First Nations, environmental, labour, academic, medical and artistic communities across Canada today announced an upcoming mass sit-in in front of the provincial legislature in Victoria, British Columbia on October 22. The sit-in will oppose tar sands pipelines and tankers and the threats they would pose to the west coast. to sign the pledge www.defendourcoast.ca

“There are moments in history when it’s clear that our elected leaders are failing us and it is necessary to take a stand,” said prominent author and environmentalist Tzeporah Berman. “Today we are stating our intention to defend our coast and calling on others to join us. The risk of oil spills and irreversible harm to our tourism and fishing industries from these pipelines and tankers is just too great.”

Over eighty community, union, business and First Nation leaders have endorsed the October 22 sit-in, including Stephen Lewis, David Suzuki, Maude Barlow, Naomi Klein, Tom Goldtooth, David Coles, Vandana Shiva, Bill McKibben, John O’Connor, and Tony Clarke. You can view the full list at defendourcoast.ca.

The October sit-in builds on the success of protests against tar sands expansion and pipelines that have taken place in the U.S. and Canada in recent months. The August 2011 sit-ins in Washington D.C. that helped delay approval of the Keystone XL pipeline and the September 26, 2011 sit-in in Ottawa that helped put Canadian tar sands pipeline proposals in the national spotlight.

“We’re meeting in Victoria to show that you can’t gut Canada’s environmental legislation and try to put a price tag on the B.C. coast without a public response,” said Maude Barlow, Chair person for the Council of Canadians. “Canada’s iconic coast is far too valuable to risk on tar sands pipelines and tankers and we pledge to defend it.”

“This October, we pledge to defend our coast and the mountains, rivers, forests, wildlife and First Nations communities of B.C. against tar sands pipelines and tankers,” said Susan Spratt, Western Regional Director of the CAW. “We want long-term green jobs that will take us beyond fossil fuels, not short-term high risk pipelines.”

Organizers expect people from across Canada to join British Columbians in calling on

elected officials to stand up for Canada's west coast and the rights of First Nation peoples.

"We hope people from all walks of life and from across the country join us in Victoria and defend the natural beauty and cultural richness of the B.C. coastline," said *Chief Jackie Thomas*, Saik'uz First Nation. "We will be there to show the widespread opposition to tar sands pipelines and tanker proposals and to show the strength of the support for First Nations people's rights to land and title and the internationally protected right to free, prior and informed consent on any development impacting our traditional territories."

People can sign up online at www.defendourcoast.ca to participate and become a coastal defender.

– 30 –

For more information, please contact:

Peter McHugh, Media and Public Relations Officer, Greenpeace Canada, 778-228-5404

DND to pay \$100 million to private firm to replace laid-off workers

Wednesday, 12 September 2012 16:23

[In U.S. Politics, Economic Class Speaks Loudest](#) Thursday, 13 September 2012 06:11

By [Carey L. Biron](#) [Reprint](#) | [Print](#) | [Send by email](#)

Between 2010 to 2011, average household income dropped by 1.7 percent for the middle fifth of the population, but rose by 5.1 percent for the top five percent richest U.S. citizens. Credit: The Great 8/cc by 2.0

WASHINGTON, Sep 13 2012 (IPS) – New research drawn from the past half-century offers one of the clearest pictures yet of the correlation between political involvement and socioeconomics in the United States, while underscoring the significant implications of recent legal and legislative changes for marginalised groups.

"From decades of data, we can say that socioeconomic status has an overwhelming impact on how politically active people are in the U.S.," Sidney Verba, a research professor at Harvard University, said while introducing [new research](#) here in Washington on Wednesday.

"Every place we looked for what was driving inequality, we found the very central role of socioeconomic status. Even if you look at different groups that differ in their average political activity – minority groups, etc – you find that, within each group, it's stratified by socioeconomic status."

While those with higher socioeconomic status have more time to engage in political campaigns and related activities, for instance, Henry E. Brady, a political-science

professor at the University of California, Berkeley, and one of Verba's co-researchers, points to the "stunning, nearly exponential rise in political donations" by those with the highest incomes.

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Even in 1990, Brady says, the top 20 percent of the population made 70 percent of all political contributions, figures that have almost certainly shot up significantly in the past few years in the aftermath of the Supreme Court's Citizens United case, which allowed for unlimited private donations to political campaigns.

"If the folks at the bottom of the socioeconomic spectrum have different political priorities from those at the top, and if money in politics really has a big impact on politics, then politics is defined by those at the top and their concerns and viewpoints," Brady says.

"That could be one reason why we don't get (economic) redistribution in America. If in fact the parties are not appealing to those at the bottom but rather to those at the top, there's no incentive whatsoever for redistributing income. In fact, there might be an incentive to cut the taxes of better-off people."

Indeed, even as record amounts of money go into the current U.S. presidential campaign, [new statistics](#) on poverty from the U.S. Census, also released on Wednesday, show an almost unchanged picture from the anaemic findings of the past several years of economic recession.

Just from 2010 to 2011, for instance, average household income dropped by 1.7 percent for the middle fifth of the population – but rose by 5.1 percent for the top five percent richest U.S. citizens.

"These disappointing trends are on top of the worst business cycles on record," Heidi Gould, with the Economic Policy Institute here in Washington, told reporters on Wednesday. "Having already experienced more than a 'lost decade', we're now likely on our way to another lost decade."

Five percent for public good

In the United States, trends on political inequality might be best indicated by lobbyist organisations, which push politicians to craft legislation in ways favourable to certain special interests.

Verba, Brady and Kay Lehman Schlozman, a professor of political science at Boston College, looked at records for some 25,000 lobbyist organisations registered in Washington over the past quarter-century.

As of 2001, Schlozman said on Wednesday, 12,000 of these groups were active, but just five percent were focused on any issue within a broad spectrum of "public good". And just one percent were lobbying on behalf of less-advantaged groups.

Instead, 53 percent of those 12,000 were focused exclusively on business, which in turn account for 72 percent of all lobbying money.

Meanwhile, Schlozman says that in 2001 there were no lobbying organisations at all representing, for instance, underprivileged children, those awaiting trial on felony charges, or those receiving food assistance, to name just a few such groups.

“Further, no one who does unskilled work and who is not in a labour union – and that’s a substantial part of the labour force – has an organisation representing him or her in Washington,” she notes.

“And let me remind you, if you’re not at the table, you’re on the menu.”

In a democracy, of course, any policy is going to have winners and losers, given the structure of a democratic decision-making process. But Verba says that a democracy’s political ideal does not need to be equal output.

“Rather it needs to be equal consideration of the needs and preferences of the public, and there are so many needs and preferences that don’t even get to the table, that are silenced if political voice is silent,” he says.

No answers

Recent moves by the U.S. Supreme Court and several state legislatures have, in the eyes of many, significantly exacerbated this situation of political inequality in the United States. In addition to the court’s Citizens United decision in January 2010, several states have recently passed restrictive voter-identification laws that opponents suggest will have a disproportionate negative impact on several marginalised groups. Yet Verba’s analysis points to the longevity of this trend, suggesting that something deeper is at work.

“The main cause of this persistence is the embeddedness of political inequality in the major institutions of American life,” he says, listing family values handed down to children, the country’s school system, even the processes of marriage and getting a job.

“So this inequality is not something that is put on us by an elite. Rather, it’s something that grows out of the very country and nature of the institutions in which we live.

That’s one of the reasons why it is very difficult to change.”

None of the three researchers express any optimism about how substantive change to the country’s political inequality could be brought about. In fact, the new analysis suggests that two possibilities that are often discussed in activist circles – the potentially transformative power of the Internet and of social movements – have actually been found to increase inequality.

“If anything, online activity is more highly stratified than offline activity,” Brady says.

“And once we have everybody on the Internet, we’re not going to have anything that even looks like equality – we’ll continue to have these same inequalities we’ve seen again and again.”

Likewise, says Schlozman, the new research found that political activity that occurs in response to the types of everyday suggestions that constitute social movements

“actually produces political voice that is even more tilted in the direction of the affluent and well-educated” than political activity taken on one’s own.

“It’s true that everyone in America has one vote, but money can be expanded incredibly – and under current rules, it is being expanded tremendously,” Verba says. “So, if anything, the ability to change things is going to be low in the future – and maybe is going down.”

1747 readings

[Peaceful act of civil disobedience planned for](#)

October to defend Canada's west coast from tar sands pipelines and tankers

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow Wednesday, 12 September 2012 19:31

Parti Québécois says it will keep promise to close Gentilly-2 nuclear power plant

[Justice News](#)

Thursday, 13 September 2012 07:18

Monique Beaudoin Montreal Gazette September 12, 2012

Nearly 30 years after it went into operation, it appears the days are numbered for Quebec's only operating nuclear power plant.

A spokesperson for the Parti Québécois said the newly-elected government will go ahead with a plan to close Gentilly-2 in Bécancour. The party has wanted to do it since December 2009, Éric Gamache said.

"There is no indication that we will not respect that position," Gamache told The Gazette Tuesday.

He did not say how the PQ would do it, but noted it does not require a vote in the National Assembly, where the PQ is in a minority position. Gamache made the statement just hours before the Montreal premiere of a new documentary about Gentilly-2, which raises questions about the safety of people living near the nuclear power plant.

The previous Liberal government announced in 2008, when Gentilly-2 was at the end of its natural life, that it would refurbish the plant at a cost of \$2 billion, extending its life to 2040. Former premier Jean Charest said it would protect 800 jobs in the region. Christian Simard of Nature-Québec welcomed the news that Gentilly-2 will close.

"Hearing it from Madame Marois would be better, but we are confident that she will declare the end of Gentilly-2 and ask Hydro-Québec to not go ahead with the refurbishing of the nuclear power plant," said Simard, whose group is part of a coalition of environmental groups, scientists, doctors and artists that has been lobbying for the closing of Gentilly-2. "Sooner would be better to clarify the situation for the people of Bécancour and Trois-Rivières."

According to Hydro-Québec, Gentilly-2, which opened in 1983, produces two per cent of Quebec's electricity.

When the Liberal government announced it planned to refurbish Gentilly-2 in 2008, Montreal filmmakers Guylaine Maroist and Éric Ruel started to work on Gentilly or Not To Be. They thought, Ruel said, that nuclear energy in Quebec would end when Gentilly-2 came to the end of its natural life.

"Like a lot of Quebecers, we were surprised to hear that Charest government wanted to do the refurbishment," Ruel said.

In the documentary, which is to air on TéléQuébec Sept. 17, federal NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair, Quebec's former provincial environment minister, says the only

possible explanation for the refurbishment was to turn Gentilly-2 into a facility that would accept nuclear waste from across Canada.

Mulcair said the provincial government, Hydro-Québec, engineering companies and the nuclear industry used “unlimited resources” to ensure there would be no public debate about nuclear power in the province.

Hydro-Québec did not respond to a Gazette request for an interview Tuesday.

The documentary cites a 2008 study commissioned by the German government that found higher-than-normal cancer rates among children living near nuclear power plants. Within five kilometres of a nuclear power plant, there was a 220-per-cent increase in leukemia cases among children, the study found.

“If they had found a 20-per-cent increase, that would have been worrying. A 40-per-cent increase would have been really worrying,” British radiation biologist Dr. Ian Fairlie, an independent consultant on radiation in the environment, says in the film. “A 220-per-cent increase was almost unbelievable.”

But other studies have not found higher leukemia rates near nuclear power plants, and the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission says the reason for the increased leukemia rate among children around German nuclear power plants is “unclear”.

In the documentary, Dr. Gilles-W. Grenier, director of public health for the Mauricie and centre of Quebec, said there is no risk to people living near Gentilly-2.

“It’s not responsible to extrapolate and say that living near a nuclear power plant like Gentilly in Quebec is dangerous,” he said. “We do not have the scientific data to support that assertion.”

Near Gentilly-2, between 2000 and 2004, the filmmakers say the public-health department reported a 27-per-cent increase in the number of leukemia cases in children living within 20 kilometres of Gentilly-2. Using the Quebec average, 29 cases should have been reported during that period; in fact, there were 40.

Three unrelated children, all living within 10 kilometres of Gentilly-2, were born without anal orifices during that period, according to public-health department documents. On a single street in Bécancour during that period, 11 pregnant women had miscarriages, including several where the fetus had congenital deformities.

Dr. Éric Notebeart, a professor in medicine at the Université de Montréal and a board member of Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, said Tuesday that children and young families should not live close to Gentilly-2.

“I wouldn’t have a young family within 10 kilometres of Gentilly-2, that’s for sure,” Notebeart said.

Gordon Edwards, a mathematician and president of the Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility, said after it is closed, Gentilly-2 could be transformed into a centre of expertise on dismantling nuclear power plants. Nearly 100 nuclear power plants in the U.S. will soon come to the end of their natural life, creating a “great” opportunity for Trois-Rivières, he said.

“We don’t believe this is a blow to the employment opportunities in Trois-Rivières at all,” Edwards said.

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Kudankulam anti-nuclear protesters form human chain off nearby Indinthakarai coast

[Peace News](#) Thursday, 13 September 2012 15:55

Kudankulam anti-nuclear protesters form human chain off nearby Indinthakarai coast

KUDANKULAM: Stepping up their protest against the atomic power plant here, anti-nuclear activists today stood in sea waters forming a human chain off nearby Indinthakarai coast.

Taking a leaf from ‘Jal Satyagraha’ activists in Madhya Pradesh, the activists of People’s Movement Against Nuclear Energy (PMANE) stood in the waters close to the shores in a new turn to their year-long protests.

Police, whose presence has been strengthened in and around the sea shores with additional forces, have beefed up security along the coast to prevent any untoward incident during the day-long protest.

The agitators have put forward four demands – stoppage of the process of fuel loading

in Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project, drop the plan to arrest anti-nuclear movement leaders, adequate compensation for those who suffered losses and release of those already taken into custody.

The new form of protest came even the whereabouts of PMANE leader S P Udayakumar remained unknown after he did somersault on his offer to surrender before police after the protest turned violent that led to police firing claiming the life of one fisherman in Tuticorin district on Monday.

The current bout of intensified protests, including the failed bid to lay siege to the plant, was launched by PMANE to prevent loading of fuel for which regulatory authorities gave the approval recently.

On September 10, the Madhya Pradesh government had agreed to the main demands of protesters who undertook a 'Jal Satyagraha' in Khandwa district, saying they would be given land as compensation and height of Omkareshwar Dam would be reduced.

The entire Kudankulam town had almost been sealed by police since yesterday with the personnel taking positions at strategic places, especially around the KNPP where the preparations for loading of enriched uranium are underway.

Police said they conducted a house-to-house search for PMANE activists, wanted in connection with Monday's incidents, in the Tsunami village near here last night.

[Bear hunting ban declared by 10 B.C. First Nations](#)

[Earth News](#) Thursday, 13 September 2012 15:40

But provincial government says only it has the authority to issue such a ban

The Canadian Press Posted: Sep 13, 2012 7:39 AM PT *The provincial government says the hunting industry generates about \$350 million in B.C. (CBC)*

Bear caught in downtown Vancouver set free

After years of urging the government to ban so-called trophy hunting for bears in their territory, 10 First Nations on B.C.'s north and central coasts have declared their own moratorium, but it is not clear if they will be able to enforce it.

Coalition spokesman William Housty admits that enforcing the ban won't be easy because the provincial government is showing no indication that it was willing to go along with a ban

"That's an issue that we're facing — how we're going to be able to deal with that without the province supporting us," said Housty of the Heiltsuk First Nation.

Housty says the First Nations don't have the authority to impose the ban, but they do want to stop hunters and poachers who leave bear carcasses lying around and have ignored signs urging them to stop the practice.

"That's really a problem. We can't walk up to these hunters and say, 'You can't hunt here.' We can't write a ticket."

Housty said hunting threatens the First Nations' lucrative ecotourism opportunities, but the province has ignored such concerns.

"Because we have not ceded any of this land to anybody, we feel that we have a voice and should have a voice in how these lands are managed and this includes the bear hunt."

Current hunt 'sustainable,' minister says

B.C. Minister of Forests Steve Thomson says the province sets hunting limits and First Nations need to respect that.

"Given estimates for the fall hunt, there were 32 authorizations given out to hunters. Based on the success rates over the past five years, we expect these authorizations to result in one or two bears harvested this fall," Thomson said.

Thomson said he was disappointed by the announcement, saying the government has always been open to talks with First Nations.

Thomson, also responsible for lands and natural resource operations, said the hunting industry contributes about \$350 million to the province annually and is an important part of the economy and the B.C.'s heritage.

More than 58 per cent of the traditional territory of the coastal First Nations is closed to grizzly bear hunting he added, noting the government has also put in place eco-system based management.

"We believe that the current hunt is sustainable and is managed based on sound science."

When asked if the provincial government sees a difference between trophy hunting and hunting for food purposes, Thomson said, "That's part of what we need to engage First Nations on."

Housty said coastal First Nations are working on marine- and land-use plans to manage resources in their territory and are also considering the salmon run and how it affects birds, bears and the evolving ecosystem.

"It goes against our cultural beliefs and values of management of our territories and bears in particular, and because we have an increasing presence on our land with research projects, with our people reconnecting to the land, it doesn't make sense to have hunters in the same area."

With files from the CBC's Marissa Harvey

TILMA, NAFTA, SPP, PNWER CETA TTP etc. **Trade agreements Violate International Norms** **and should be declared null and void**

[Justice News](#)

Thursday, 13 September 2012 08:43

by Joan Russow Global Compliance research project
september 13, 2012

These trade agreements or "Public Private Partnerships among Nations" have led and will increasingly lead to violations of international peremptory norms. Anti-trade activists must finally use international law related to human rights including civil and political rights, social, cultural and economic rights, labour rights, rights of indigenous peoples, rights of migrant workers, children's rights, rights to a safe environment.. .etc to counteract these trade agreements. Citizens must wonder if governments even read the international instruments that they sign and ratify, or if they do, if they have any intention of discharging obligations and of acting on commitments, and citizens must

also wonder why these instruments are not being used to counter trade agreements

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION CONVENTIONS DISREGARDED

TTP along with other trade agreements have led and will continue to lead to an increased disregard for international peremptory norms related to the numerous International Labour Organizations Conventions most of which have not been ratified by Canada, and the United States. If one examines the ILO Conventions, and the important provisions that have been agreed to, it is difficult to understand the reason for there not being a full scale demand from the Labour movement in Canada and the United States for the Canadian and US governments to sign and ratify these agreements, and to enact the necessary legislation to ensure compliance.

For years the Labour movement nationally and internationally has advocated the principle of fair and just transition. This principle advances the undertaking that when an industry contributes to harm to human health and to the environment, labour will support the sunsetting of the industry if society institutes a fair and just transition for workers and communities affected by this transition.

DISCRIMINATION ON THE GROUNDS OF POLITICAL AND OTHER OPINION, AND RACIAL PROFILING

Both Canada and the US have signed and ratified the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights; among the listed grounds for which there shall not be discrimination is on the ground of race, and political and other opinion.

The SPP agreement, has various provisions which are leading to the violation of civil and political rights; it is possible that TILMA (the agreement among BC, Alberta) , and the potential extended PNWER (Pacific North West Economic Region. PNWER would also lead to the violation of civil and political rights. PNWER is described in a press release as “a bi-national public/private partnership that has been working with Washington State, British Columbia”. This PPP is proposed to be extended to Alberta and Saskatchewan and Alaska.

It was announced in a PNWER press release on March 23, 2008 [on the third anniversary of the signing of the Waco Declaration on the Security and Prosperity Partnership Agreement.] that there would be new border requirements:

“In advance of implementing the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) next year, the Department of Homeland Security and the State of Washington have agreed to launch a driver’s license pilot project that would let travelers use an enhanced driver’s license to cross the border. It will be the nation’s first pilot project to test an alternative to requiring all US citizens to show a passport when they cross the border. “

The SPP Agreement has led to the violation of civil and political rights, by placing citizens' names on no-fly lists, or by stopping citizen advocates at the border. This new provision is hailed by the public/private/partnership (PNWER) will undoubtedly follow the lead of the SPP in violation of civil and political rights of citizens.

INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL NORMS VIOLATED THROUGH INCREASED DEREGULATION

The above corporate-led trade/PPP agreements are leading increasingly to deregulation through corporate voluntary compliance, and through disregard for years of international environmental norms. Institutional government memory is short: governments at all levels are renegeing on their commitments to ensure that corporations including transnational corporations comply with national codes¹ and international law, including international environmental law (Habitat II, 1996). In addition, every state made a commitment to reduce the ecological footprint; these trade agreements do and will increase the ecological footprint.

Under these trade/PPP agreements, particularly under the SPP agreement, there is an expressed demand for “a reliable source of energy”². Essentially this is a provision that has increasingly brought about demands to exploit sites such as the Canadian oil sands irrespective of the environmental and health impacts, and the violation of international norms agreed to under the Framework Convention on Climate Change, and under the Convention on Biological diversity.

TRANSBOUNDARY PRINCIPLE AND EXTRATERRITORIALISM BYPASSED

These Trade agreements have and will increasing result in the violation of the transboundary Principle. The violations will undoubtedly impact on the “human right to water.

The transboundary principle initially arose from a successful US case against Cominco, and then became an international peremptory norm

In the 1920s the United States successfully sued Cominco for polluting the Columbia River in the United States. A precedent was set that Cominco was held legally responsible for polluting the Columbia River on the US side, and was required to compensate Washington State.

As a result of that case an international principle was established that countries could be held responsible for the activities, on their territory, that have serious environmental consequences on the environment of an adjacent Country. A version of this principle was included in the Convention on the Law of the Sea, and in the Rio Declaration which was adopted by all member states of the United Nations at the 1992 UN Convention on Environment and Development.

“Principle 2: States have, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the

principles of international law, the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental and developmental policies, and the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other States or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction. Principle 14 States should effectively cooperate to discourage or prevent the relocation and transfer to other States of any activities and substances that cause severe environmental degradation or are found to be harmful to human health.” For years, states and their chartered corporations have used the guise of “extraterritoriality” to justify engaging in practices, forbidden in their own states, in other states. With hand on heart, the states and corporation claim what right to we have to impose out higher standards on other states.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF NAFTA

In October 1992, the Mulroney Conservative government, carried out an environmental review of NAFTA, and in that review, declared that all international environmental agreements ratified by Canada would take precedence over NAFTA. Yet, Canada has never been willing to invoke provisions in the Biodiversity Convention or the Framework Convention on Climate Change, to which Canada is a signatory, to address egregious actions of corporations suing the Federal government under NAFTA.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROVISIONS IN NAFTA IGNORED.

TILMA, and SPP Agreement will even perpetuate, as NAFTA has done, the violation of perhaps the only valid environmental provision in NAFTA.

Article 1114: Environmental Measures

1. Nothing in this Chapter shall be construed to prevent a Party from adopting, maintaining or enforcing any measure otherwise consistent with this Chapter that it considers appropriate to ensure that investment activity in its territory is undertaken in a manner sensitive to environmental concerns.

The Parties recognize that it is inappropriate to encourage investment by relaxing domestic health, safety or environmental measures. Accordingly, a Party should not waive or otherwise derogate from, or offer to waive or otherwise derogate from, such measures as an encouragement for the establishment, acquisition, expansion or retention in its territory of an investment of an investor. If a Party considers that another Party has offered such an encouragement, it may request consultations with the other Party and the two Parties shall consult with a view to avoiding any such encouragement.

CANADA AND THE US HAVE FAILED TO PROTECT MIGRANT WORKERS, AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

MIGRANT WORKERS

The trade agreements have led and will increasingly lead to the violation of the rights

of migrant workers. The following rights have been proclaimed in the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Migrant workers and their families is:

Article 25 1. Migrant workers shall enjoy treatment not less favourable than that, which applies to nationals of the State of employment in respect of remuneration and:

(a) Other conditions of work, that is to say, overtime, hours of work, weekly rest, holidays with pay, safety, health, termination of the employment relationship and any other conditions of work, which, according to national law and practice, are covered by this term;

(b) Other terms of employment, that is to say, minimum age of employment, restriction on home work and any other matters which, according to national law and practice, are considered a term of employment.

2. It shall not be lawful to derogate in private contracts of employment from the principle of equality of treatment referred to in paragraph 1 of the present article.

3. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that migrant workers are not deprived of any rights derived from this principle by reason of any irregularity in their stay or employment. In particular, employers shall not be relieved of any legal or contractual obligations, nor shall their obligations be limited in any manner by reason of any such irregularity.

Article 26 1. States Parties recognize the right of migrant workers and members of their families:

(a) To take part in meetings and activities of trade unions and of any other associations established in accordance with law, with a view to protecting their economic, social, cultural and other interests, subject only to the rules of the organization concerned;

(b) To join freely any trade union and any such association as aforesaid, subject only to the rules of the organization concerned;

(c) To seek the aid and assistance of any trade union and of any such association as aforesaid.

2. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of these rights other than those that are prescribed by law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public order (ordre public) or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.â€”

Both Canada and the US have failed to ratify the Convention for the Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers and their families.

RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Also the trade agreements have lead and will increasingly lead to the abandonment of the rights of indigenous peoples. In 1992 every member state of the United Nations made the commitment to do the following:

the lands of indigenous people peoples and their communities should shall be protected

from activities that are environmentally unsound or that the indigenous people concerned consider to be socially and culturally inappropriate (26.3. ii., Agenda 21) On September 13, 2007, Both Canada and US were among the four UN member states that refused to adopt the Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

THESE AGREEMENTS SHOULD BE DECLARED NULL AND VOID AND THE CHARTERS OF CORPORATIONS INCLUDING TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATIONS MUST BE REVOKED.

These agreements do and will lead to increased violations of international peremptory norms. Anti- trade activists must finally use international law related to human rights including civil and political rights, social, cultural and economic rights, labour rights, rights of indigenous peoples, rights of migrant workers, children’s rights, rights to a safe environment etc.

These trade agreements and Public Private Partnerships among Nations should be declared null and void for violating international peremptory norms, the Charters or the licences of the corporations that have violated international peremptory norms must be revoked, and a fair and just transition program must be instituted for workers and communities impacted by revocation of corporate charters and licence.

INSTITUTIONAL COLLUSION BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS AND CORPORATIONS

The Corporations either sponsor these trade conferences, control the dialogue in the conferences, form partnerships with government officials on drafting of policy. The corporations are like “snakes in the Grass”: on their websites they flaunt their concern for the preserving the environment, for instituting sustainability, for enhancing the quality of life; yet when one compares their rhetoric with their actions it is obvious that they are “snakes in the grass” (see snakesinthegrass.net)

Genetically engineered “golden” rice lacks lustre

Earth News

Friday, 14 September 2012 18:59

Genetically engineered “golden” rice lacks lustre Last week we wrote of the rather disturbing news that [24 Chinese children had been fed genetically engineered \(GE\) Golden Rice](#) in a trial backed by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), despite state authorities having come out publicly with clear directives against this very experiment. But exactly what is this craftily named rice, and the Vitamin A deficiency it claims to assist? A [2010 Greenpeace report](#) took an in-depth look: Vitamin A deficiency (VAD) continues to be one of the most serious health problems in the developing world. The last two decades have seen tremendous improvements in the treatment of VAD, and it has been virtually eliminated among specific sectors of the population in

many countries. The number of countries achieving vitamin A supplementation (VAS) targets nearly doubled between 2003 and 2005. These improvements are due to a combination of four strategies, well-tested and proven to be successful:- Vitamin A supplementation with capsules

– The fortification of food with vitamins and minerals

– Oral supplements or food additives

– Dietary diversification. However, VAD has also been used as a reason to develop so-called ‘golden’ rice – a variety of rice that has been genetically-engineered (GE) to biosynthesise beta-carotene, a precursor of vitamin A, in the inner edible parts (endosperm) of rice. **Greenpeace considers the term ‘golden rice’ to be a misnomer**

– calling this rice ‘golden’ suggests that it is a panacea or miracle cure, which – after 20 years of development, millions of dollars of funding and significant promotion by a number of organisations – it clearly is not.

The marketing of so-called golden rice is often promoted as a solution to VAD in countries where rice is a staple food. This solution is not only ecologically irresponsible – introducing GE rice on the Asian continent, a centre of origin and diversity for rice, has the potential to contaminate invaluable genetic resources for combating future disease in rice varieties – but it also misses the point: **VAD is routinely associated with other nutritional deficiencies. Thus, programmes that improve the intake of all necessary vitamins and minerals and promote access to a healthy balanced diet are the only truly sustainable solution to the widespread problem of chronic**

undernourishment. Examples of successful VAD programmes that do not include GE can be found in all areas of the world, and many of them include an effort to increase dietary diversity, the most sustainable method of dealing with VAD, which simultaneously addresses multiple micronutrient deficiencies. We believe that the generous funding channelled into the development of golden rice would be far better applied toward existing methods to fight VAD, those which favour sustainable food systems, provide food security and increase agricultural diversity in a way that is empowering women, providing income to rural farmers, and improving the nutritional status of women and children around the globe. Read the full report: [Golden rice’s lack of lustre](#) Image © Greenpeace / John Novis

[Ask your local mayor and councillors to support Resolution A8 against tankers](#)

– [Justice News Friday, 14 September 2012 09:27](#)
posted by Joan Russow

[Union of B.C. Municipalities will be meeting in Victoria at the Convention Centre from September 24-28. The UBCM is voting for a third straight year on a resolution related to oil pipeline and tanker proposals.](#)

[Resolution A8, against tankers was passed by the municipality of Saanich](#)

– [Resolution A8 recognizes that:](#)

[“A crude oil spill would have devastating and long lasting effects on British Columbia’s unique and diverse coast, which provides critical marine habitat and marine resources that sustain the social, cultural, environmental and economic health of coastal and First Nations communities”.](#)

—
[It calls on the Union of B.C. Municipalities to:](#)

However, that report ignores the biggest threat to water security: neoliberal policies of the free market economic system laying waste to the natural world and turning water into a commodity, activists counter.

China and India will not have enough fresh water to meet their needs before 2030, according to the “Global Water Crisis” report released this week. Well before that time, water shortages will increase conflicts and worsen instability in sub-Saharan Africa, West Asia and North Africa, it warned.

Related IPS Articles

- [OP-ED: Women and Girls at Heart of the Blue Revolution](#)
- [Water in DRC More Often Cause of Death than Source of Life](#)
- [‘Eating’ Water Latest and Rising Threat to a Thirsty World](#)

“The future political impact of water scarcity may be devastating,” said former Canadian prime minister Jean Chrétien.

“Using water the way we have in the past simply will not sustain humanity in future,” said Chrétien, a co-chair of the InterAction Council (IAC), a group of 40 prominent former government leaders.

The IAC, the United Nations University’s Institute for Water, Environment and Health, and Canada’s Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation convened a conference of water experts in 2011 whose deliberations ultimately resulted in the report: “The Global Water Crisis: Addressing an Urgent Security Issue”.

With about one billion more mouths to feed worldwide by 2025, global agriculture alone will require additional water equivalent to the annual flow of 20 Niles or 100 Colorado Rivers every year, the report found.

Meanwhile, greater competition between the energy sector and other water users for already limited freshwater resources in many regions will impact future energy development, with significant potential impacts on energy reliability and security. U.S. security and intelligence agencies say there are areas of the world where the water situation is worsening, as is the local capacity to respond to droughts and floods, said Zafar Adeel, director of the United Nations University’s Canadian-based Institute for Water, Environment and Health.

“Within a decade these could escalate into security concerns,” Adeel, a report co-author, told IPS.

“The international community needs to invest far more into improving the management of water,” he said.

Amongst the reports recommendations is a call for increased annual investment in water supply and sanitation-related efforts by approximately 11 billion dollars.

“Today, a child dies on average every 20 seconds from a water-related disease,” said Adeel.

“We welcome the attention being brought to the global water crisis by these former leaders,” said Maude Barlow, the national chairperson of the Council of Canadians.

“Their voices carry a lot of weight and they may get the attention of current leaders and policy makers in a way that has been hard for those of us in civil society to do,” Barlow told IPS.

She is the author of the book “Blue Covenant: The Global Water Crisis” and was a leader in the campaign to have water recognised as a human right by the U.N.

In 2010, the U.N. General Assembly recognised water as a human right.

Barlow supports the call in the IAC report for nations and international institutions to address issues of conservation, water re-use, source protection and investments in much-needed infrastructure to ensure water services.

The glaring omission in the report and its recommendations is the fact that the “exponential demand for water is directly tied to a consumer lifestyle fed by globalisation”, she said. Unrestrained growth, unregulated free trade and corporate self-governance are the biggest threats to water, Barlow told IPS.

“Industrialised agriculture and the global trade in food have taken a terrible toll on the world’s water. What we need are local sustainable food polices that reward the wise use of local watersheds.”

Bw said she is saddened by the fact that the report does not delve into the heart of the problem because it is not seen as politically feasible to tackle the main threats to water, economic growth and corporate power.

“A water secure future will only happen if water is declared a common heritage and public trust, managed justly for the good of all,” she concluded.

[Mitt Romney, Monsanto Man](#)

Saturday, 15 September 2012 07:43

[Wayne Barrett](#)

September 14, 2012 The

Nation <http://www.thenation.com/article/169885/mitt-romney-monsanto-man>



Republican presidential candidate, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney campaigns at Van Dyck Park in Fairfax, Va., Thursday, Sept. 13, 2012. (AP Photo/Charles Dharapak)

Republican presidential candidate, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney campaigns at Van Dyck Park in Fairfax, Va., Thursday, Sept. 13, 2012. (AP Photo/Charles Dharapak)

This article was reported in collaboration with the Investigative Fund at the Nation Institute, where Barrett is a reporting fellow.

Though Mitt Romney has been campaigning for president since 2006, it's alarming how little is known about critical chapters of his business biography. Nothing spells that out more clearly than his ties to Monsanto—the current target of a mid-September [Occupy nationwide action](#)—whose dark history features scandals involving PCBs, Agent Orange, bovine growth hormone, NutraSweet, IUD, genetically modified (GM) seed and herbicides, reaching back to the 1970s and '80s. That's when Monsanto was the [largest consulting client](#) of Romney's employer, Bain & Company, and when Romney helped move Monsanto from chemical colossus to genetic giant, trading one set of environmental controversies for another.

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[Scientists protest federal cutbacks to environmental monitoring](#)

Friday, 14 September 2012 19:17

By [Edward Hill - Victoria News](#)

September 14, 2012 5:45 PM

Ban Weaponized Drones from the World

Posted by Joan Russow Friday, 16 November 2012 07:53

Meticulous researchers have documented that U.S. drones are killing many innocent civilians in Pakistan, Yemen and elsewhere. Drones are making the world less stable and creating new enemies. Their remoteness provides those responsible with a sense of immunity.

Weaponized drones are no more acceptable than land mines, cluster bombs, or chemical weapons. The world must renounce and forbid their manufacture, possession, or use. Violators must be held accountable. [Read more...](#) **More Articles...** [“Writing Is on the Wall” at Upcoming Climate Summit](#) [Fracking and a Radioactive Silvery-White Monster: Radium Must be Left in the Earth](#) [Tidal Turbines in Whale Epicentre? Hell No! Scientists say turbines would put whales at risk](#) [Backlash may alter plan for energy-generating device](#) [Federal scientists uncover evidence that oilsands contaminants travel further than expected](#)

Toxic substance found in snow near oilsands **Environment Canada study finds contaminants dangerous to fish**

[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow Friday, 16 November 2012 08:58

by [CBC News](#) <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/story/2012/11/13/calgary-oilsands-toxins-fish-snow.html>: Nov 13, 2012 9:28 PM MT [Close](#) Oilsands contaminants2:08

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An Environment Canada study has revealed the presence of contaminants in snow near oilsands mines.

CBC News has learned the details ahead of a presentation by Environment Canada researchers at the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry in Long Beach, Calif., later this week.

The researchers found snow near the oilsands contained toxic substances dangerous to

fish eggs. The study doesn't say anything about the potential effect on mammals that eat snow. University of Alberta biologist David Schindler said the research doesn't surprise him. "Those Environment Canada studies, I think, confirm my [worst suspicions](#)," he said. In 2009, Schindler also found contaminants in snow near the oilsands. Later, his team discovered a fish with a tumor, believed to be linked to oilsands contamination. The province takes these findings seriously, said Alberta Environment spokesperson Erin Carrier. "We recognize that there is naturally occurring bitumen in the area. But we also recognize that with the development of oilsands in the area, that we do have to monitor," said Carrier.

The province says it worked with Ottawa to launch a joint monitoring program in northern Alberta. These findings won't be the only research presented in California this week at the meeting of international scientists. Another connected study found that hydrocarbons in lakes near the oilsands have risen by two to 23 times since the beginning of exploration 60 years ago.

Environmentalists say they fear the work done by Environment Canada's scientists won't get much attention. "Scientists have been told to refer questions to media liaisons and not to actually speak about their studies themselves," said Chelsea Flook, executive director for the Prairies at the Sierra Club. At a similar conference held in Boston last year, Environment Canada scientists were given a list of precise answers for reporters' questions. The Conservative government insists scientists are bureaucrats and can't say things that might be seen as offering an opinion on government policies. The document below is from the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry meeting. The researchers' abstract can be found on pages 103 and 104. Last Updated on Friday, 16 November 2012 09:04

[The New Normal panel; 2012 Global Security conference in Halifax on Friday, November 16.](#)

[Peace News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow Friday, 16 November 2012 15:30 By Joan Russow PhD, Global compliance Research Project

The first session was entitled "**What is the New Normal and When Will it Get Here [there]? While some thought the new normal would be that the US would play less of an international role, others thought that the new normal would be the persistence of the old normal. Wolfgang Ischinger, the Chairman, Munich Security Conference reflected on the fact that** "sometimes we are involved so long in a war that we don't even remember why we were there. TRUE SECURITY IS COMMON SECURITY Perhaps the new normal could be reviving and expanding Olaf Palme's concept of Common security with the following objectives; • to achieve a state of peace, and disarmament; through reallocation of military expenses • to create a global structure that respects the rule of law and the International Court of Justice; • to enable socially equitable and environmentally sound employment, and ensure the right to

development and social justice; • to promote and fully guarantee respect for human rights including labour rights, civil and political rights, social and cultural rights- right to food, right to housing, right to safe drinking water and sewage, right to education and right to universally accessible not for profit health care system , • to ensure the preservation and protection of the environment, the respect for the inherent worth of nature beyond human purpose, the reduction of the ecological footprint e move away from the current model of unsustainable and over-consumptive The blueprint for common security has been developed over the years at the United Nations and is present in obligations incurred through covenants and conventions, and commitments made through conference action plans, and expectations through resolutions and Declarations. The new normal could be that states would sign and ratify existing conventions and treaties and enact the necessary legislation to ensure compliance. In addition, throughout the years, international peremptory norms have been established but the political will to abide by them has to be present.**THE “FORCE OF COMPLIANCE”** In the panel there was a call for prevention and a calculation of risks. For too long states bypassed Chapter VI – the peaceful resolution of disputes- and moved to Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. Chapter VI, entitled “peaceful solutions of disputes”, of the Charter of the United Nations, conforms to and upholds the fundamental purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, advances the de-legitimization of war, and promotes respect for the rule of international law through the International Court of Justice.

Under Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations, a number of provisions have been established to bring about the peaceful settlement of disputes:

(i) The first provision is to counter conflict of interest in decision-making related to peaceful solutions of disputes.

Decisions under Chapter VI are constrained by Article 27, which reads that a party to a dispute shall abstain from voting. This provision, which is present in Chapter VI but is absent in Chapter VII, is consistently violated by the UN Security Council.

(ii) The second provision to bring about peaceful settlement of disputes is recourse, under Article 36, to the rule of international law, through the International Court of Justice:

Article 36 reads: “legal disputes should, as a general rule, be referred by the parties to the International Court of Justice in accordance with the provisions of the Statute of the Court”.

Chapter XIV complements Chapter VI in outlining the role of the International Court of Justice:

Chapter XIV, Article 92, states that the International Court of Justice shall be the principal judicial organ of the United Nations...and, under Article 93, and all members of the UN are ipso facto parties to the statute of the International Court of

Justice, and under Article 94, each member of the United Nations undertakes to comply with the decision of the International Court of Justice in a case to which it is a party and under Article 96 there is the provision for the UN General Assembly, UN Security Council and other organs of the UN to request the International Court of Justice to give an advisory opinion on any legal question. announced that in its desire to work more closely with the United Nations and the UN Charter, has decided to embrace the force of compliance rather than the force of arms. remarked that throughout the United Nations history, there have been important international conventions, treaties and covenants related to “common **LIGHT**

FOOTPRINT Some of the panelists referred to the importance in the new normal to have a light footprint and stressed the importance of development and diplomacy. This new normal in a multipolar world could embark on implementing a set of proscriptions: such as the following;

a. Delegitimize war- Given the social, environmental, health, human rights, and economic consequences of war, under no conditions or circumstance is war legal or just. b. End the practice of invoking Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations rather than invoking Chapter VI – the peaceful resolutions of disputes – and be prepared to be judged by the International Court of Justice.

c. End the misconstruing of Article 51 (self-defence) of the Charter of the United Nations to justify premeditated non-provoked military aggression, or to use various such pretexts for invading other sovereign states.

d. Abandon the guise of the pre-emptive/preventive attack policy that has resulted in aggressive attacks on sovereign states – a violation of the Article 2 of United Nations and international law as being the ‘supreme’ international crime of a war of aggression.

e. End the use of “human security” which has been extended to “humanitarian intervention”, and used along with the “responsibility to protect” or with “right to intervene” with a view to justifying military interventions in other states.

f. End the practice of targeting or assisting in the assassination of leaders of other sovereign states, and of engaging in “regime change”.

g. End the reluctance of nuclear arms states to comply with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty by failing to implement Article VI of the Treaty, (Article VI: commits all parties to pursue negotiations in good faith on measures to end the nuclear arms race and to achieve disarmament.). End the opposition to the call for a nuclear arms free middle East

h. End the production of all weapons of mass destruction such as nuclear, chemical, and biological, as agreed to in United Nations Conference on Humans and the Environment (UNCHE) in 1972, and in specific conventions. And discontinue the gutting of the Treaty on Cluster bombs

i. Suffocate the production of uranium, end importing and exporting of uranium, prohibit the use of weapons such as those with depleted uranium and those that are prohibited under Geneva protocols and end the continued profit-making from the sale of arms and trade in small arms.

j. Disband NATO for its disregard of the international rule of law, including the objective of the Charter of the United Nations- to prevent the scourge of war, and to abide by convention such as the Convention against torture
k. End the practice of assisting “rendering”- sending “persons of interests” to countries which are known to condone torture.

l. Prohibit propaganda for war as per the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), including establishing military bases, engaging in war games, producing and selling of armaments, and holding arms trade exhibitions

m. End the production, circulation and berthing of nuclear powered or nuclear arms-capable vessels throughout the world.

n. Close and convert, to peaceful purposes, all foreign military bases in sovereign states around the world.

o. End the occupation and support for occupation in other states

p. Repeal Anti-Terrorism Act because it violates civil and political rights, and results in racial profiling.

q. End “War Games” or “Military Exercises” such as Exercise Trident Fury or Northwest Training Range complex.

r. End misplaced spending priorities on militarism, and reallocate funds to true security -“common security”
Common security was a concept initiated by Olaf Palme, a former president of Sweden, and has been extended to embody the following objectives:
• to achieve a state of peace, and disarmament; through reallocation of military expenses
• to create a global structure that respects the rule of law and the International Court of Justice;
• to enable socially equitable and environmentally sound employment, and ensure the right to development and social justice;
• to promote and fully guarantee respect for human rights including labour rights, civil and political rights, social and cultural rights- right to food, right to housing, right to safe drinking water and sewage, right to education and right to universally accessible not for profit health care system ,
• to ensure the preservation and protection of the environment, the respect for the inherent worth of nature beyond human purpose, the reduction of the ecological footprint
e move away from the current model of unsustainable and overconsumptive developmentS. To end the destabilization of states by foreign embassies, government front NGOS and corporationsT ... etc. The new normal could be common security, force of compliance and a light footprint. TWEETS DURING THE CONFERENCE 9:25 AM – 17 Nov 12 · [Joan Russow @joanRussow](#) The New

normal – redefining what constitutes true security

[http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8657:-the-new-normal-panel-2012-global-security-conference-in-halifax-on-friday-november-16&catid=104:i-peace-](http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8657:-the-new-normal-panel-2012-global-security-conference-in-halifax-on-friday-november-16&catid=104:i-peace-news&Itemid=204)

[news&Itemid=204 ... @halifaxtheforum #halifax2012 media@halifaxtheforum.org](#)

9:15 AM – 17 Nov 12 · [16m Joan Russow @joanRussow #halifax2012](#). Why do the “good guys” have provocative war games, & develop weapons that violate the Geneva protocol on prohibited weapons 9:10 AM – 17 Nov 12 [20m Joan Russow @joanRussow](#)

Why do the “good guys” not support a nuclear arms free Middle East.& also urge Israel as a nuclear weapon’s state to ratify NPT [#halifax2012](#). 9:06 AM – 17 Nov 12 [25m Joan Russow @joanRussow](#) Mackay extolls the protecting of “values we hold dear” since 2006, Cnds may wonder which values he is referring to ?

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states cannot go to the Intl court of law against the US because since the case of Nicaragua, US does not respect the ICJ 8:41 AM – 17 Nov 12 · [50m Joan Russow @joanRussow #Halifax2012](#)

the so called “good guys” have usually acted in strategic national interests.-and not for respect for the rule of law [#cdnpoli](#) 8:35 AM – 17 Nov 12 · [55m Joan Russow @joanRussow](#)

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[@joshrogin](#) the US fails to ratify so many intl instruments, to defy the Intl rule of law & to show disdain for the ICJ [#Halifax2012View conversation](#) 7:35 AM – 17 Nov 12 · [1h Joan Russow @joanRussow #halifax2012 #cdnpoli](#)

The New Normal panel;

2012 Intl Security conference in Halifax

http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8657:-the-new-normal-panel-2012-global-security-conference-in-halifax-on-friday-november-16&catid=104:i-peace-news&Itemid=204 ... 7:31 AM – 17 Nov 12 · 1h [Joan Russow](#)

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[news&Itemid=204](#) ... [@halifaxtheforum](#) [#halifax2012](#) [#cdnpoli](#) Last Updated on Saturday, 17 November 2012 17:09

Province urged not to renew leases for salmon farms

[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow Friday, 16 November 2012 19:02

Aboriginals and environmentalists protest outside the premier's constituency office and deliver 11,000-name petition

BY LARRY PYNN, VANCOUVER SUN

Protesters gather outside Christy Clark's office on 4th Avenue to protest the renewal of leases for open-net operations on the coast.

Photograph by: Wayne Leidenfrost, PNG , Vancouver Sun

The B.C. government was urged Wednesday not to renew leases for open-net salmon farms on the coast.

Aboriginals and environmentalists demonstrated outside Premier Christy Clark's constituency office in Point Grey at noon and delivered a petition with more than 11,000 signatures opposing the renewal of salmon-farm leases in B.C. In a statement, Molina Dawson of the Dzawada'enuxw First Nation from Kingcome Inlet said: "I know without a doubt that the cost to our wild salmon – and everything that relies on them – isn't worth it. So, as long as the government and fish farm companies are actively endangering our fish they will not be

getting any support from me.”

The Cohen Commission report last month suggested that salmon farms “have the potential to introduce exotic diseases and to exacerbate endemic diseases which can have a negative effect on Fraser River sockeye.”

Commissioner Bruce Cohen said that wild sockeye could suffer “serious or irreversible harm” if exposed to disease and that the federal fisheries department needs to recognize the possible risk of disease transfer between wild and farm fish.

He recommended that federal fisheries undertake a decisive study of the risks to wild salmon from Discovery Islands fish farming operations (north of Campbell River and on the Fraser sockeye migrate route) with conclusive results by 2020, as well as an annual cap on salmon production.

If by that year DFO “cannot confidently say the risk of serious harm is minimal,” then the area should be closed to salmon farming, Cohen said. That should happen sooner if research confirms a link, he added.

Alexandra Morton, an independent salmon researcher, said Wednesday: “Cohen states that if salmon farms have more than minimal risk of serious harm, they should cease operations. We are well past minimum risk.”

Torrance Coste, Vancouver Island campaigner for the Wilderness Committee, said that the federal Conservative government cannot be relied upon to protect wild salmon. That’s why the province is being pressured to not renew sea-bed leases for salmon farms, including 18 coming up for renewal in the Broughton Archipelago, he said.

Mary Ellen Walling, executive director of the Salmon Farmers Association, said in response that the industry supports the Cohen report, which encourages precaution and care in decision making.

“Our farmers already do that ...,” she said.

Walling noted that industry has about 14 protocol agreements with First Nations offering a “range of opportunities such as priority hiring, contract opportunities and revenue”

A 2011 report by Canadian Aquaculture Systems Inc. for the Aboriginal Aquaculture Association showed that annual output of farmed salmon in B.C. is about 77,300 tonnes – 60,500 tonnes of that produced in aboriginal territories under various operational and protocol agreements with the First Nations.

Walling added: “As for the tenures, our farmers have been operating there for many years and these are not new applications.”

Agriculture Minister Norm Letnick said in a statement only that the province continues to review the Cohen report and its implications and that the province would provide a more detailed response in the future.

The Ministry said there are 27 aquaculture tenures in the Discovery Islands. Of those, seven are under adjudication for tenure replacement, and are under a month-to-month tenancy.

lpynn@vancouver.sun.com

Last Updated on Sunday, 18 November 2012 19:47

[The New Normal panel; 2012 Global Security conference in Halifax on Friday, November 16,](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 16 November 2012 15:30

By Joan Russow PhD, Global compliance Research Project

The first session was entitled “What is the New Normal and When Will it Get Here [there]? While some thought the new normal would be that the US would play less of an international role, others thought that the new normal would be the persistence of the old normal.

Wolfgang Ischinger, the Chairman, Munich Security Conference reflected on the fact that “sometimes we are involved so long in a war that we don’t even remember why we were there.

Last Updated on Saturday, 17 November 2012 17:09

[Read more...](#)

[Toxic substance found in snow near oilsands Environment Canada study finds contaminants dangerous to fish](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 16 November 2012 08:58

by [CBC News](#)

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/story/2012/11/13/calgary-oilsands-toxins-fish-snow.html>

: Nov 13, 2012 9:28 PM MT

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Oilsands contaminants2:08

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An Environment Canada study has revealed the presence of contaminants in snow near oilsands mines.

Last Updated on Friday, 16 November 2012 09:04

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[Ban Weaponized Drones from the World](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 16 November 2012 07:53



Meticulous researchers have documented that U.S. drones are killing many innocent civilians in Pakistan, Yemen and elsewhere. Drones are making the world less stable and creating new enemies. Their remoteness provides those responsible with a sense of immunity.

Weaponized drones are no more acceptable than land mines, cluster bombs, or chemical weapons. The world must renounce and forbid their manufacture, possession, or use. Violators must be held accountable.

[Read more...](#)

“Writing Is on the Wall” at Upcoming Climate Summit

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 16 November 2012 07:20

By [Stephen Leahy](#)



Obama talks with Hurricane Sandy victims at a shelter in Brigantine, N.J. He says dealing with climate change will be a personal mission in his second term. Credit: Official White House Photo by Pete Souza

UXBRIDGE, Canada, Nov 15 2012 (IPS) - Two-thirds of the world's proven fossil fuel reserves cannot be used without risking dangerous climate change, the International Energy Agency (IEA) warned this week.

Preventing the consumption of those two-thirds will be the primary task of the annual U.N. climate negotiations that resume at the end of this month.

[Read more...](#)

Fracking and a Radioactive Silvery-White

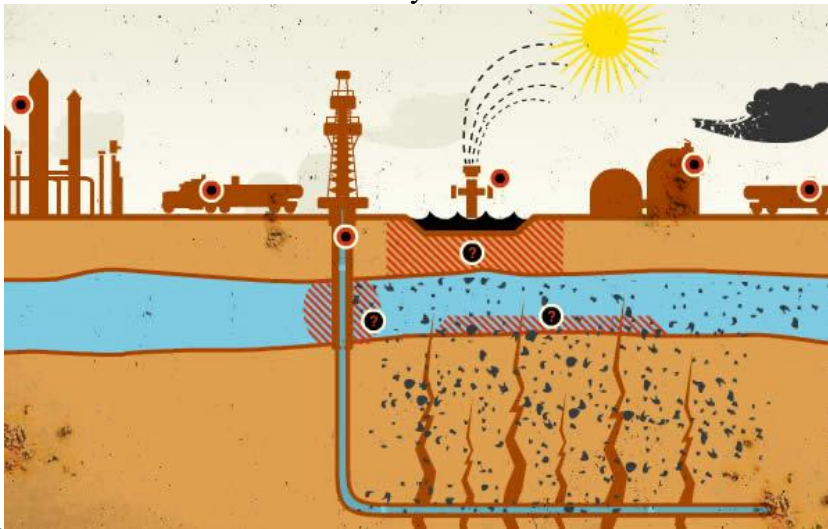
Monster: Radium Must be Left in the Earth

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 15 November 2012 15:31

by Karl Grossman

Fracking for gas not only uses toxic chemicals that can contaminate drinking and groundwater -- it also releases substantial quantities of radioactive poison from the ground that will remain hot and deadly for thousands of



years.

Vision

Image: 8020

Issuing a report yesterday exposing major radioactive impacts of hydraulic fracturing known as fracking -- was Grassroots Environmental Education, an organization in New York, where extensive fracking is proposed.

The Marcellus Shale region which covers much of upstate New York is seen as loaded with gas that can be released through the fracking process. It involves injecting fluid and chemicals under high pressure to fracture shale formations and release the gas captured in them.

[Read more...](#)

Tidal Turbines in Whale Epicentre? Hell

No!

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 15 November 2012 14:17

by The Marine detective

<http://themarinedetective.com/2012/11/10/tidal-turbines-in-whale-epicentre-hell-no/>



[Update November 13, 2012 - As testimony to how serious this is - international Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC) has picked this up and put out [an action alert](#).

*Update November 14, 2012 - To our surprise, the deadline to provide comment regarding the land tenure has been extended, it is now also **December 2nd**.*

For a bundling of media items on this see the end of the blog.]

[\[Click here to jump to making your submissions\]](#).

There are times when expletives like “Hell No!” are justified and I am sure you will agree this is one of those very unfortunate times and – your action is needed.

Blackney Pass off Johnstone Strait is an epicentre of whale activity and there is [an application for an “Investigative License of Occupation – Ocean Power”](#) for this very area. Yep, that’s right . . . an application for [“actual installment of technical investigative and monitoring equipment”](#) that could lead to turbines being in critical whale habitat. The proponent is [SRM Projects Ltd](#) of Nanaimo, B.C.

Last Updated on Thursday, 15 November 2012 14:22

[Read more...](#)

Scientists say turbines would put whales at risk Backlash may alter plan for energy-generating device



Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 15 November 2012 14:08

By Judith Lavoie, Times Colonist November 14, 2012

UNDATED -- A photograph of the killer whale known as L112 near Victoria, B.C. in August 2011. The whale was found dead in February 2012 on Long Beach in Washington State, its body bloodied and battered. The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is investigating. HANDOUT PHOTO: Ken Balcomb. For Douglas Quan (Postmedia News). DEAD-WHALE

Photograph by: International - Wire

Scientists and whale-protection groups are sending a resounding message to the province that it is unacceptable to consider energy-generating tidal turbines in critical habitat for threatened northern resident killer whales.

The outcry may change plans by SRM Projects Ltd. of Nanaimo to investigate putting tidal turbines in Blackney Passage near the entrance to Johnstone Strait, proponent Scot Merriam said Tuesday.

"I am going to be trying to talk to as many of these people as I can, one on one, to understand the primary concerns," said Merriam, who was taken aback by the response.

[Read more...](#)

[Federal scientists uncover evidence that oilsands contaminants travel further than expected](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 15 November 2012 12:37

By Margaret Munro, Postmedia News November 13, 2012



The development of Alberta's oilsands is the subject of some contention nationally.

Photograph by: © Todd Korol / Reuters , Reuters

Federal scientists have uncovered evidence that contaminants wafting out Alberta's oilsands operations are collecting on the bottom of remote lakes up to 100 kilometres away.

The chemical "legacy" in the lake sediments indicates that oilsands pollution is travelling further than expected and has been for decades.

Last Updated on Thursday, 15 November 2012 12:40

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36 readings

[**Israel Throttles Palestinian Television**](#)

Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 15 November 2012 06:54





By **Jillian Kestler-D'Amours**

Director of media projects at Wattan TV, George Sahhar, at what is left of their television studios. Credit: Jillian Kestler-D'Amours

/IPS.

RAMALLAH, Occupied West Bank, Nov 14 2012 (IPS) - George Sahhar opens the door to a closet-sized control room, where a

cacophony of wires, routers, papers, and computer screens are messily strewn across a desk.

"This is where the transmitter was," Sahhar said, pointing to a gaping hole amidst the disconnected wires, before continuing

on to a bigger control room, where more equipment is missing. "We don't know why it happened. It's inexplicable and unacceptable."

Sahhar is director of media projects at Wattan TV, the only independent television station in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Last February, over two dozen Israeli soldiers stormed Wattan TV's Ramallah offices in the early morning hours. They confiscated the station's transmitters, laptops, financial documents, invoices, contracts, archives, and other equipment.

Human rights groups condemned the incident as a blatant violation of Palestinian media freedom. Wattan TV, which is owned by local Palestinian civil society groups and partly funded by international donors, estimated that the raid incurred a financial loss of 300,000 dollars.

Before losing its equipment, the station broadcast a variety of political, cultural and social programmes to the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Today, it no longer broadcasts in Gaza, can't host live broadcasts from its studios, and airs only limited coverage in the West Bank.

"It's very hard. A process that would take us four or five seconds now takes us half a day to complete without the transmitter," Sahhar told IPS. "The pressure has been enormous on our staff. What if we bring in another transmitter and (the army comes) back an hour later?"

Now, the station is appealing to the Israeli Supreme Court to have its equipment, files and archives returned, and to get an explanation about why the raid took place. The Court granted the Israeli government an extension until Nov. 14 to provide some answers.

As of noon local time, Wattan TV officials told IPS that they were still waiting for an update from the court. "Today is the final day, but we are still waiting and coordinating with our lawyer. We are not optimistic at all," said the station's general director, Muamar Orabi. At the time of the raid, the Israeli authorities argued that Wattan TV's frequency was interfering with radio signals in Israel,

including those at Ben Gurion airport near Tel Aviv. Station managers, however, have staunchly refuted this claim.

"It's a baseless accusation," Sahhar said, explaining that Wattan TV has been licensed with the Palestinian Authority (PA)

since 1996, and is also a member of the International Telecommunications Union in Switzerland. "From 1996 until today, frankly,

I'm unaware of any airplanes crashing as a result of our frequency."

The Oslo Accords agreement, signed between Israeli and Palestinian leaders in the early 1990s, organised Palestinian and Israeli telecommunications frequencies. It stipulated that neither side's frequencies would interfere with the other's, and that Israel will not impede the proper functioning of the agreed-upon Palestinian stations.

A Joint Technical Committee (JTC) was also set up to deal with any issues arising between the Israeli and Palestinian telecommunications systems. "If there is a dispute about the frequency, the Israelis need to tell the Palestinian Authority and the PA will deal with it," Sahhar said.

According to Mada, the Palestinian Centre for Media Freedoms and Development, since 2008, Israeli soldiers have stormed 11 Palestinian media headquarters, and confiscated equipment belonging to at least 14 media institutions.

"It's a war of airwaves," said Mada Director Mousa Rimawi from his Ramallah office. "(The Israelis) want to dominate the frequencies. They want to occupy everything."

Rimawi explained that confiscating equipment from Palestinian media outlets has a very negative psychological impact on

Palestinian journalists, which in turn impacts the quality of their reports and investigations.

"Palestinians try to continue their work, but in the back of their mind, the threats are still there. (The Israeli army) can come any day at night and no one can stop them," Rimawi told IPS. "The Israelis are behaving like they are above the law.

Because they are not pressured or punished, they are continuing their violations against media outlets, against journalists and against Palestinians in general."

The Israeli army raided Wattan TV's offices for the first time in 2002, in the midst of the Second Intifadah (uprising). Upset by the station's critical coverage of its policies, the Palestinian Authority also shut the station down five times between 1996 and 2002.

For George Sahhar, while it wasn't the first such incident, the latest raid on Wattan TV's offices was akin to an attack on Palestinian culture. "Media work is art, so it's really painful when someone takes it away violently. There is still a tremendous sense of apprehension," Sahhar said.

"But we will continue to insist on being the voice of reason, with our limited resources. We want to inform Palestinians and create bridges to come up with a common vision of where we want Palestine to be. We have our eye on the future."

Last Updated on Thursday, 15 November 2012 06:57Last Updated on Thursday, 15 November 2012 06:57

42 readings

Frack Fight A Secret War of Activists -- With the World in the Balance



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 18 November 2012 19:23



By [Ellen Cantarow](http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175618/) <http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175618/>

Natural Gas Hydrofracturing well | Ecoflight

There' s a war going on that you know nothing about between a coalition of great powers and a small insurgent movement. It' s a secret war being waged in the shadows while you go about your everyday life.

In the end, this conflict may matter more than those in Iraq and Afghanistan ever did. And yet it' s taking place far from newspaper front pages and with hardly a notice on the nightly news. Nor is it being fought in Yemen or Pakistan or Somalia, but in small hamlets in upstate New York. There, a loose network of activists is waging a guerrilla campaign not with improvised explosive devices or rocket-propelled grenades, but with zoning ordinances and petitions.

The weaponry may be humdrum, but the stakes couldn' t be higher. Ultimately, the fate of the planet may hang in the balance.

All summer long, the climate-change nightmares came on fast and furious. Once-fertile swathes of American heartland **baked** into an aridity reminiscent of sub-Saharan Africa. Hundreds of thousands of **fish** dead in overheated streams. Six million acres in the West **consumed** by wildfires. In September, a **report** commissioned by 20 governments predicted that as many as 100 million people across the world could die by 2030 if fossil-fuel consumption isn' t reduced. And all of this was before superstorm Sandy wreaked havoc on the New York metropolitan area and the Jersey shore.

Washington's leadership, when it comes to climate change, is already mired in failure. President Obama **permitted** oil giant BP to resume drilling in the Gulf of Mexico, while Shell was allowed to begin **drilling tests** in the Chukchi Sea off Alaska. At the moment, the best hope for placing restraints on climate change lies with grassroots movements.

In January, I **chronicled** upstate New York's homegrown resistance to high-volume horizontal hydraulic fracturing, an extreme-energy technology that extracts methane ("natural gas") from the Earth's deepest regions. Since then, local opposition has continued to face off against the energy industry and state government in a way that may set the tone for the rest of the country in the decades ahead. In small hamlets and tiny towns you've never heard of, grassroots activists are making a stand in what could be the beginning of a final showdown for Earth's future.

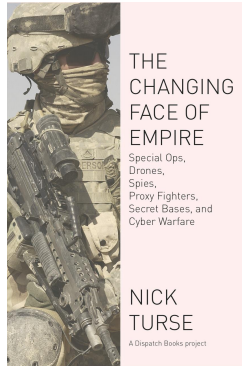
Frack Fight 2012

New York isn't just another state. Its largest city is the world's financial capital. Six of its former governors have gone on to the presidency and Governor Andrew Cuomo seems to have his sights set on a run for the White House, possibly in 2016. It also has a history of movements, from abolition and women's suffrage in the nineteenth century to Occupy in the twenty-first. Its environmental campaigns have included the **watershed** Storm King Mountain case, in which activists defeated Con Edison's plan to carve a giant facility into the face of that Hudson River landmark. The decision established the right of anyone to litigate on behalf of the environment.

Today, that activist legacy is evident in a grassroots insurgency in upstate New York, a struggle by ordinary Americans to protect what remains of their democracy and the Earth's fragile environment from giant corporations intent on wrecking both. On one side stands New York's anti-fracking community; on the other, the natural gas industry, the state's Department of Environmental Conservation, and New York's industry-allied Joint Landowners Coalition.

As for Governor Cuomo, he has managed to anger both sides. He seemed to **bow** to industry this past June by hinting

that he would end a 2010 moratorium on fracking introduced by his predecessor David Paterson and open the state to the process; then, in October, he appeared to **retreat** after furious protests staged in Washington D.C., as well as Albany, Binghamton, and other upstate towns.



Buy the book.

“ I have never seen [an environmental movement] spread with such wildfire as this,” says Robert Boyle, a legendary environmental activist and journalist who was central in the Storm King case and **founded** Riverkeeper, the prototype for all later river-guardian organizations. “It took me 13 or 14 years to get the first Riverkeeper going. Fracking isn’ t like that. It’ s like lighting a train of powder.”

Developed in 2008 and vastly more expansive in its infrastructure than the purely vertical form of fracking invented by Halliburton Corporation in the 1940s, high-volume horizontal hydraulic fracturing is a land-devouring, water-squandering technology with a **greenhouse gas footprint** greater than that of coal. The process begins by propelling one to nine million gallons of sand-and-chemical-laced water at hyperbaric bomb-like pressures a mile or more beneath Earth’ s surface. Most of that fluid stays underground. Of the remainder, next to nothing is ever again available for irrigation or drinking. A recent **report** by the independent, nonpartisan U.S. Government Accountability Office concluded that fracking poses serious risks to health and the environment.

New York State’ s grassroots resistance to fracking began about four years ago around kitchen tables and in living rooms as neighbors started talking about this frightening technology. Shallow drilling for easily obtainable gas had

been done for decades in the state, but this gargantuan industrial effort represented something else again.

[Anthony Ingraffea](#) of Cornell University's Department of Engineering, co-author of a study that established the global warming footprint of the industry, calls this new form of fracking an unparalleled danger to the environment and human health. "There's much more land clearing, much more devastation of forests and fields. . . thousands of miles of pipelines. . . many compressor stations [that] require burning enormous quantities of diesel. . . [emitting] hydrocarbons into the atmosphere." He adds that it's a case of "the health of many versus the wealth of a few."

Against that wealth stands a movement of the 99% -- farmers, physicists, journalists, teachers, librarians, innkeepers, brewery owners, and engineers. "In Middlefield we're nothing special," says Kelly Branigan, a realtor who last year founded a group called Middlefield Neighbors. "We're just regular people who got together and learned, and reached in our pockets to go to work on this. It's inspiring, it's awesome, and it's America -- its own little revolution."

Last year, Middlefield became one of New York's first towns to use the humblest of tools, zoning ordinances, to beat back fracking. Previously, that had seemed like an impossible task for ordinary people. In 1981, the state had exempted gas corporations from New York's constitutionally guaranteed home rule under which town ordinances trump state law. In 2011, however, Ithaca-based lawyers Helen and David Slottje overturned that gas-cozy law by establishing that, while the state regulates industry, towns can use their zoning powers to keep it out. Since then, a cascade of bans and moratoria -- more than 140 in all -- have protected towns all over New York from high-volume frack drilling.

This Is What Democracy Looks Like

Caroline, a small hamlet in Tompkins County (population 3,282), is the second town in the state to get 100% of its electricity through wind power and one of the most recent to pass a fracking ban. Its residents typify the grassroots

resistance of upstate New York.

“I’ m very skeptical that multinational corporations have the best interests of communities at heart,” Don Barber, Caroline’ s Supervisor, told me recently. “The federal government sold [Americans] out when they exempted fracking from the Clean Water and Air Acts,” he added. “Federal and state governments are not advocating for the civil society. There’ s only one level left. That’ s the local government, and it puts a tremendous load on our shoulders.”

Caroline’ s Deputy Supervisor, Dominic Frongillo, sees local resistance in [global terms](#). “We’ re unexpectedly finding ourselves in the ground zero for climate change,” he says.

“It used to be somewhere else, mountaintop removal in West Virginia, deep-sea drilling in the Gulf of Mexico, tar sands in Alberta, Canada. But now...it’ s right here under our feet in upstate New York. The line is drawn here. We can’ t keep escaping the fossil fuel industry. You can’ t move other places, you just have to dig in where you are.”

Two years of pre-ban work in Caroline included an election that replaced pro-drilling members of the town board with fracking opponents, public education forums, and a six-month petition drive. “We knocked on every single door two or three times,” recalls Bill Podulka, a retired physicist who co-founded the town’ s resistance organization, ROUSE (Residents Opposed to Unsafe Shale Gas Extraction). “Many people were opposed to gas-drilling but were afraid to speak out, not realizing that the folks concerned were a silent majority.” In the end, 71% of those approached signed the petition, which requested a ban.

On September 11th, a final debate between drilling opponents and proponents took place, after which Barber called for the vote. A ban was overwhelmingly endorsed. “For the first time,” he told the crowd gathered in Caroline’ s white clapboard town hall, “I will be voting to change the balance of rights between individuals and civil society. This is because of the impacts of fracking on health and the environment. And the majority of our citizens have voted to pass the ban.” The board then ruled 4 to 1 in favor.

Stealth Invasion

About a year and a half ago, as Caroline and other towns were moving to protect their land from the industry, XTO, a subsidiary of Exxon-Mobil Corporation, began preparing for a possible fracking future in the state. It eyed tree-shaded, Oquaga Creek, a trout-laden Delaware tributary in upper New York State's Sanford County, leased the land, and applied to the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) for a water-withdrawal permit. XTO required, it said, a quarter of a million gallons of water from the creek every day for its hydraulic fracturing operations.

Delaware Riverkeeper, an environmental organization, found out about the XTO application and spread the word. Within days, the DRBC received 7,900 letters of outrage. On June 1, 2011, hundreds of citizens, organized by grassroots anti-frackers, packed a hearing in Deposit, a village in Sanford Township that lies at the confluence of the creek and the western branch of the Delaware River. Only two people spoke at the meeting in favor of XTO. One was the Supervisor (mayor) of Sanford, Dewey Decker. He applauded the XTO application and denounced protestors as "outsiders." He is among a group of landowners who have [leased land](#) to XTO for hundreds of millions of dollars. (Decker refused to be interviewed for this article.) The rest of the crowd spoke up for the creek, its fish, and its wildlife. The Delaware River Basin Commission indefinitely tabled the XTO application.

While a grassroots victory, the episode also served as a warning about how determined the industry is to move forward with fracking plans despite the state-enforced moratorium still in place. As a result, Caroline and other towns are continuing to develop local anti-fracking measures, since they know that the 2010 ban on the process will end whenever Governor Cuomo okays rules currently being written by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).

When it comes to those rules and fracking more generally, the DEC has a conflict of interest. While it is supposed to protect the environment, it is also tasked with regulating the very industries that exploit it through the agency's Mineral Resources Division. Last year, the DEC [received](#) over 80,000 written comments on the latest

draft of its guidelines for the industry, the 1,500-page “ SGEIS ” (which stands for “ Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement”). Drilling opponents outnumbered proponents 10 to 1. The deluge was a record in the agency’ s history.

Activists weren’ t the only ones with a keen interest in the SGEIS, however. Documents obtained through New York’ s Freedom of Information Law indicate that, in mid-August 2011, six weeks before the DEC made its statement public, the agency [shared](#) detailed summaries of it with gas corporation representatives, giving the industry a chance to influence the final document before it went public.

Two days before the SGEIS was opened to public scrutiny, an attorney for the Oklahoma-based Chesapeake Energy Corporation and other companies asked regulators to “reduce or eliminate” a requirement for the sophisticated testing of fracking fluids. Such fluids are laden with toxins, including carcinogens, which storms could wash away from drilling sites -- an especially grim prospect given the catastrophic flooding experienced in the state over the last three years.

At the same time, two upstate New York journalists [revealed](#) that Bradley Field, the head of the DEC’ s Mineral Resources Division, had signed a petition that denied the existence of climate change. Formerly of Getty Oil and Marathon Oil, Field also serves as the state’ s representative to the Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission and the Ground Water Protection Council, both industry fronts which maintain that fracking is benign. As this was coming to light, state officials anonymously [leaked](#) word of a plan to open five counties on New York’ s border with Pennsylvania to fracking as long as communities there supported the technology.

This is What Autocracy Looks Like

In May 2012, Dewey Decker and his board passed a resolution pledging that the town of Sanford would take no action against fracking, while awaiting the decision of the DEC. There was no prior notice. Citizens were left to read about it in their local papers. “You wake up the next morning and say, ‘ What happened?’ ” commented Doug Vitarious, a

retired Sanford elementary school teacher.

In June, a headline in the Deposit Courier, a Sanford paper, read “ Local Officials in Eligible Communities Approve Pro-Drilling Resolutions. ” Accompanying the piece was a map of towns that had passed such resolutions. The subscript under the map [read](#): “Joint Landowners Coalition of N.Y. ” The JLCNY is the state’ s grassroots gas industry ally, whose stated mission is to “ foster... the common interest... as it pertains to natural gas development. ” Decker represents the organization in Sanford.

During the summer, Vitarious and other citizens asked their town board where the resolution had originated, but were met with silence. They requested that the board rescind the resolution and conduct a referendum. Decker refused.

By the end of August, 43 towns in the region had passed resolutions modeled on one appearing at the JLCNY website. It stipulates that at the local level “ no moratorium on hydraulic fracturing will be put in place before the state of New York has made it’ s [sic] decision. ” Under New York’ s Freedom of Information Law, Catskill Citizens for Safe Energy and the National Resources Defense Council obtained records from Sanford and two other towns about how they achieved their objectives. The records, says Bruce Ferguson of Catskill Citizens for Safe Energy, “ detail contacts between gas industry operatives and officials. ”

Two months before superstorm Sandy swamped parts of the state, Sue Rapp, a psychotherapist from the town of Vestal, told me that flooding worries her as much as anything else about fracking. Upper New York State suffered flooding in 2010 and 2011. And then came Sandy. Floods turn millions of gallons of fracking waste-water for which there is no safe storage into streams of poisons that wash into waterways.

Unlike Sanford’ s board, Vestal’ s has not formally blocked debate. It has heard arguments for a moratorium by Rapp and an organization she co-founded, Vestal Residents for Safe Energy (VERSE), as well as pleas for a moratorium by physicians and academics. Its reaction, however, has simply been to sit on its hands, waiting for the DEC and Cuomo to

make a final decision. This amounts to adopting the JLCNY position in all but formal vote. “What is happening?” asked Rapp rhetorically at a demonstration in Binghamton this past September. “They are trying to shut us down. But we do vote and we will vote. We do not constitute [what pro-drillers call] the tyranny of the majority, but simply the majority. That is called democracy.”

Demonstrations against Cuomo’s frack plan, which drew thousands to Washington D.C., Albany, and elsewhere in New York, included pledges to commit sustained acts of civil disobedience should the governor carry out plans to open the Pennsylvania border area of the state to fracking. At the end of September, the New York Times announced that Cuomo had retreated from his June stance. The report credited the state’s grassroots movement for his change of mind. Legendary for his toughness and political smarts, the governor will confront a political challenge in the coming months. Either he will please gas-industry supporters or his Democratic base. Whichever way he goes, it could affect his chances for the White House.

The stakes, however, are far larger than Cuomo’s presidential aspirations. Opening any part of the state to fracking will certainly damage the local environment. More importantly, a grassroots win in New York State could open the door to a nationwide anti-fracking surge. A loss might, in the long run, result in a cascade of environmental degradation beyond the planet’s ability to cope. As unlikely as it sounds, the fate of the Earth may rest with the residents of Middlefield, Caroline, Vestal, and scores of tiny villages and small towns you’ve never heard of.

“All eyes are on New York,” says Chris Burger, a former Broome County legislator and one of a small group who persuaded New York’s last governor, David Paterson, to pass the state’s moratorium on fracking. “This is the biggest environmental issue New York has ever faced [and not just] New York, the nation, and the world. If it’s going to be stopped, it will be stopped here.”

Ellen Cantarow first wrote from Israel and the West Bank in 1979. A [TomDispatch](#) regular, her writing has been published in The Village Voice, Grand Street, Mother Jones,

Alternet, Counterpunch, and ZNet, and anthologized by the South End Press. She is also lead author and general editor of an oral-history trilogy, *Moving the Mountain: Women Working for Social Change*, published in 1981 by The Feminist Press/McGraw-Hill, widely anthologized, and still in print.

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Drones must like cluster bombs be prohibited for violating the Geneva Protocol **Peace News**

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 18 November 2012 08:14

by Joan Russow Global Compliance Research Project

Consequences, of using militarized drones once realized, they, like cluster bombs, will be deemed to be prohibited under the Geneva protocol. The weapons industries and those that support weapon systems have been criminally negligent for not being capable of anticipating the dire consequences of introducing new weapons. It is unconscionable that new weapons are continually introduced in defiance of the precautionary principle: Where there is a threat of irreversible harm to humans and the environment, the lack of full scientific certainty should not be used to prevent the threat of the use of these weapons.

The global community must act proactively and ban drones

http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8655:ban-weaponized-drones-from-the-world&catid=104:i-peace-news&Itemid=204

While governments over the years through various Geneva Protocols and other conventions have incurred obligations related to armaments, corporations through sympathetic governments have continued to produce weapons systems that violate government obligations.

For example:

Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), 8 June 1977.

In 1977, established basic rules related to armaments:

Art 35. Basic rules

1. In any armed conflict, the right of the Parties to the conflict to choose methods or means of warfare is not unlimited.
2. It is prohibited to employ weapons, projectiles and material and methods of warfare of a nature to cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering.

AND

3. It is prohibited to employ methods or means of warfare, which are intended, or may be expected, to cause widespread, long-term and severe damage to the natural environment. These provisions, if enforced, would end the production of armaments and close down this exhibition:

Also in the additional Geneva protocol there are imposed limitations on the development of new weapons. Under Article 36, which reads.

Art 36. New weapons

In the study, development, acquisition or adoption of a new weapons, means or method of warfare, a High Contracting . ie governments. are under an obligation to determine whether its employment would, in some or all circumstances, be prohibited by this Protocol or by any other rule of international law applicable to the High Contracting Party.

In 1980, member states of the United Nations negotiated the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions of Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects

Arsenals that will be excessively injurious or have indiscriminate effects; and through the actions of these military dealers, governments are controvancing the above convention Also rather than preventing the production and use of cluster bombs, countries that have aggressively intervened in other countries have used them

BUT

After numerous studies related to the impact of cluster bombs, in 2008 a legally binding international instrument that prohibits the use and stockpiling of cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians and requires clearance of contaminated areas». Was adopted.

How many of latest armaments in this exhibition will be prohibited in the future; once their dire consequences materialize

Governments must invoke the precautionary principle and embark upon prohibiting the production of all these armaments

They do not have to wait there is scientific certainty that dire consequences of the

weapon systems materialize to prohibit the production, exhibition and use of these armaments such as trident fury on the West Coast – to war games including NATO war games.

These expressions of militarism could and must be declared to be “propaganda for war”

Under the International human rights instrument – the International Covenant, of Civil and Political Rights negotiated in 1966, has been signed and ratified by most countries including Canada and the US.

All governments incurred an obligation reflected in this statement “Any propaganda for war shall be prohibited by law (Art. 20, International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights, 1966)

Governments must discharge their obligation under the covenant to prohibit the propaganda for war, thus to prohibit all war games, all nuclear ship visits and all production and exhibition of armaments.

Reallocation of military expenses

In 1976 at Habitat 1, a UN conference in Vancouver member states of the United Nations affirmed the following in relation to the military budgets and armaments:

“The waste and misuse of resources in war and armaments should be prevented. All countries should make a firm commitment to promote general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, in particular in the field of nuclear disarmament. Part of the resources thus released should be utilized so as to achieve a better quality of life for humanity and particularly for the peoples of developing countries” (II, 12 Habitat 1).

This commitment was continually reinforced over the years through various resolutions at the UN General Assembly and in 1992, at the UN Conference on the Environment Development All members states of the UN made a commitment to reallocate military expenses.

There have been 33 years of procrastination and now the current global military budget is over 1.7 Trillion, and AN increasing, amount is being spent on armaments.

If we want to reduce the production of armaments we must call for substantial reduction of the military budgets

War machine arsenals exhibitions are continuing to occur with impunity and increasing perfidy

Last Updated on Sunday, 18 November 2012 19:50

Elections Canada email trail points to growing suspicions over voter suppression ‘mischief’ during 2011 election

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 18 November 2012 14:58

By Stephen Maher & Glen McGregor, Postmedia News November 16, 2012

Robbie the Friendly Robot.

Photograph by: David Kawai / Ottawa Citizen , Postmedia News

OTTAWA — Three days before the last federal election, Elections Canada confronted the Conservatives about suspicious calls directing voters to the wrong polling stations but were met with denials of any wrongdoing from the party’s lawyer, internal emails show. In one email, an official with the agency reported a growing number of misleading calls as voting day approached and said some were worried that a “scam” to mislead voters was under way.

The emails, released under the Access to Information Act, show that voters in ridings across Canada believed they had been misled by Conservative callers.

They also cast doubt on the theory, advanced by some Conservatives, that reports of so-called “poll-moving calls” were invented by voters who flooded Elections Canada with nearly 1400 complaints after news of the robocalls scandal first broke in February.

The message from Elections Canada staff trace a timeline that began with the first reports of the calls on April 29, three days before the vote, when the agency began to field inquiries from concerned voters.

At 8:16 p.m., Sylvie Jacmain, the director of field programs and services, sent an email to agency lawyer Ageliki Apostolakos, reporting problems in the ridings of Saint Boniface, Manitoba, and Kitchener-Conestoga, Ontario.

“In the course of the last half-hour, it has come to my attention (in two ridings) that it seems representatives of Mr. Harper’s campaign communicated with voters to inform them that their polling station had changed, and the indications offered to one would lead her more than an hour and a half from her real voting place, which is found a few minutes from her home,” she wrote in French.

Half an hour later, procedures officer Sylvain Lortie wrote to Jacmain to say that the Conservative campaign in Saint Boniface “has communicated with (party) headquarters, who were doing the calls.”

Apostolakos quickly followed up with an email to the Conservative Party lawyer Arthur Hamilton.

“In the course of the last half-hour, Elections Canada has heard that two representatives of the Conservative campaign office are communicating with electors in two electoral districts to inform them that their polling station has changed to another location,”

Apostolakos wrote.

Hamilton responded just after midnight the following night — 27 hours later, according to time stamps on the emails — writing that because some polling locations had been changed, some Conservative candidates were contacting voters to ensure they were going

to the right places.

“The calls being made by our candidates request the voter to confirm her or his polling location,” Hamilton wrote, saying he had looked into Elections Canada’s concerns.

“There is no indication by the caller that the location may have changed or words to that effect. And no voter is being directed to a polling location one and a half hours away from the correct polling location.”

By Sunday afternoon, Elections Canada had received reports of the calls from 13 different ridings. Legal counsel Karen McNeil sent another email to Hamilton:

“These calls are continuing and the frequency of calls seems to be increasing,” she wrote, providing a list of the originating phone numbers that some voters had recorded. Voters who called the numbers back heard only recorded messages identifying them as Conservative Party lines, she said.

McNeil told Hamilton the poll-moving calls had been reported by voters in the ridings of Avalon (Newfoundland and Labrador); West Nova (Nova Scotia); Ajax-Pickering, Halton, Kingston and the Islands, Kitchener-Conestoga and Vaughan (Ontario); Kildonan-St. Paul, Saint Boniface and Winnipeg Centre (Manitoba); and Cardigan (Prince Edward Island).

There were also later reports of poll-moving calls in two Quebec ridings: Outremont and Lac-Saint-Louis and Prince George-Peace River in British Columbia.

Hamilton replied at 10:45 a.m. the following morning — election day — saying only that he would forward the same response he had sent Apostolakos.

As Hamilton sent the email, hundreds of voters in Guelph were heading to vote at the Quebec Street Mall, victims of an as-yet-unsolved mystery call from “Pierre Poutine.”

In spite of the two emails to Hamilton, the calls continued.

Email traffic shows the officials were becoming increasingly suspicious about the nature of the calls.

On Sunday afternoon, Elections Canada lawyer Michele Rene de Cotret wrote to Jane Dunlop, manager of external relations, giving her a heads up on “some mischief purportedly done by representatives of the Conservative party calling people to tell them that the location of their polling site has been moved.”

The same day, elections officer Anita Hawdur wrote to Apostolakos: “The polling station numbers given out by the Conservative Party...are all wrong. Most of them are quite far away from the elector’s home and from the initial polling place that showed on their VIC (voter information card.)”

Later that afternoon, Hawdur sent Apostolakos a message warning that, in one riding, officials received four calls from voters saying they had been misdirected. “This is getting pretty suspicious,” she wrote. “The workers in the returning office think these people are running a scam.”

Hawdur reported at 3:32 p.m. Sunday that “we are starting to get more calls now.”

At 5:10 p.m., Natalie Babin Dufresne emailed a number of officials lining up advertising to warn voters in Prince George-Peace River, where no polling stations had been changed, as a result of “alleged Conservative and Elections Canada calls.”

The next morning, election day, the number of calls seemed to intensify.

At 11:27 a.m., as the agency struggled with chaos at a polling station in Guelph, Hawdur sent an email to a number of colleagues: “It’s right across the country except Saskatchewan; a lot of the calls are from electoral districts in Ontario. it appears it’s

getting worse. Some returning officers reported that the calls are allegedly identifying Elections Canada.”

Asked about the allegations in the emails, Conservative Party spokesman Fred DeLorey denied the party tried to mislead anyone.

“To ensure our supporters knew where to vote, our script read that ‘Elections Canada has changed some voting locations at the last moment. To be sure could you tell me the address of where you’re voting?’” DeLorey said in an email.

“In the days leading up to and including Election Day we were only calling our identified supporters to get out our vote, and in every call we identified ourselves as calling on behalf of the Conservative Party, so any accusation that we were misleading voters doesn’t hold up to those simple facts.”

DeLorey said Elections Canada changed over 1,000 polls locations and the country. When Chief Electoral Officer Marc Mayrand appeared before a parliamentary committee in March, he said only 473 polls of more than 20,000 locations were changed, and only 61 moved in the last week, when it would have been too late to send out revised voter cards.

In his report on the election tabled in August 2011, Mayrand made brief mention of the “crank calls” that incorrectly advised voters of changed polling locations but there was no indication that these were a widespread or coordinated effort. Mayrand said only the Commissioner of Canada Elections was investigating.

Hamilton’s emailed response to Elections Canada is consistent with evidence in a robocalls-related court challenge given by Andrew Langhorne, an executive with the Conservative’s main phone bank company, Responsive Marketing Group.

Langhorne swore an affidavit earlier this year saying that RMG agents called identified Conservatives to ensure they had the right polling location printed on their voter identifications cards.

“If the address provided by the voter for their polling station did not match the address in front of the RMG agent, the RMG agent was directed to provide the voter with the polling station address displayed from the (get-out-the-vote) data,” Langhorne said. But Langhorne allowed that voters and callers may have different addresses because of errors in the database the callers used, or errors in the voters list provided by Elections Canada.

In its postelection report, Elections Canada said that it had “indicated to political parties that the list (of polling stations) supplied should only be used for internal purposes and that parties should not direct electors to polling sites.”

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Rally against the 2012 Halifax NATO War Conference

Peace News

Posted by Joan Russow Sunday, 18 November 2012 03:36

Haligonians to again oppose the Fourth Annual Halifax International Security Forum by [Tony Seed](#)

Anti-Nato banner at the 2011 rally in Peace & Freedom Park across from the Westin Hotel

November 21, 2009: Haligonians mount a vigorous protest against the First Halifax International Security Forum, funded by DND and ACOA.

Protest at the 2011 Halifax War Conference

Protest at the 2011 Halifax War Conference

Saturday, November 17 — 1:00 pm

Halifax Peace & Freedom Park (formerly Cornwallis Park), Hollis and South Sts.

Organized by: No Harbour for War

Endorsed by: Halifax Peace Coalition, CUPW, NSPIRG, Food Not Bombs, St Mary's Activist Group, Canadians, Arabs & Jews for a Just Peace, Independent Jewish Voices, and others

For information: noharbourforwar@hotmail.com

ESTABLISHED four years ago, the Halifax International Security Forum (HISF) is taking place November 16-18 at the Westin Hotel. Warmongers from as many as 50 countries are joining Peter MacKay and some 300 others at the Forum “to learn from each other, share opinions, generate new ideas, and *put them into action.*”

Once again this year, the organization No Harbour for War, joined by many others, has come forward to say, “It is unacceptable that Halifax, or any Canadian city, be used as a venue to plan further crimes against the peace and the peoples of the world.”

On Saturday, November 17, these organizations are calling on Haligonians to “Bring your banners and placards, bring your music and statements, and most of all bring your friends to oppose this war conference.”

Participation in the rally is being fuelled by people's justified anger and outrage against the brutal crimes of Israel against the Palestinians, “Operation Pillar of Defence,” and the Harper and Obama government's support for the assault on Gaza as self-defence. All across Canada and around the world people are staging rallies this weekend in defence of the people of Palestine.

The rally is being held on the second day of the conference.

Activists highlight that the “Halifax” International Security Forum is actually based in the capital of the United States, Washington, D.C. In its own words, the HISF is “an invitation only weekend”: this means all participants are selected, vetted and invited from the United States.

Even though the HISF features live streaming on its website, three quarters of the sessions are classified as “off-the-record” and thus held in absolute secrecy. Of 34 sessions, 26 are “off-the-record.”

The embedded media, consisting of invited senior correspondents and editors from

leading mass media in the NATO bloc, any number of whom have been enlisted as moderators, have never been allowed – nor expressed any desire to – to report on the closed door discussions and conclusions which have great ramifications for Canadians and all citizens of the world. The public is excluded. The main feature is that it is organized so that the Canadian people have no say. Despite such significant discussions, no representatives of workers' organizations, or those with knowledge and legitimate concerns or the First Nations of either country are invited to speak about the questions of democracy, sovereignty and peace.

The opulent hotel is totally locked down, surrounded by HRM Police outside with a private security force inside, becoming an armed camp. Last year the Israeli secret service Mossad accompanied Gen Ehud Barak, head of the Israeli Defence Force who commanded the murderous invasion of Gaza in 2009, killing over 3,000 Palestinians including some 600 children, to the podium where he conducted a 30-minute "public interview session." Meanwhile, following the lively rally outside, over one hundred participants surrounded the plush hotel, shouting over the heads of armed HRM police, "this is what democracy looks like" and "the real criminals are inside!" That said it all. The first HISF took place in 2009 following the Strasbourg/Kiel NATO Summit during the 60th anniversary of NATO and was inaugurated by then U.S. Defence Secretary Robert Gates. It was organized by the German Marshall Fund of the United States, also based in Washington, and modelled on a series of similar conferences and forums it had organized in Europe in conjunction with NATO summits.

That event and the next in 2010 featuring Condoleezza Rice, former U.S. Secretary of State in the Bush presidency, concentrated on elaborating the new "strategic doctrine" that was to be adopted by NATO at its 2010 Lisbon Summit, which followed the 2010 HISF. The espousal of "trans-Atlantic values" by which is meant the union of Europe under the U.S. banner was the order of the day. Generals, admirals and strategists dominated in the first two forums.

At the third HISF in 2011, there was a clear shift in emphasis and tactics.

Along with the global expansion of NATO, U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta called in his keynote speech for a focus on other "forms of engagement" than military, saying "we must also constantly assess *the forms of engagement* that are most appropriate in light of the capabilities of our allies and the threats that we face."

Towards this end, the 2011 forum highlighted the participation of leading liberal representatives of such agencies of the U.S. state as the National Endowment for Democracy and two of its core agencies, the National Democratic Institute and the International Republican Institute, together with Freedom House and Human Rights Watch. Its agenda was synchronized with the program of subversion of these agencies known to specialize in the "soft power" techniques of intervention, political destabilization and regime change under the pretext of "people power," "democracy," "open society," "non-violence" and "human rights."

At the same time, more attention was given to the Middle East and Africa, especially Syria and Iran. For the first time, "dissidents" were introduced as "human rights" "experts" — all from Syria and Iran and all resident in the U.S. and Canada. Although NATO claimed it had "liberated" Libya, not one single representative attended from Africa, including Tunisia, Libya and Egypt.

Specialists in manipulation and subversion of "colour revolutions" in Eastern Europe and

Lebanon and the “Arab Spring” were recruited from the National Democratic Institute, Freedom House and the Council on Foreign Relations to the newly-created board of directors formed in 2011 to operate the HISF. These included president David Van Praagh (NDI, NED), vice-president Joseph Hall (NDI) and secretary David J Kramer (president, Freedom House). In fact, four of the five directors are resident in New York and Washington, where its office is based. The headquarters are located in Suite 610, 1717 Rhode Island Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. Importantly, the HISF has no organic connection with Halifax, a small city with a strategic port on the Atlantic coast of Canada, except to appropriate its name and cynically use its locale as an out-of-the-way venue for the U.S. war conference.

This year, the agenda for HISF continues to focus on the role of the U.S. and NATO in the promotion of so-called democracy on a global basis, while maintaining dominance of Western countries in global affairs, especially with respect to China.

Focus on the “Arab Spring” has now shifted to a specific focus on interference in Syria and Iran in particular, with the sub-text justifying Israel’s related and indefensible assault on Gaza.

In statements issued just before the Conference, Peter MacKay, John Baird and Stephen Harper joined the Zionists’ disinformation, trying to construe their aggression and war crimes as self-defence. Israel has sent eight representatives to Halifax, including from Benjamin Netanyahu’s Office of the Prime Minister and two newspaper correspondents, as part of its campaign for a more perfect marriage with NATO as a full member.

The Syrian panel is a pertinent example of how the agenda and format of War Conference is designed and used for war to incite war in the form of further Western “humanitarian intervention” in that country and the region, which has hit a brick wall in Syria, Iran and Lebanon. It is thus one of only six sessions that are classified as open and is being televised for elite and public consumption.

One of the main speakers is Washington-based Radwan Ziadeh of the widely discredited U.S.-sponsored Syrian National Council, which has been folded into the “unified opposition” just formed in Qatar by the U.S. and the Gulf feudal regimes to, as Obama falsely claimed in his press conference of November 13, 2012, “represent the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people.”

Nevertheless, only Britain has recognized this latest entity as a government-in-exile. Both Ziadeh and another SNC representative, Mohammad al-Abdallah from New York, work with U.S.-financed agencies, *i.e.*, they represent the U.S. state, not the Syrian people. Ziadeh has publicly called for “Kosovo-stye military intervention” and is involved with the U.S. Institute for Peace on formulating a “transition plan,” *i.e.*, regime change of the Iraqi type. Politically, the SNC calls for a new rapprochement with Israel and a reversal of Syria’s long-standing fraternal relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran. The “Syrian Free Army” has attacked with arms Palestinian refugee camps inside Syria. The HISF has suspiciously kept their SNC affiliation off its published list of invitees, as it did in 2011, presenting them as “dissidents,” academics and independent champions of “human rights.”

They are joined on this panel by a representative of the *Al Hayat* newspaper, based in London and funded by Saudi Arabia, one of the regional organizers of the armed gangs smuggled into Syria, and a Kurdistan member of the Iraqi government. The HISF aims to give the agents of Washington legitimacy and respectability within NATO, other

participating countries and the media — together with an international platform to consolidate elite opinion and disinform public opinion as a necessary part of inciting new levels of intervention.

The implications that the events in the Middle East will have on “energy security” and oil supplies to the U.S. empire are also being brought to the table of the Halifax Conference. The “on-the-record” panel on energy is headlined by Alberta Conservative premier Alison Crawford and Wyoming Republican Senator Ron Barrasso, champions of the monopoly right of the oil and gas cartel. Their attendance is linked with MEG Energy Ltd. of Calgary, now a “partner” in the Halifax conference. This U.S.-owned monopoly is seeking to make the big score from the plunder of the Alberta oilsands, including the Northern Gateway pipeline to export oil to China and the Keystone XL pipeline to carry raw bitumen south to the U.S. empire. This represents the first time a premier other than Nova Scotia’s Darrell Dexter and a U.S. senator other than Republican Sen John McCain (Arizona) and Democrat Sen Mark Udall (Colorado) have attended the Halifax International Security Foun.

Concern is also expressed about Afghanistan and Pakistan and how to neutralize the peoples of the region.

Latin America and the Caribbean are noticeable by the near-complete absence of representation with the exception of the Jamaican military (where Canada is establishing one of its new overseas military bases), the Colombia minister of defence, and Mexico and Brazil.

What’s behind the media attention?

Another significant feature is that for the first time the Canadian media is heavily publicizing the U.S.-NATO war conference (1) *before* the event; (2) as a so-called Canadian initiative and (3) as a benign “debate” on alternative positions on security. To this end, the CBC TV’s Peter Mansbridge was brought to Halifax for a one-hour special, including a one-on-one interview with MacKay. Warmongers are prettfied as “world leaders” and “heavy hitters of the security world.”

This facade flies in the face of additional facts. Last year, the Halifax anti-war activists exposed that the Department of National Defence and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) were handing over guaranteed annual funding – to the tune of over \$7.5 million in Canadian taxdollars in an unsourced contract – to the U.S. organizers based in Washington to finance the 2011, 2012 and 2013 conferences.

Four of the five directors of the HISF’s board are resident in New York and Washington, where its office is based. The headquarters are located in Suite 610, 1717 Rhode Island Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. There is no Canadian telephone. The word “defence” is spelt “defense” on its website. This in itself is a telling comment on the Harper-MacKay-Obama concept of sovereignty and governance. But the question arises as to whether or not the HISF is a covert arm of the U.S. state. Front organizations are reminiscent of all the methods and tactics of the Cold War with its “pass through” conduits.

Importantly, the “Halifax” International Security Forum has no organic connection with Halifax, a small city with a strategic, ice-free port on the Atlantic coast of Canada, except to cynically appropriate its name and use its locale as an out-of-the-way venue for the U.S. war conference.

Further, the HISF now openly includes as “partners” the NATO military bloc (sending its top commanders), General Dynamic and Irving Shipbuilding (two giant monopolies

involved in military production and the arms trade), together with the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), the most powerful think tank of the U.S. elite, known as the imperial brain trust. Since May 2005 the CFR has openly demanded the annexation of Canada and Mexico in a United States of North American monopolies. Its *Foreign Affairs* journal and website are a lead manufacturer of the psychosis of the inevitability of war against Iran. It has done this by orchestrating a “debate” between seemingly different views on the viability of a pre-emptive strikes, diplomacy or invasion of Iran and then framing this as the sole policy options. The HISF has incorporated this neo-liberal method in its form. Characteristically, details of the content of their “partnership” with the HISF are left in the shade but the basic relationship is anti-social, neo-liberal and anti-national as the content and form of the HISF reveal.

Security is based on securing the rights of all

At the heart of the “debate” on all sides at the HISF is that the only way to stave off eventual decline is by striving for domination of the Middle East. Such a debate can only be used to justify U.S. and NATO attacks against Syria and Iran and the Israeli attacks against the steadfast Palestinian people that the U.S. imperialists deem necessary to destroy those countries and peoples so as to secure their domination over Asia.

The agenda items for the fourth Halifax NATO war conference are replete with chauvinism against the peoples of the world. They underscore that this conference is based on an imperialist definition of “values” and “security,” which is itself based on U.S. hegemony, the dominance of “western civilization,” “might makes right,” “responsibility to protect” and white man’s burden.

Importantly, the HISF is advancing these racist and imperialist concepts wrapped in its high profile Canadian flag — facilitated by the embedded media — amid a heated debate within the U.S. establishment around the re-election of Barack Obama, the setbacks its proxy forces are facing from Syria and Iran and on the diplomatic front in defence of their sovereignty, the decline of U.S. preponderance and its hegemonic position, the fight over oil and gas, and the growing resistance within Canada which blocks the agenda of big capital and the politicians and generals in their service. This resistance blocks the agenda of big capital and the politicians and generals in their service just as Iran and Syria and the resistance of the Palestinian, Lebanese and Egyptian peoples are blocking the expansion of NATO and the U.S. in the Middle East.

Canadians reject the self-serving definitions of democracy, security and self-defence promoted by the HISF. Canadians reject the “values” embraced of white man’s burden. Canadians and the peoples of world do not need condescending saviours to undermine their aspirations for a bright future. The peace- and justice-loving peoples of the world have defined security as fighting for the rights of all. They are fighting to uphold the sovereignty of all nations, big and small, and oppose the use of force as a means to resolve conflicts between nations and peoples.

No Harbour for War!

Not In Our Name!

All Out to Oppose the Halifax NATO War Conference!

With files from TML Daily

Last Updated on Sunday, 18 November 2012 04:09

Israeli Firepower Threatens to Overwhelm Palestinians

Peace News

Posted by Joan Russow Monday, 19 November 2012 08:19

By [Thalif Deen](#)[Reprint](#)

Israeli air force F-16I's sit on the tarmac. Its air power includes F-15 and F-16 fighter planes, E-2C Hawkeye reconnaissance aircraft, Kfir military trainers, Boeing mid-air refueling aircraft, and Apache, Chinook and Sikorsky Blackhawk helicopters. Credit: Darrell I. Dean, U.S. Air Force

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 17 2012 (IPS) – When the late Yasser Arafat, leader of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), was engaged in a heavily one-sided battle against a robustly-armed Israel in 2000, he admitted the Palestinians were completely outgunned by the Israelis.

As the the U.S.-supplied Cobra helicopters rained fire on the West Bank and Gaza, Arafat told reporters, “I have only one aeroplane,” alluding to his single-aircraft Palestinian airline.

Even in routine military jargon, an “aeroplane” no longer exists – particularly in an age of jet fighters and attack helicopters – proving how powerless the Palestinians remained as a fighting force against Israel.

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The PLO's rockets and machine guns at that time were overwhelmed by an Israeli military arsenal beefed up with some of the world's most sophisticated military equipment.

The air force inventory included F-15 and F-16 fighter planes, E-2C Hawkeye reconnaissance aircraft, Kfir military trainers, Boeing mid-air refueling aircraft, and Apache, Chinook and Sikorsky Blackhawk helicopters – virtually all of them doled out mostly as outright military grants from the United States.

And as Hamas, the successor to the PLO, now finds itself in a military skirmish with Israel in Gaza, the long-range rockets falling on Israel are still unmatched by Israel's missiles, warships, battle tanks, mortar, howitzers and air defence radar.

An Israeli fighter plane early this week blew up, with pinpoint accuracy, a vehicle carrying a Hamas military leader and his family.

Nearly 12 years after Arafat's admission of military helplessness, the Palestinians seemed armed only with rockets, mortars, assault rifles and anti-aircraft guns against Israel's laser-guided bombs, armoured vehicles, battle tanks and armoured personnel carriers. In Middle Eastern politics, it is long established fact that no Arab country – or even a combination of Arab countries – would be able to overpower the Israelis.

The latest Global Militarisation Index released last week by the Bonn International

Centre for Conversion (BICC) listed Israel as “the world’s most militarised nation”, followed by Singapore, Syria, Russia, Jordan and Cyprus.

Dan Darling, military markets analyst for Asia/Europe at Forecast International, told IPS that “in terms of raw firepower and military technologies Israel remains the most advanced military nation in the region”.

The defence exporting policy of the U.S., and to a lesser extent other European nations, is the retention of the status quo, he said.

“Thus every approved defence sale to an Arab nation in the Middle East is weighed against the consequent pressure brought to bear on Israel’s qualitative military edge (QME)”, he noted.

For instance, he pointed out, the next-generation F-35 Lightning II stealth fighter plane has been approved for sale to the Israelis, but is unlikely to get the go-ahead for interested Arab parties until the Israeli Air Force is equipped with the platform and its personnel brought up to speed on utilising and maintaining the aircraft.

“And even then the number of aircraft and the planes accompanying weapons and electronics suites approved for an Arab country will not be allowed to measure up to the level granted the Israelis,” said Darling.

The United States has also helped fund and develop Israeli anti-rocket/mortar/missile air-defence systems such as David’s Sling and Iron Dome.

Born in conflict, Israelis realise their country has to maintain a strong national security apparatus, Darling said.

On the domestic side, the Israeli defence electronics industry is well advanced in the area of unmanned aerial and ground platforms, he added.

In terms of pure spending, however, nobody in the region invests more in defence and security than Saudi Arabia (48-plus billion dollars in 2012).

Forecast International, a U.S. based company which also monitors arms sales worldwide, has ranked Israel second, regionally, in terms of defence budgets, at 14.7-15.0 billion dollars, just ahead of Iraq (14.6 billion dollars) and well ahead of the United Arab Emirates (10 billion dollars).

According to the 2012 Congressional Budget Justification put out by the U.S. State Department, outright U.S. military grants to Israel remained at 2.8 billion each in 2010 and 2011, rising to 3.1 billion dollars in 2012.

The State Department also said that 2009 marked the first year of a 10-year, 30-billion-dollar military financing memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Israel.

“U.S. assistance helps ensure that Israel maintains a qualitative military edge over potential regional threats, preventing a shift in the security balance in the region, and safeguarding U.S. interests,” the State Department said.

Meanwhile, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said Friday he was extremely concerned about the continued violence in Gaza and Israel and deeply worried by the rising cost in terms of civilian lives.

Ban, who is planning a visit to the Middle East, “urgently appealed to all concerned to do everything under their command to stop this dangerous escalation and restore calm”.

Walking a thin line between the Israelis and the Palestinians, he said, “Rocket attacks are unacceptable and must stop at once. Israel must exercise maximum restraint.”

Meanwhile, the 15-member Security Council met at a late night session Thursday. But there was no decision on how to deal with the escalating violence.

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[Planet on Path to Four C Warming, World Bank Warns](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 21 November 2012 08:22

By [Stephen Leahy](#)

UXBRIDGE, Canada, Nov 19 2012 (IPS) – Coal, oil and gas companies and their backers in the financial and investment industry must stop putting billions of dollars into finding and extracting new sources of fossil fuels. If they don't shift their investments, temperatures will soar four to 10 degrees C higher, devastating many parts of the world, the World Bank said Monday.

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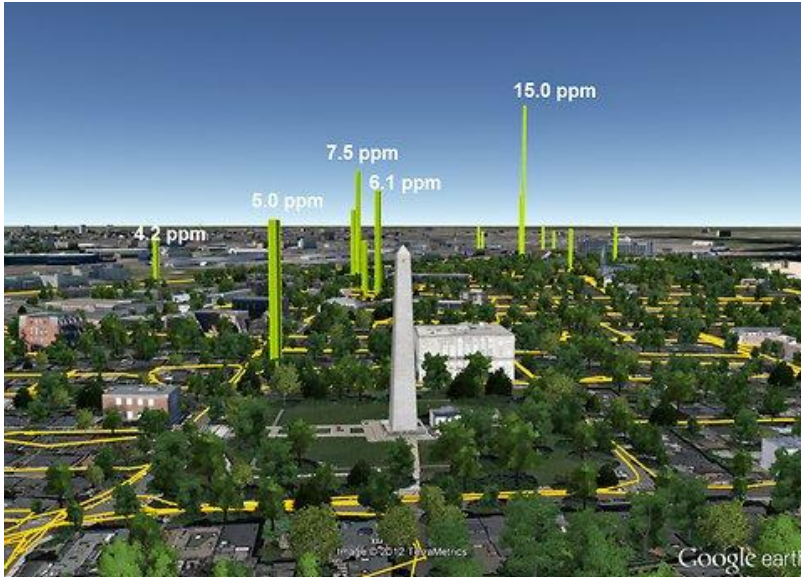
Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 22 November 2012 16:34

By [JOANNA M. FOSTER](#) November 20, 2012,

<http://green.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/11/20/methane-is-popping-up-all-over-boston/>

Kaiguang ZhaoMethane leaks around the Bunker Hill Monument in the Charlestown neighborhood of Boston, measured in parts per million.



Kaiguang ZhaoMethane leaks around the Bunker Hill Monument in the Charlestown neighborhood of Boston,

Natural gas has been hailed by some as a crucial bridge fuel to a cleaner energy future. But how much cleaner is burning natural gas than burning oil or coal?

Concern over water contamination from fracking for natural gas aside, some argue that the much-advertised climate advantage of natural gas may be all but offset by the steady release of methane during its long journey from the well to the 65 million American households that depend on natural gas. Molecule per molecule, methane has more than [20 times the global warming potential](#) of carbon dioxide.

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By Waking Times November 20, 2012

ETC Group

Agribusiness giants [Monsanto](#), DuPont and Dow are plotting the boldest coup of a global

food crop in history. If their requests to allow a massive commercial planting of [genetically modified](#) (GM) maize are approved in the next two weeks by the government of outgoing president Felipe Calderón, this parting gift to the gene giants will amount to a knife in the heart of the center of origin and diversity for maize.

Last Updated on Thursday, 22 November 2012 13:48

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[Monsanto Back at it Again in Costa Rica with GM Corn](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

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November 17, 2012 | By Dylan Charles, *Editor* [Waking Times](#)

In the small Latin American country of Costa Rica, where agriculture is king and enormous corporate plantations have dotted the country-side, a subsidiary of [Monsanto](#) is making a push to plant several hectares of genetically modified transgenic corn in the Northwestern province of Guanacaste.

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WASHINGTON, Nov 20 2012 (IPS) - News stories on the latest International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report suggested new reasons to fear that Iran is closer to a “breakout” capability than ever before, citing a nearly 50-percent increase in its stockpile of 20-percent enriched uranium and the installation of hundreds of additional centrifuges at the Fordow enrichment installation.

But the supposedly dramatic increase in the stockpile of uranium that could theoretically be used to enrich to weapons grade is based on misleading figures in the Nov. 16 IAEA report. The actual increase in the level of that stockpile appears to be 20 percent.

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Fight against climate change blocked by Luddites at Big Oil:



Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 21 November 2012 08:11

by McQuaig Toronto Star Monday November 19, 2012

<http://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorialopinion/article/1290137--fight-against-climate-change-blocked-by-luddites-at-big-oil-mcquaig>

Platform

Bruce Chambers/AP Oil companies currently have proven reserves of oil, gas and coal worth \$27 trillion.

In the interest of fighting climate change, most of us avoid buying SUVs — fortress-like vehicles that aren’t necessary unless one intends to take the whole family for a spin through downtown Baghdad.

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Nigeria Exxon spill spreads for miles along coast



Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 20 November 2012 22:29



By Tife Owolabi

IBENO, Nigeria | Sun Nov 18, 2012 2:51am EST

IBENO, Nigeria (Reuters) - An oil spill at an ExxonMobil facility offshore from the Niger Delta has spread at least 20 miles from its source, coating waters used by fishermen in a film of sludge.

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Declassified documents reveal that the Israeli military calculated how many calories a typical Gazan would need to survive, in order to determine how much food to supply the Gaza Strip during Israel's 2007-2010 blockade. The Israeli human rights group Gisha, which campaigns against Israel's Gaza blockade, fought a legal battle to force the Israeli Ministry of Defense to release the documents.

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['People Over Profits!': Climate Justice Groups Slam 'Wholly Irresponsible' Tar Sands Plan](#)



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Tuesday, 20 November 2012 17:39

Peaceful Uprising and Utah Tar Sands Resistance say western land sale puts 'short-term profits' ahead of the planet, attempt to deliver 'People's Environmental Statement'

Published on Tuesday, November 20, 2012 by [Common Dreams](#)

- Common Dreams staff



photo: Utah Tar Sands

Resistance

Dozens of protesters attempted to deliver "The People's Environmental Impact Statement" on the Bureau of Land Management's "wholly irresponsible" plan to lease over 800,000 acres of land in Utah, Colorado, and Wyoming for tar sands and oil shale development to the Bureau's office in Salt Lake City on Monday.

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MQ-9 Reaper drone. Rights groups fear such weapons are precursors to

greater autonomy for machines on the battlefield.

Credit: U.S. Air Force

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 19 2012 (IPS) - The predator drone – an unmanned

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Canada had expected to face UN grilling for attitude on torture



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 20 November 2012 08:31

Canada had expected to face UN grilling for attitude on torture

Jim Bronskill OTTAWA — The Canadian Press Nov. 12

2012 <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/>

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Concerned advocates about Canada's position on Torture

Canada fully expected the intense grilling it got from a United Nations committee earlier this year about its

international obligations to shun torture and other cruel treatment, newly released briefing memos show.

Officials quietly advised Justice Minister Rob Nicholson the committee would "likely press Canada" on issues

ranging from prison overcrowding and police use of force during demonstrations to murdered aboriginal women and redress for people subjected to torture abroad.

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George W. Bush and Dick Cheney for alleged war crimes

perpetrated during the American pursuit of terrorism suspects.

In late May, a delegation presented Canada's latest report on compliance with the UN Convention Against Torture. Leading up to the appearance, officials provided the minister with copies of numerous talking points "for the delegation to use as needed to respond to the committee's questions in a manner that defends Canada's interests," says a memo to Mr. Nicholson released under the Access to Information Act.

"Canada's appearance may attract some media attention since organizations such as

Amnesty International Canada will be present.”

The Foreign Affairs Department was co-ordinating preparation of “communications products” on behalf of Justice, Public Safety, and Citizenship and Immigration, the memo noted.

The dozens of pages of internal memos reveal the extent to which Canada was prepared to defend its human-rights record at the UN.

Canadian advisers noted that civil society groups occasionally call for prosecution of foreign public officials – including Mr. Bush and Mr. Cheney –for actions during their time in office.

Investigations involving allegations of war crimes are complex, lengthy and resource-intensive, says a briefing note on the former U.S. leaders.

“To ensure the most efficient use of resources, Canada prioritizes suspects who reside in Canada.”

All war-crimes cases require the consent of the federal attorney-general before charges can be laid, the note adds. “Therefore, from a practical perspective, the police consult with the appropriate authorities prior to an individual’s arrest.”

The note advised that “if pressed” for information on Mr. Bush and Mr. Cheney, officials should tell the UN committee, “Generally speaking, Canada does not address specific criminal complaints in a public forum.”

The notes also show Canada was concerned the case of Mahmoud Jaballah –currently facing deportation under a national-security certificate – might come up during discussion of whether Canada would ever return someone to a country where they faced torture.

Canada acknowledged a key Supreme Court ruling left open “the theoretical possibility of removal to a risk of torture” in cases where the person’s continued presence in Canada was outweighed by the threat they posed to Canadian security. But it added Canada had never deported anyone in a case where officials had concluded the person faced a substantial risk of abuse.

In its June report on the presentation, the UN committee expressed concern that Canadian law could allow the return of a persecuted individual to their tormentors.

The report also took issue with several other aspects of Canada’s legal regime, including planned measures affecting refugee claimants and the continuing use of national-security certificates to deport non-citizens.

In addition, it chastised Canada over a ministerial direction to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service allowing the spy agency, in some cases, to use information that may have been derived through torture, or to share information even if it might lead to abuse.

The committee recommended the federal government compensate three Arab-Canadians – Abdullah Almalki, Ahmad El-Maati and Muayed Nureddin – who were tortured in Syria, in part due to lapses by Canadian agencies.

It also asked Canada to provide follow-up answers to key concerns and recommendations by June 1 next year.

Last Updated on Tuesday, 20 No

[Canadian Peace Congress Condemns Israel’s Attack On Gaza](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 19 November 2012 11:02


by Canadian Peace Congress

Canadian Government Must Support Peace and Self-Determination, Not War and Occupation!

The Executive Council of the Canadian Peace Congress (CPCCon) condemns the recent and escalating aggression by Israel against the Palestinian territory of Gaza. The Congress declares its solidarity with the people of Palestine, and reiterates its support for an independent Palestinian state within the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.

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[Who is doing the killing in Gaza? Noam Chomsky and others challenge world's media](#) 

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 19 November 2012 08:44

15 November 2012 by Noam Chomsky & others

[Palestine and Israel](#)

The degree of terror felt by ordinary Palestinian civilians in Gaza is barely noticed in the media, in stark contrast to the world's awareness of terrorised and shock-treated Israeli citizens.

Funeral of Palestinians killed by Israeli attack, Gaza, 11.11.2012

WHILE COUNTRIES across Europe and North America commemorated military casualties of past and present wars on November 11, Israel was targeting civilians.

On November 12, waking up to a new week, readers at breakfast were flooded with heart rending accounts of past and current military casualties.

There was, however, no or little mention of the fact that the majority of casualties of modern day wars are civilians.

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Monday, 19 November 2012 08:19

By [Thalif Deen](#) [Reprint](#)



Israeli air force F-16I's sit on the tarmac. Its air power includes F-15 and F-16 fighter planes, E-2C Hawkeye reconnaissance aircraft, Kfir military trainers, Boeing mid-air refueling aircraft, and Apache, Chinook and Sikorsky Blackhawk helicopters. Credit: Darrell I. Dean, U.S. Air Force

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[SUBMISSION TO THE CANCUN CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE,](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 18 November 2012 23:28



by Joan Russow and Richard Levicki

The following pdf document was submitted in 2010.(if you can't see it you may need to install Adobe Reader. It is free from [HERE](#)) Unfortunately we are 2 years further down the road and the polititions and industry are still not taking climate change seriously

Doha 2012 - UN Climate Change Conference from November 26 - December 7, 2012. will take place in Qatar

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Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 18 November 2012 19:23

By [Ellen Cantarow](#) <http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175618/>



There' s a war going on that you know nothing about between a coalition of great powers and a small insurgent movement. It' s a secret war being waged in the shadows while you go about your everyday life.

In the end, this conflict may matter more than those in Iraq and Afghanistan ever did. And yet it' s taking place far from newspaper front pages and with hardly a notice on the nightly news. Nor is it being fought in Yemen or Pakistan or Somalia, but in small hamlets in upstate New York. There, a loose network of activists is waging a guerrilla campaign not with improvised explosive devices or rocket-propelled grenades, but with zoning ordinances and petitions.

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By Stephen Maher & Glen McGregor, Postmedia News November 16, 2012



Robbie the Friendly Robot.

Photograph by: David Kawai / Ottawa Citizen , Postmedia News

OTTAWA — Three days before the last federal election, Elections Canada confronted the Conservatives about suspicious calls directing voters to the wrong polling stations but were met with denials of any wrongdoing from the party's lawyer, internal emails show.

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[Drones must like cluster bombs be prohibited for violating the Geneva Protocol](#)



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Sunday, 18 November 2012 08:14

by Joan Russow Global Compliance Research Project



Consequences, of using militarized drones once realized, they, like cluster bombs, will be deemed to be prohibited under the Geneva protocol. The weapons industries and those that support weapon systems have been criminally negligent for not being capable of anticipating the dire consequences of introducing new weapons. It is unconscionable that new weapons are continually introduced in defiance of the precautionary principle: Where there is a threat of irreversible harm to humans and the environment, the lack of full scientific certainty should not be used to prevent the threat of the use of these weapons.

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by [Tony Seed](#)



Anti-Nato banner at the 2011 rally in Peace & Freedom Park across from the Westin Hotel

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WASHINGTON, Nov 20 2012 (IPS) – News stories on the latest International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report suggested new reasons to fear that Iran is closer to a “breakout” capability than ever before, citing a nearly 50-percent increase in its stockpile of 20-percent enriched uranium and the installation of hundreds of additional centrifuges at the Fordow enrichment installation.

But the supposedly dramatic increase in the stockpile of uranium that could theoretically be used to enrich to weapons grade is based on misleading figures in the Nov. 16 IAEA report. The actual increase in the level of that stockpile appears to be 20 percent.

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Bruce Chambers/AP Oil companies currently have proven reserves of oil, gas and coal worth \$27 trillion.

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'People Over Profits!': Climate Justice Groups Slam 'Wholly Irresponsible' Tar Sands Plan

Posted by Joan Russow
Tuesday, 20 November 2012 17:39

Peaceful Uprising and Utah Tar Sands Resistance say western land sale puts 'short-term profits' ahead of the planet, attempt to deliver 'People's Environmental Statement'

Published on Tuesday, November 20, 2012 by [Common Dreams](#)

– Common Dreams staff

photo: Utah Tar Sands Resistance

Dozens of protesters attempted to deliver "The People's Environmental Impact Statement" on the Bureau of Land Management's "wholly irresponsible" plan to lease over 800,000 acres of land in Utah, Colorado, and Wyoming for tar sands and oil shale development to the Bureau's office in Salt Lake City on Monday.

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Rights Groups Call for Ban on Futuristic Killer Robots



Peace News

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 20 November 2012 12:09

By **Thalif Deen**



MQ-9 Reaper drone. Rights groups fear such weapons are precursors to greater autonomy for machines on the battlefield. Credit: U.S. Air Force

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 19 2012 (IPS) - The predator drone – an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) – is one of the relatively new lethal weapons used by the United States for targeted killings of suspected terrorists, particularly in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen and Somalia.

And since it is unmanned and remotely controlled, the drone does not risk the lives of U.S. soldiers.

But the weapon has increasingly come under fire because of the collateral damage in the spillover killings of innocent civilians, including women and children.

On Monday, [a report jointly published](#) by Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Harvard Law School's International Human Rights Clinic (IHRC) has warned of an even more deadly weapon: killer robots.

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Described as fully autonomous, these weapons will have the capability to select and fire on targets without human intervention in future wars.

The primary concern of HRW and IHRC is the impact fully autonomous weapons would have on the protection of civilians during times of war.

In the report released Monday, they called on governments to pre-emptively ban these yet-to-be deployed weapons because of the danger they pose to civilians in armed conflict.

Asked how feasible it was to garner support at the United Nations for an international convention to ban such killer robots, Steve Goose, arms division director at Human Rights Watch, told IPS that many governments are not yet aware of the status of development of, and plans to produce fully autonomous weapons systems.

So, a good deal of education needs to be done, he said.

"But we are convinced that the obvious and undeniable inconsistency of these future weapons with existing international humanitarian law, and the degree to which they will be repugnant to the public conscience, will make an international prohibition on killer robots achievable in the near term," said Goose.

Asked how drones differ from fully autonomous weapons, Goose said drones have a "man in the loop" – a human has remote control, a human selects the target and decides when to fire the weapon.

The 50-page report titled "Losing Humanity: The Case Against Killer Robots" expresses concern over these fully autonomous weapons, which would inherently lack human qualities that provide legal and non-legal cheques on the killing of civilians.

In addition, the obstacles to holding anyone accountable for harm caused by the weapons would weaken the law's power to deter future violations.

"Giving machines the power to decide who lives and dies on the battlefield would take technology too far," said Goose, pointing out that human control of robotic warfare is essential to minimising civilian deaths and injuries.

Fully autonomous weapons do not yet exist, and major powers, including the United States, have not made a decision to deploy them, according to the report. However, the most high-tech militaries are developing or have already deployed precursors that illustrate the push toward greater autonomy for machines on the battlefield, it said.

The United States is a leader in the technological development of killer robots, while several other countries, including China, Germany, Israel, South Korea, Russia, and the United Kingdom have also been involved.

"Many experts predict that full autonomy for weapons could be achieved in 20 to 30 years, and some think even sooner," HRW said.

Both HRW and IHRC Monday called for an international treaty that would absolutely prohibit the development, production, and use of fully autonomous weapons.

They also called on individual nations to pass laws and adopt policies as important measures to prevent development, production, and use of such weapons at the domestic level.

Asked what weapons are currently banned under international conventions, Goose told IPS that banned weapons include poison gas, chemical and biological weapons, blinding lasers, antipersonnel mines, and cluster munitions.

The 1995 ban on blinding lasers (spearheaded by the International Committee of the Red Cross and Human Rights Watch) is a key example of banning a weapon before it was widely produced or fielded by armed forces – a preemptive ban such as HRW and others are aiming for with fully autonomous weapons, Goose said.

The report analyses whether the technology would comply with international humanitarian law and preserve other cheques on the killing of civilians.

But it finds that fully autonomous weapons would not only be unable to meet legal standards but would also undermine essential non-legal safeguards for civilians.

"Our research and analysis strongly conclude that fully autonomous weapons should be banned and that governments should urgently pursue that end," the report says.

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Canada had expected to face UN grilling for attitude on torture



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 20 November 2012 08:31

Canada had expected to face UN grilling for attitude on torture

Jim Bronskill OTTAWA — The Canadian Press Nov. 12

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Officials quietly advised Justice Minister Rob Nicholson the committee would "likely press Canada" on issues ranging from prison overcrowding and police use of force during demonstrations to murdered aboriginal women and redress for people subjected to torture abroad.

More Related to this Story The federal government was also prepared to defend its refusal to arrest former U.S. leaders George W. Bush and Dick Cheney for alleged war crimes perpetrated during the American pursuit of terrorism suspects.

In late May, a delegation presented Canada's latest report on compliance with the UN Convention Against Torture. Leading up to the appearance, officials provided the minister with copies of numerous talking points "for the delegation to use as needed to respond to the committee's questions in a manner that defends Canada's interests," says a memo to Mr. Nicholson released under the Access to Information Act.

"Canada's appearance may attract some media attention since organizations such as Amnesty International Canada will be present."

The Foreign Affairs Department was co-ordinating preparation of "communications products" on behalf of Justice, Public Safety, and Citizenship and Immigration, the memo noted.

The dozens of pages of internal memos reveal the extent to which Canada was prepared to defend its human-rights record at the UN.

Canadian advisers noted that civil society groups occasionally call for prosecution of foreign

public officials – including Mr. Bush and Mr. Cheney –for actions during their time in office.

Investigations involving allegations of war crimes are complex, lengthy and resource-intensive, says a briefing note on the former U.S. leaders.

“To ensure the most efficient use of resources, Canada prioritizes suspects who reside in Canada.”

All war-crimes cases require the consent of the federal attorney-general before charges can be laid, the note adds. “Therefore, from a practical perspective, the police consult with the appropriate authorities prior to an individual’s arrest.”

The note advised that “if pressed” for information on Mr. Bush and Mr. Cheney, officials should tell the UN committee, “Generally speaking, Canada does not address specific criminal complaints in a public forum.”

The notes also show Canada was concerned the case of Mahmoud Jaballah –currently facing deportation under a national-security certificate – might come up during discussion of whether Canada would ever return someone to a country where they faced torture.

Canada acknowledged a key Supreme Court ruling left open “the theoretical possibility of removal to a risk of torture” in cases where the person’s continued presence in Canada was outweighed by the threat they posed to Canadian security. But it added Canada had never deported anyone in a case where officials had concluded the person faced a substantial risk of abuse.

In its June report on the presentation, the UN committee expressed concern that Canadian law could allow the return of a persecuted individual to their tormentors.

The report also took issue with several other aspects of Canada’s legal regime, including planned measures affecting refugee claimants and the continuing use of national-security certificates to deport non-citizens.

In addition, it chastised Canada over a ministerial direction to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service allowing the spy agency, in some cases, to use information that may have been derived through torture, or to share information even if it might lead to abuse.

The committee recommended the federal government compensate three Arab-Canadians – Abdullah Almalki, Ahmad El-Maati and Muayed Nureddin – who were tortured in Syria, in part due to lapses by Canadian agencies.

It also asked Canada to provide follow-up answers to key concerns and recommendations by June 1 next year.

Last Updated on Tuesday, 20 No

36 readings

Canadian Peace Congress Condemns Israel's Attack On Gaza



Peace News

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 19 November 2012 11:02

by Canadian Peace Congress

Canadian Government Must Support Peace and Self-Determination, Not War and Occupation!

The Executive Council of the Canadian Peace Congress (CPCCon) condemns the recent and escalating aggression by Israel against the Palestinian territory of Gaza. The

Congress declares its solidarity with the people of Palestine, and reiterates its support for an independent Palestinian state within the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.

We condemn the hypocritical and war-mongering position of the Harper Conservative government, who immediately stated its support for Israel's aggression. Despite efforts to cloak Israel's attacks with the language of "self-defense" and "anti-terrorism", the reality is that the current aggression is part of a long history of provocation, aggression, truce violations, political assassinations, collective punishment and other criminal actions by Israel against the Palestinian people. We call upon the Canadian government to reverse its support for the aggressive actions of Israel, and to press the Netanyahu government for an immediate ceasefire and to open genuine peace negotiations.

The Canadian Peace Congress supports the thousands of people in Israel who have mobilized against the attacks and called for an immediate ceasefire.

We note that these attacks are occurring in the context of increased aggression and interference by NATO and its member states, including Canada, in the Middle East region. We reiterate our opposition to the drive to war against Syria and Iran, and call for the immediate withdrawal of the thousands of foreign mercenaries who are leading the anti-government violence in Syria.

The CPCCon supports the efforts by peace and solidarity organizations across Canada, including the Canadian Peace Alliance, to quickly mobilize opposition to Israel's criminal attack and to prevent escalation of this dangerous and deadly situation. We encourage and support further mobilizations, to build a broadly-based movement that can pressure the Canadian government to adopt a foreign policy based on peace, international cooperation and solidarity.

**No to Israel's aggression! No to NATO and imperialist war!
Yes to peace and sovereignty!**

Canadian Peace Congress, Executive Council
November 18, 2012

About the Canadian Peace Congress:

The Canadian Peace Congress was formed in 1949 as an organization of Canadian people that works for world peace and disarmament. We maintain that peace, not militarism and war, is the guarantor of democracy, human rights, and social and economic justice. The Congress is affiliated to the World Peace Council and is a founding member of the Canadian Peace Alliance.

For more information on the Canadian Peace Congress, or to join, please contact:

Dave McKee

President, Canadian Peace Congress
dmckee@canadianpeacecongress.ca

Attachment converted: Macintosh HD:Statement on Gaza Nov 12.pdf (PDF /«IC»)
(0025B213)

Last Updated on Monday, 19 November 2012 11:05

Who is doing the killing in Gaza? Noam Chomsky and others challenge world's media

Posted by Joan Russow
Monday, 19 November 2012 08:44
15 November 2012 by Noam Chomsky & others
[Palestine and Israel](#)

The degree of terror felt by ordinary Palestinian civilians in Gaza is barely noticed in the media, in stark contrast to the world's awareness of terrorised and shock-treated Israeli citizens.

Funeral of Palestinians killed by Israeli attack, Gaza, 11.11.2012

WHILE COUNTRIES across Europe and North America commemorated military casualties of past and present wars on November 11, Israel was targeting civilians.

On November 12, waking up to a new week, readers at breakfast were flooded with heart rending accounts of past and current military casualties.

There was, however, no or little mention of the fact that the majority of casualties of modern day wars are civilians.

Last Updated on Monday, 19 November 2012 08:52

SUBMISSION TO THE CANCUN CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE,

Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow Sunday, 18 November 2012 23:28

by Joan Russow and Richard Levicki

The following pdf document was submitted in 2010.(if you can't see it you may need to install Adobe Reader. It is free from [HERE](#)) Unfortunately we are 2 years further down the road and the politicians and industry are still not taking climate change seriously Doha 2012 – UN Climate Change Conference from November 26 – December 7, 2012. will take place in Qatar

Last Updated on Thursday, 22 November 2012 14:08

[Behind the pillars of cloud The food and farming sector in Gaza has been severely maimed, worsening the condition of agricultural sector.](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 22 November 2012 17:10

by [Rami Zurayk](#) and [Anne Gough](#) 22 Nov 2012 13:45k

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/11/2012112293032651902.htm>

1



Farmers are in the midst of the crucial olive harvest and olive oil production season and the destruction is a disastrous blow for food and economic security in Gaza [EPA]

Since its creation in 1948, Israel has used food and nutrition as a means to entrench its military and territorial occupation of Palestine. While all eyes are turned today to the savage eradication of [children and entire families](#) in Gaza through operation "Pillar of Cloud", Israel pursues its long-term goal of decimating the means of food production, livelihoods and the ability of those in Gaza to make economic and political decisions about what they grow and what they eat.

Gaza and the rest of Occupied Palestine is being restructured as an entity where malnutrition is endemic, access to food is denied and people are forced to live under the

constant fear of not having enough to eat.

In the last eight days, the food and farming sector in Gaza has been severely maimed, worsening the condition of an agricultural sector impaired by six years of Israeli imposed siege, military campaigns and decades of occupation.

In the first five days of the assault, the Ministry of Agriculture in Gaza estimated losses to the agriculture and fishing sectors to be above US \$50 million.

According to our colleague Mohammad El Bakri, who is with the [Union of Agricultural Work Committees](#), and other agricultural specialists in Gaza, farmers are in the midst of the crucial olive harvest and olive oil production season and the destruction is a disastrous blow for food and economic security in Gaza.



Water crisis

The [targeting of tunnels by Israeli airstrikes](#) has restricted the flow of food and fuel into Gaza. Few shops remain open and the UN has warned of an impending water crisis. There are reports of bombing campaigns purposely targeting irrigation wells. The Ministry of Health in Gaza [is out of 40 per cent of essential medicines](#) and running low on basics like bandages and syringes.

Gaza's dire situation began in 1948 when Zionist militia groups expelled over 700,000 Palestinians from their land, 200,000 of whom fled to Gaza and tripled its population.

Historically, Gaza had been known for [the fresh water oasis of Wadi Gaza](#), an important stop on trade routes between Egypt and Syria. No longer an oasis, lands razed and levelled by Israeli bulldozers along Gaza's eastern border ([29 per cent of arable land](#)) are now closed. Israeli naval ships harass and water cannon Palestinian fishermen, restricting them to three nautical miles from shore.

Polluted sewage is leaking into the coastal aquifer from water networks and buildings [bombed by Israeli airstrikes](#) in 2008-09's operation "Cast Lead".

Israel has also blocked the equipment needed to repair the damaged infrastructure. With tap water undrinkable, some people in Gaza are now surviving on [20 litres/day/person](#), while water consumption for the average Israeli is about [300 litres/day/person](#).

All of Gaza's [10,000 smallholder farms were damaged](#) in the 2008-09 onslaught, half a million trees uprooted and more than [one million chickens were killed](#) along with sheep, cattle and goats. The Israelis destroyed 60 per cent of the agricultural industry in Gaza,

causing \$268m in losses.

The proportion of Gazans judged "food insecure" increased to 75 per cent and in the aftermath, many households have been found to be [chronically food insecure](#). Two years after the attack, [the unemployment rate in Gaza was 45.2 per cent](#).

Isolated from fields

The West Bank has fared little better. The Oslo Interim Accords of 1995 carved the West Bank into Area A under Palestinian Authority control representing 3 per cent of the West Bank, Area B under joint control totalling 25 per cent and Area C, 72 per cent of the land, under full Israeli control including the agricultural land of the Jordan Valley.



In reality, the Israeli army can invade any area at any time. The bifurcation of Palestinian land and the construction of walls and barricades have [isolated farmers from fields and markets](#), given impunity to violent Israeli settlers and disfigured the landscape.

Israel's long-term goal in Gaza is not only the enforcement of the siege, but also a strategic application of de-development that forces Palestinians to be dependent on either Israel or international aid.

In 2007, the Israeli military created a [calculation](#) for the minimum number of calories allowed to people in Gaza. The caloric control mechanism ensures collective punishment, but not complete starvation. It is evident that this attack and Israel's food policy for Palestinians enjoys support from the US government.

The consequences of the recent assault will only be visible when the dust has settled. But it will surely not depart from the aim [expressed](#) by former Israeli official Dov Weisglass in 2006: "The idea is to put the Palestinians on a diet, but not to make them die of hunger."

Rami Zurayk is Professor at the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences and director of the Interfaculty Graduate Environmental Sciences Program at the American University of Beirut. Author of [Food, Farming and Freedom: Sowing the Arab Spring](#) and a guest author with Al Shabaka Palestinian Policy Network. Co-author of *Control Food, Control People: The Struggle for Food Security in Gaza* forthcoming from the Institute of Palestine Studies.

Anne Gough is Instructor at Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences, Interfaculty Graduate Environmental Sciences Program at the American University of Beirut.

Co-author of Control Food, Control People: The Struggle for Food Security in Gaza
forthcoming from the Institute of Palestine Studies.

The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect Al Jazeera's editorial policy.

Source:

Al Jazeera

Harper took steps to stifle Palestinian statehood bid



Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 27 November 2012 22:55

By CAMPBELL CLARK The Globe and Mail

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/harper-took-steps-to-stifle-palestinian-statehood-bid/article5655676/?cmpid=rss1>

Tuesday, Nov. 27 2012, 9:46 AM EST



Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas waves to the crowd during a rally supporting the Palestinian UN bid for observer state status, in the West Bank city of Ramallah, Sunday, Nov. 25, 2012. The Palestinians will request to upgrade their status on November 29. The status could add weight to Palestinian claims for a state in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem, territories captured by Israel in the 1967 Mideast war from Jordan.

(Majdi Mohammed /AP)

Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his government have intervened to pressure the Palestinian Authority to drop its bid for upgraded status at the United Nations, further cementing Canada's transition into one of Israel's firmest allies.

Last Updated on Tuesday, 27 November 2012 23:05

[Read more...](#)

113 readings

Discover the stories and hopes of Victoria's homeless this season



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 27 November 2012 16:35

by Cool Aid News Release For Immediate Release: November 27, 2012 www.homelesspartners.com www.CoolAid.org/shelter

Victoria – Steel-toed boots, nail polish, "Eclipse" on DVD and thermal underwear - this is a small cross-section of the past wish lists of Victoria's shelter residents. When asked, "What would you like for

Christmas?", most homeless are simply overwhelmed that someone cares enough to even pose the question. Yet this season, volunteers are doing just that, and posting the results at www.homelesspartners.com.

Working with the Cool Aid Society, members of the Shelbourne Street Church of Christ are meeting with residents at three local shelters, and asking them to share their stories, and their hopes. Whether it's the equipment needed to get a job, a small luxury to make things feel normal again (however briefly), a gift for an estranged teenage daughter, or another layer to keep out the cold, all of these wish list items have the power to make someone's Christmas special. In fact, just the knowledge that people care enough to read their stories and think about them, has a huge impact on the interviewees. By going to the website and perusing the biographies and wish lists, Victorians have the opportunity to learn more about the individuals living on our streets, how they got there, and what a big difference something small can make.

"The hope is that we can show the homeless that they are not invisible, that they are cared for," says Jennie Keeran, co-founder of the Homeless Partners Christmas Wish List program. "It also allows the public to see that the homeless are not nameless or faceless, nor are they an issue. They are individuals with different personalities and histories, that can be helped through creating this connection." Since 2005, this non-profit program has brought thousands of gifts to the less fortunate, and connected and touched many more hearts in cities across North America. This is the fourth year Victoria is participating, and the hope is to serve the 100+ residents of Next Steps, Sandy Merriman House and Rock Bay Landing shelter.

If you'd like to read their stories, send them an encouraging note, or even buy them a gift, please go to www.homelesspartners.com. Due to the short-term nature of many shelter stays, volunteers will continue to add stories to the site until mid-December, so please check for updates as Christmas Day approaches.

- 30 -

Information: www.homelesspartners.com www.CoolAid.org/shelter

Monique Cummings / Travis Hutchinson, Shelbourne Street Church of Christ,
[250-592-4914](tel:250-592-4914), secretary@shelbournestreet.com

Jennie Keeran, Homeless Partners Co-Founder, jenniek@uniserve.com

Christine O'Brien, Victoria Cool Aid Society, Coordinator of Sandy Merriman House & Next Steps Transitional Shelter, [250-480-1408](tel:250-480-1408), cobrien@CoolAid.org

Joann Connolly, Victoria Cool Aid Society, Coordinator of Rock Bay Landing,

[250-383-1951](tel:250-383-1951), jconnolly@CoolAid.org

Alan Rycroft, Community Relations
Victoria Cool Aid Society
102-749 Pandora Avenue, Victoria BC, V8R 2Z9
250-414-4781, 250-383-1639 fax

www.CoolAid.org
arycroft@CoolAid.org

www.Twitter.com/VicCoolAid
www.Facebook.com/VicCoolAid
www.YouTube.com/VicCoolAid

36 readings

Second B.C. shipping incident in two days heightens concerns over Enbridge Northern Gateway project



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 24 November 2012 18:18

Larry Pynn, Vancouver Sun : Friday, November 23, 2012 3:00 PM

<http://www.globaltvbc.com/second+bc+shipping+incident+in+two+days+heightens+concerns+over+enbridge+northern+gateway+project/6442759649/story.html> 

Photo Credit: Amy Judd , Global News

A second ocean-going vessel has run into trouble on the B.C. north coast in two days, creating further fodder for critics seeking to block the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline project.

Dan Bate, spokesman for the Canadian Coast Guard, said Friday that the deep-sea cargo ship, Tern Arrow, lost engine power in heavy seas and 40-knot winds near Laredo Sound south of Kitimat on Thursday at 2:17 p.m.

The Bahamas-registered 188-metre ship drifted for almost three hours before establishing emergency power at 5 p.m. and heading to open water at one to three knots southbound for the Pine Island pilot station, Bate said.

"At the time the vessel regained power it was south of McInnes Island in open waters." he added.

Bate said the coast guard ship Gordon Reid was "tasked by the Rescue Centre, but stood off in sheltered waters once the crew of the cargo ship was able to regain emergency power." The ship's master reported full propulsion restored at 3:07 a.m. on Friday.

The vessel left the Kitimat Alcan dock, carrying bulk goods, bound for Portland, said Bate, adding two pilots would have joined the ship at Kitimat and disembarked at Pine Island Pilot Station.

Pacific Wild's Ian McAllister, who lives on Denny Island on the central coast, said the two events bring a strong dose of reality to an Enbridge advertising campaign currently underway designed to allay public concerns.

"As that campaign is rolling out, two near shipping disasters on the same part of the coast where these oil tankers are proposed to transit," he said. "Enbridge's analysis of shipping-disaster potential really needs to be revisited."

On Tuesday night, a loaded container ship, the 279-metre German-registered Hanjin Geneva, changed course to avoid a small fishing boat and hit a sandbar about six nautical miles from Prince Rupert.

The ship was pulled free of the sandbar by a tugboat at high tide Wednesday morning. There was no leak of oil and no injuries.

The ship was piloted by a B.C. coastal pilot, an experienced mariner whose job is navigating large vessels into harbours and through coastal waters.

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Read it on Global News: [Global BC | Second B.C. shipping incident in two days heightens concerns over Enbridge Northern Gateway project](#)

Last Updated on Saturday, 24 November 2012 18:22

56 readings

What's the carbon footprint of ... a new car?



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 28 November 2012 14:59

by green living blog Guardian

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/green-living-blog/2010/sep/23/carbon-footprint-new-car>

Making a new car creates as much carbon pollution as driving it, so it's often better to keep your old banger on the road than to upgrade to a greener model.



The carbon footprint of a new car:

6 tonnes CO₂e: Citroen C1, basic spec

17 tonnes CO₂e: Ford Mondeo, medium spec

35 tonnes CO₂e: Land Rover Discovery, top of the range

The carbon footprint of making a car is immensely complex. Ores have to be dug out of the ground and the metals extracted. These have to be turned into parts. Other components have to be brought together: rubber tyres, plastic dashboards, paint, and so on. All of this involves transporting things around the world. The whole lot then has to be assembled, and every stage in the process requires energy. The companies that make cars have offices and other infrastructure with their own **carbon footprints**, which we need to somehow allocate proportionately to the cars that are made.

In other words, even more than with most items, the manufacture of a car causes ripples that extend throughout the economy. To give just one simple example among millions, the assembly plant uses phones and they in turn had to be manufactured, along with the phone lines that transmit the calls. The ripples go on and on for ever. Attempts to capture all these stages by adding them up individually are doomed from the outset to result in an underestimate, because the task is just too big.

The best we can do is use so-called input-output analysis to break up the known total emissions of the world or a country into different industries and sectors, in the process taking account of how each industry consumes the goods and services of all the others. If we do this, and then divide by the total emissions of the auto industry by the total amount of money spent on new cars, we reach a footprint of 720kg **CO₂e** per £1000 spent.

This is only a guideline figure, of course, as some cars may be more efficiently produced than others of the same price. But it's a reasonable ballpark estimate, and it suggests that cars have much bigger footprints than is traditionally believed. Producing a medium-sized new car costing £24,000 may generate more than 17 tonnes of **CO₂e** – almost as much as three years' worth of gas and electricity in the typical UK home.

Interestingly, the input-output analysis suggests that the gas and electricity used by the auto industry itself, including all the component manufacturers as well as the assembly plant, accounts for less than 12% of the total. The rest is spread across everything from metal extraction (33%), rubber manufacture (3%) and the manufacture of tools and machines (5%) through to business travel and stationary for car company employees.

The upshot is that – despite common claims to contrary – the embodied emissions of a car typically rival the exhaust pipe emissions over its entire lifetime. Indeed, for each mile driven, the emissions from the manufacture of a top-of-the-range Land Rover Discovery that ends up being scrapped after 100,000 miles

may be as much as four times higher than the tailpipe emissions of a Citroen C1.

With this in mind, unless you do very high mileage or have a real gas-guzzler, it generally makes sense to keep your old car for as long as it is reliable – and to look after it carefully to extend its life as long as possible. If you make a car last to 200,000 miles rather than 100,000, then the emissions for each mile the car does in its lifetime may drop by as much as 50%, as a result of getting more distance out of the initial manufacturing emissions.

When you do eventually replace your car, it obviously makes sense to do so with a light, simple and fuel-efficient model: that way you'll be limiting both the manufacturing and the exhaust-pipe emissions. But before you buy, [look into car clubs](#), especially if you live in a city centre: you may save lots of money as well as reducing the number of cars that need to be produced.

Of course, the exact benefits of new versus old cars, diesel versus hybrids, car clubs versus owning, and so on, are different for each person. To find out the greenest choice for you, check out the new interactive [greener car guide at Startuk.org](#).

[See more carbon footprints.](#)

- This article draws on text from [How Bad Are Bananas? The Carbon Footprint of Everything](#) by Mike Berners-Lee

Last Updated on Sunday, 02 December 2012 13:03

43 readings

Anti-consumerist ‘Reverend’: Black Friday boosts global warming



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 24 November 2012 05:16

By Arturo Garcia

Friday, November 23, 2012



Topics: [Alex Witt](#) ♦ [Reverend Billy Talen](#) ♦ [Witt](#)

"We have a 1,000-mile hurricane, Sandy, that — you know, you've been talking about little else for three weeks, haven't you?" Talen said. "There's a message there from Sandy, and that's, we have to change our lives." In an interview with MSNBC host Alex Witt, Reverend Billy Talen of [the Church of Stop Shopping](#) linked the journey of millions to storefronts on Black Friday to the global warming that ultimately fueled Superstorm Sandy.

Talen, who has toured the country in a parody of religious revivals aimed at getting people to stop being such voracious consumers, also alluded to [a 2009 study](#) by Mindclick SGM saying that carbon emissions from shopping on Black Friday were 50 times higher than for the increasingly-popular "Cyber Monday," where many online retailers spotlight their own bargains.

"The shift toward online commerce is part of the overall trend of IT leading to dematerialization, or virtual goods and services replacing physical goods," Gigaom reported after the study's release, adding that an increasing emphasis on virtual conferencing as opposed to physical meetings could reduce global carbon emissions by 500 million tons by 2020.

However, Witt said, the reality is that it's not just shoppers out on the road in the holiday crush, but also people either looking for jobs or taking what hours they can get in retail positions to support their families.

"There's all sorts of things that come into a family, whether it be a Hurricane Sandy event, or a losing their job event, that hits a house hard," Witt said.

Talen responded by saying that people can't afford to look at the world via a macro-vs-micro lens.

"We have to be macro now," he said. "We finally got the politicians to say the phrase, 'climate change.' We have to finally make a change. And that change is taking place. There's a quiet revolution in this country. People are going to sustainable local economies, ma and pa stores, farmer's markets, swap and thrift and repair it, don't necessarily throw it away as quickly. We are doing that and it's not getting reported very [often]."

Watch Witt's interview with Talen, aired Friday on MSNBC, below.

Raw Story (<http://s.tt/1uCYz>)

Last Updated on Sunday, 02 December 2012 13:08

[Climate conference in Doha decides on second Kyoto period](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 08 December 2012 16:59

**Report from Swiss Delegation. Bern,
08.12.2012 – The UN Climate Change
Conference in Doha (Qatar) ended on 8**

December 2012 with an agreement. The Kyoto Protocol will be continued until 2020 and the conclusion of a comprehensive climate agreement was confirmed for the post-2020 period. From the perspective of the Swiss delegation the conference achieved the minimum of what it set out to do.

[Read more...](#)

95 readings

'Yes on Prop 37' was classic "controlled opposition"



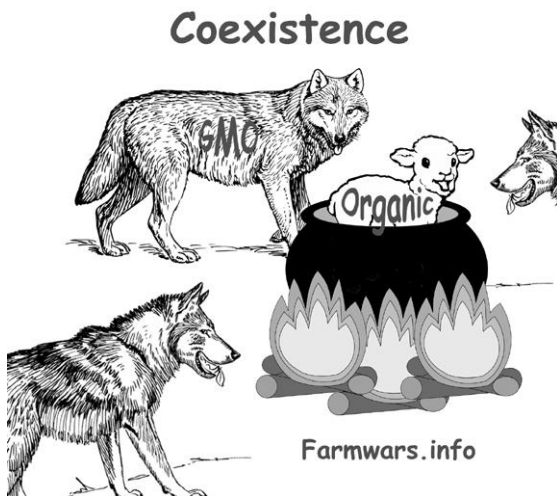
Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 08 December 2012 10:40

by Jon Rappoport

December 5, 2012 www.nomorefakenews.com <http://farmwars.info/?p=9624>



BOTTOM LINE: PROP 37 WAS CLASSIC "CONTROLLED OPPOSITION" LED BY COMFORTABLE BUSINESSMEN

"Agricultural co-existence?" Huh? What does that mean? It's an elite strategy. It means we accept different ways of growing food in America. It's the big ag-corp message these days.

Co-existence is an idea that's being sold. "Let's be tolerant.." "Let's have the free market decide what food is sold and isn't sold." On another level, it's a yuppie fetish.

"We have organic food over here, and then we have GMO food there, and then over here we have

conventionally grown food with pesticides but no GMOs.”

And that is exactly and precisely what Prop 37 said. We can co-exist as long as we know what kind of food we’re buying. As long as it’s labeled GMO if it’s GMO.

Okay? Keep all this in mind, because the punchline will be big.

Researching the whole Prop 37 debacle has proved to me, one more time, that Web journalists are miles ahead of the mainstream press.

In particular, I call your attention to an explosive piece written by Nick Brannigan. It just arrived by email. The title: “Is ‘Just Label It’ Controlled Opposition?” Read it here:

<http://www.nickbrannigan.com/articles/is-just-label-it-controlled-opposition.htm>

Brannigan reveals the approach of Gary Hirshberg, the renowned CEO of Stoneyfield. Hirshberg, like several major players in the YES ON 37 campaign, opts for co-existence.

In other words, it’s assumed that GMO food is here to stay, and we need to inform consumers they have a choice, and then the free market will decide our future. GMO? Organic? Conventional with pesticides but no GMOs? The consumer will pick the winning horse in the race.

The labeling campaigns, like YES ON 37, aim at just that. “You have a right to know what’s in your food, and when you do, you can make a choice.”

I revealed, in past articles, that this was the whole message to voters in California during the run-up to Election Day. YES ON 37 wasn’t about spelling out the health dangers of GMOs. It wasn’t about showing how Monsanto, through patents, is going after control of the world’s food supply. It wasn’t about demonstrably false Monsanto science or government collusion to allow GMO crops into the US food supply.

Brannigan presents some very vital information, in his article, about an organization called AGree. Gary Hirshberg of Stoneyfield is a co-chair. Partners in this organization include, Brannigan states, the omnipresent Bill and Melinda Gates, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Ford Foundation.

You should visit the AGree site and read through their literature.

<http://foodandagpolicy.org/>

To me, it resembles a man talking with his mouth full of marbles. The language is dense, but you’ll find proposals for multi-faceted types of agriculture to fit different areas and needs—including GMOs.

In other words, AGree is talking about co-existence. They’re spreading that message, and their co-chair, Gary Hirshberg, who also supported YES ON 37, is fine with the message.

And if co-existence can be sold, then Monsanto wins. They absolutely win. They spread their genes through the food supply, from one end to the other.

Well, you say, how can we have anything but co-existence? How is that possible? How can we get GMO crops out of America? They’re everywhere.

Well, not quite everywhere.

<http://www.examiner.com/article/what-countries-have-banned-gmo-crops>

South Australia has banned them. So has Switzerland. Ditto for Japan, New Zealand, Ireland, Austria, Hungary, Greece, Bulgaria, Luxembourg, Madeira.

Germany has banned the growing or sale of GMO maize. Three counties in California have banned GMO crops: Mendocino, Trinity, and Marin.

And this is the whole point. Monsanto and its allies want to stop the ban from happening in the US. That’s their bottom-line. Above all, there must not be a ban on GMO crops in America.

A ballot proposition that mandates labeling of foods? Not the best thing, Monsanto says, but it’s tolerable. If the Prop loses, then that sets back the anti-GMO forces, and they have to re-group and try again elsewhere.

That gives Monsanto more time to spread more GMO crops across America. If Prop 37 wins, Monsanto can live with that. They’ll come up with a Plan B to deal with the loss.

Monsanto already did that in the UK, after the European Union ruled that labeling of GMO foods was mandatory, in 1997. Monsanto supported labeling. They could do that now in American states that pass ballot measures.

“Well, we were against labeling, sure. We thought it was unnecessary. But now that it’s passed, the people have spoken. We will do everything we can to support this decision, and we’re confident that our food

meets the highest standards..." Blah-blah.

But Monsanto doesn't want a ban on GMO crops. No. And they certainly don't want a strong movement in America to insist on a ban.

Solution? Promote the idea of agricultural coexistence, just as AGree is doing. Divert anti-GMO forces into campaigns for labeling. Let those folks spend all their time, money, and energy trying to get labeling. Make sure the movement doesn't turn into a powerful force demanding a ban.

Look at it this way. "Agricultural coexistence" is a soft stance. It covertly claims that choice is always a good thing, as if we're debating which lamp to buy or which flashlight.

What's left out of that equation? One of the flashlights happens to emit a powerful and invisible toxic cloud every time you turn it on.

But let's not discuss that. No. Let's just "let the market decide."

Get it? It's all based on the notion that GMO foods are here to stay in America, and therefore we shouldn't worry our pretty little heads about it. We should just insist that we have the right to know whether there are GMOs in the food we buy. That's all.

It's a smokescreen. And it's promoted to keep us from flat-out saying, "Hey, wait a minute. GMO food is toxic. Monsanto has committed multiple crimes and they should be prosecuted. We should BAN GMO food."

I know what the proponents of Prop 37 are going to say, and I want to take up their argument. They're going to say, "No. If we gain the right to know what's in our food, millions of people in California are going to stop buying GMO food, and this refusal is going to spread, and then we'll win. We'll starve Monsanto. The free market will win. From state to state, new ballot measures will win for labeling, and the resistance to GMO food will grow..."

However, that argument depends on consumers caring. Will consumers really give a damn that they're buying GMO food?

Monsanto will continue to introduce new GMO crops into the American landscape, like apples and salmon. Monsanto will put more and more GMOs into food products. They'll fight a war of attrition, and in the end, they stand a very good chance of winning...because most consumers won't care, any more than they care when they enter a public building and see some ridiculous sign on the wall about carcinogenic compounds being present in the building.

Monsanto will bet that, after a time, GMO labels on food products won't bother most people. Monsanto will spend untold millions of dollars claiming that GMO food is identical to non-GMO.

And again, the most important thing for Monsanto is: there won't be a ban on GMO crops in America.

Monsanto won't be prosecuted for crimes by the US Dept. of Justice.

And even if, say, in the state of Washington, where the next Prop 37-type ballot measure is about to be mounted, the campaign involves educating people about GMOs, will that really make a difference? Will there be an all-out attack on GMOs and Monsanto? Or will it be a soft attack?

I ask this because I believe the leaders of Prop 37 don't want to make serious waves. They are dedicated to "the right to know what's in your food" proposition, above all. They are satisfied with that. They have no intention of really going after the people who make that flashlight that exudes clouds of poison when it's turned on. And those leaders of Prop 37 are pulling along, behind them, many, many people who might otherwise back a real campaign to have GMO crops banned in America.

A civilization does not survive when elites can commit grave and ongoing crimes with impunity. And that's exactly the situation we have. Monsanto is the chief criminal.

Am I saying the YES ON 37 campaign was entirely useless? No, it educated some people. But in the long run (and Monsanto is in this for the long run), it functioned as a diversion away from the main event: BANNING GMO CROPS.

There is no powerful movement in America to ban GMO crops and prosecute Monsanto for heavy crimes.

Instead, we have groups led by businessmen who want the free market to decide, and who want labeling. In the long run, that's a loser.

Monsanto knows this.

Look at the legal adviser for the California Right to Know Campaign, Joe Sandler. Sandler has been very active, over the years, working at high levels for the Democratic Party. He's a beltway attorney. He takes a hand in steering the GMO-labeling ship. There is no way he is going to step out front and say, "Let's ban the

whole mess. Let's turn this into a war against Monsanto and ban all GMO crops in America." You could wait for several hells to freeze over before that happens.

Look at Gary Hirshberg or Grant Lundberg or another lawyer in the YES ON 37 mix, Andy Kimbrell. No way they're going to go all the way. They're going to demand labeling and that's it.

And Monsanto can live with that. Obama can live with that.

Monsanto can sit back and say, "It's a very good thing there is no powerful movement in America to ban GMO crops. We like that. We like that a lot."

Which is exactly what they're doing and saying right now.

Did Monsanto fight against YES ON 37? Did they employ dirty tricks? Of course they did. But that was on the minor stage. That wasn't the big time.

On the big stage, they're already winning.

They're winning, in part, because a handful of natural-food entrepreneurs and their lawyers are in charge of the anti-GMO movement in America, and are selling the idea that mandatory labeling is going to grow into a tsunami against GMOs. That's their mindset and that's their bet.

They're "realists." They don't take a clue from those countries that have, in fact, banned GMOs. They work from the premise that, in America, we need to co-exist. We need to bow to the free market and let the chips fall where they may.

Yeah, well, many of those chips are going to be GMO.

Most of the growing land in America is going to be GMO.

And the Monsanto genes are going to drift and drift into the whole food supply, and the huge tonnage of toxic pesticide sprayed on GMO crops is going to drift and settle into the soil...as we coexist.

So let's not bullshit each other, okay?

Let's not wave a few flags and claim we're winning against Monsanto, when the fact is we don't have a powerful movement in America to ban GMO crops.

Don't label the bastards. Ban them.

My advice to the ground troops who are fighting to get mandatory GMO labeling in various states around the country? Talk to your leaders. Tell them that, instead, you want an all-out fight against Monsanto and GMOs. You want a ban. And if they refuse, get rid of those leaders. Start your own organization.

Stay in it for the long haul. Don't go for the partial solution. Yes, it makes the battle harder, but it's the only battle that counts.

Jon Rappoport

The author of an explosive collection, **THE MATRIX REVEALED**, Jon was a candidate for a US Congressional seat in the 29th District of California. Nominated for a Pulitzer Prize, he has worked as an investigative reporter for 30 years, writing articles on politics, medicine, and health for CBS Healthwatch, LA Weekly, Spin Magazine, Stern, and other newspapers and magazines in the US and Europe. Jon has delivered lectures and seminars on global politics, health, logic, and creative power to audiences around the world. You can sign up for his free emails at www.nomorefakenews.com

Source: <http://jonrappoport.wordpress.com/2012/12/06/yes-on-prop-37-was-classic-controlled-opposition/>

PEJNEWS.COM EDITOR'S COMMENT; From 1997-2001, when I was the National leader of the Green party of Canada, I called for the banning of Genetically engineered food and crops.[the Green Party of Canada no longer calls for a ban in Canada). In 1998, at a conference in St Louis, I drafted the Biodevastation 1 Declaration calling for the banning of GE food and crops and it was passed in principle ; In1999, at the biodevastation II conference in Delhi, I drafted a Global petition for the banning of GE food and crops- It was signed by all participants except for the Consumers's International, whose representative stated that their CAMPAIGN was labelling. Also in 1999 at the WTO in Seattle, I worked, with others, on a statement calling for banning; this statement was read, in the NGO plenary, by Congresswoman, Maxime Waters ; Since then I lobbied for banning at World Summit on Sustainable Development at numerous UN CSD and CSW conferencesat the UN in New York in October 2011, I attended the session on prop 37 at the Bioneers Conference, where I argued unsuccessfully that they should call for banning because, while labelling addresses the right to know issue, it does not address, the equity issue and the

environmental issues (Joan Russow) More recently June 2012, I lobbied at Rio +20 for the banning of GE food and crops

Last Updated on Saturday, 08 December 2012 14:42

73 readings

BOLIVIA DEFENDS MOTHER EARTH FROM THE THREAT OF CARBON MARKETS



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 07 December 2012 21:09

by brendanorrell@gmail.com

<http://bsnorrell.blogspot.com/p/bolivia-defiende-la-madre-tierra-de-la.html>



Photo by Michelle Cook, Navajo, at the Conference for the Protection of Mother Earth and Rights of Nature 2010

BOLIVIA'S PROPOSAL: STRENGTHENING MARKETS NOT MARKET-BASED FOREST MANAGEMENT

In Qatar, at the UN COP 18, Bolivia continues fight for Mother Earth

By Plurinational State of Bolivia

Censored News

hDuring the 18th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Doha, Qatar, the Bolivian delegation reaffirmed its rejection of the use and expansion of the carbon market as a tool to reduce emissions that cause climate change in the world and presented a proposal with alternative tools in carbon markets.



With President Evo Morales, in the mountains of Bolivia,
at soccer game and feast, during Mother Earth Conference

2010 Photo Brenda Norrell Censored News

The Plurinational State of Bolivia proposed the implementation of a new mechanism to prevent deforestation and avoid the emission of millions of tons of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, which will be funded through the Green Fund of the Convention, by public funds from developed countries, historical causes of the problem, in line with the commitments made by these countries for a decade with no results to date.

The mechanism proposed by Bolivia, different and critical of REDD represents are real and consistent with the principles of the Convention, notably with the principles of equity, historical responsibility and climate debt. This proposal seeks to achieve real reductions and not speculation about trends, supplemented by actual reduction actions within industrialized countries, thus avoiding transfer their responsibilities to developing countries.

BOLIVIA PRESENTED THE NON-MARKET BASED JOINT MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION MECHANISM FOR THE INTEGRAL AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF FORESTS

Doha, December 1 Bolivian delegation in Doha

The struggle to curb forest carbon markets continues in Doha. Bolivia has raised in the sessions of the Working Group on "Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation" the need to take seriously into account the document of Rio + 20 "The future we want" in which it is stated that there are different approaches to achieve sustainable development and the need for developing holistic and integrated approaches taking into account harmony with nature.

Bolivia is proposing at Doha the recognition by the Convention of a "Joint Mitigation and Adaptation Mechanism for the Integral and Sustainable Management of Forests" as a non-market approach to promote reduction of emissions in the context of deforestation and forest degradation, giving continuity to the agreements reached at COP17 in Durban 2011, when a decision for the development of non-market based approaches was achieved.

The Bolivian proposal is oriented to establish a mechanism to promote reduction of deforestation and forest degradation in the context of the sustainable management of forests which is based in the following foundations: the non-commercialization of the environmental functions of forests, the recognition of the multiple and holistic functions

of forests, and the strengthening of local forest governance. Instead of promoting ex post payments once reduction of carbon stocks are achieved, the Bolivian proposal calls for ex ante long-term finance not only to achieve mitigation goals but also adaptation needs in order to help local communities and local population to facilitate forest conservation and the transition to better land use through the development of more sustainable production system (linking agriculture and forestry).

Also, Bolivia has submitted to the Secretariat a proposal to incorporate the consideration of the Joint Mitigation and Adaptation Mechanism in the working group of "various approaches to promote mitigation", calling also for the halt in the implementation of market mechanisms in climate change. Bolivia has suggested that any approach or mechanism oriented to promote mitigation should take into account the following principles: principles of equity and Common but Differentiated Responsibilities of the Convention; sustainable development in harmony and balance with Mother Earth, including ethical responsibility, and change of unsustainable patterns of consumption and production; non-commodification and non-financialization of the environmentally functions of Mother Earth; and conceptual congruity with the basic science of climate change. Since only non-market based approaches are able to meet such principles, those should be promoted as the solution to cope climate change.

Last Updated on Friday, 07 December 2012 21:19

41 readings

Will Philippines negotiator's tears change our course on climate change?



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 07 December 2012 10:46

by **John Vidal** in Doha

Thursday 6 December The Guardian Blog see video at

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/poverty-matters/2012/dec/06/philippines-delegator-tears-climate-change>

At the COP18 climate talks, the Filipino delegate broke down as he appealed to the world: 'no more delays, no more excuses'

Philippines negotiator makes emotional plea at Doha climate talks [Link to this video](#)

When a senior diplomat at global talks breaks down in public, it is a signal that other countries must pay attention. It happens rarely, but it can have a dramatic effect.

On Thursday, it happened in a full plenary session of the COP18 climate talks at Doha.

Naderev Saño, the lead negotiator of [the Philippines delegation](#), got halfway through his prepared

statement and then stopped (video).

He wanted to relate the tortured negotiations to the tragedy unfolding in his own country when **typhoon Bopha slammed into the island of Mindanao**, killing hundreds of people and making thousands homeless. It was, he said, like **hurricane Sandy** which hit New York, **Haiti** and Cuba last month, a clear sign of **climate change**. No typhoon had ever come so far south, it was more intense than ever and one had not hit this region in many decades. Saño told the plenary session:

"As we sit here in these negotiations, even as we vacillate and procrastinate here, the death toll is rising. There is massive and widespread devastation. Hundreds of thousands of people have been rendered without homes. And the ordeal is far from over, as typhoon Bopha has regained some strength as it approaches another populated area in the western part of the **Philippines**. "Madam chair, we have never had a typhoon like Bopha, which has wreaked havoc in a part of the country that has never seen a storm like this in half a century. And heartbreaking tragedies like this are not unique to the Philippines, because the whole world, especially developing countries struggling to address poverty and achieve social and human development, confront these same realities.

"Madam chair, I speak on behalf of 100 million Filipinos, a quarter of a million of whom are eeking out a living working here in Qatar [**as migrant labourers**]. And I am making an urgent appeal, not as a negotiator, not as a leader of my delegation, but as a Filipino ..."

At this point he broke down.

"I appeal to the whole world, I appeal to leaders from all over the world, to open our eyes to the stark reality that we face. I appeal to ministers. The outcome of our work is not about what our political masters want. It is about what is demanded of us by 7 billion people.

"I appeal to all, please, no more delays, no more excuses. Please, let Doha be remembered as the place where we found the political will to turn things around. Please, let 2012 be remembered as the year the world found the courage to find the will to take responsibility for the future we want. I ask of all of us here, if not us, then who? If not now, then when? If not here, then where?"

"Thank you madam chair."

The hall rose and applauded.

Later I spoke to Saño, or "Yeb" as he is widely known. He said: "This was the 16th typhoon this year. It was particularly intense and uncharacteristic, **struck the province of Davao Oriental**. I know the area well. I have been there many times. Quite a few of our delegation have their families there.

"Each destructive typhoon season costs us 2% of our GDP, and the reconstruction costs a further 2%, which means we lose nearly 5% of our economy every year to storms. We have received no **climate finance to adapt** or to prepare ourselves for typhoons and other extreme weather we are now experiencing.

"We have not seen any money **from the rich countries** to help us to adapt. So more and more people die every year. I feel very frustrated. I was very emotional because it tears your heart out when you know your people are feeling the impact. We cannot go on like this. It cannot be a way of life that we end up running always from storms.

"You feel frustrated when the UN process does not work. We always go to the brink in the negotiations. That is a bad sign. Climate change negotiations cannot be based on the way we currently measure progress. It is a clear sign of planetary and economic and environmental dysfunction."

32 readings

An Empty Table at Doha Climate Talks



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 07 December 2012 10:39

By Stephen Leahy

Two young Arab activists frustrated with Qatar's lack of public leadership at COP18 unfurl a banner in protest on Dec. 6 and are de-badged. Credit: adopt a negotiator/cc by 2.0

DOHA, Qatar, Dec 6 2012 (IPS) - United Nations climate talks are on the edge of collapse Thursday, according to a coalition of civil society and representatives from half of the world's countries.

Once again, rich industrialised nations are putting nothing on the table in terms of increased emissions cuts and financial support for poor nations, said Celine Charveriat, director of advocacy and campaigns for Oxfam International.

"This is just like WTO (World Trade Organisation) negotiations where rich countries refuse everything until the very last minute," Charveriat told IPS.

The atmosphere is tense and angry with less than 24 hours left before the summit known as COP18

concludes on Friday, she said.

"We need raised ambition from developed countries. If not, we will be extinct," said Emmanuel Diamini, chair of the Africa Group of negotiators.

Related IPS Articles

- [A Storm Brews in Doha](#)
- [The Big Fight in Doha Is Over Climate Finance](#)
- [OP-ED: Loss and Damage from Climate Change Must Not Become the "New Normal"](#)

"Ambition" refers to increased reductions in emissions primarily from burning of fossil fuels. Even if major industrialised economies like the United States, Canada, Japan and the European Union achieve their currently promised cuts, temperatures will likely rise between four and 10 degrees C based on the latest science.

The vast majority of carbon emissions contributing to climate change are from developed nations.

"When we call for increased ambition, they (developed countries) say we are blocking progress," Diamini said at a press conference.

If there is no increase in ambition in Doha, when will it happen? asked Yeb Sano, head of the Philippines delegation.

"Hundreds of thousands of my people are homeless and in evacuation centres today after typhoon Bopha," Sano said.

"We refuse to make this a way of life...We must not do just what our political masters tell us but what seven billion people need," he said. "Doha must be the place where we turned things around."

Much of the acrimony is focused around the U.S. refusal to commit to anything new.

"The U.S. negotiating team should be replaced," said Kumi Naidoo, head of Greenpeace International. They have spent four years blocking negotiations, according to Naidoo.

"People are dying because of climate change. People are losing their homes, their livelihoods, their source of food. It is saddening to see rich country negotiators actively blocking progress in order to maintain the profits of their coal, oil and forestry industries," Naidoo said in a press conference.

The U.S. has put the most carbon emissions into the atmosphere and bears the biggest responsibility for acting to reduce emissions and providing financial help to poorer countries already being impacted, he said.

Greenpeace joined with ActionAid, Christian Aid, Friends of the Earth, Oxfam, WWF, and with African and many other nations to say that a Doha agreement must include scaled-up public climate finance from 2013, deep emissions cuts and a mechanism to address loss and damage from the impacts of climate change.

The political and public atmosphere around the financial crisis in Europe won't allow us to go further, said Kristian Ruby, assistant to the EU chief negotiator.

The EU is proposing a mandatory review of emission cuts in 2014.

"U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is convening a world leaders' summit on this in 2014. And by then the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) will have released its latest scientific assessment," Ruby told IPS.

There is progress, but not enough, he agreed, noting that China has been holding up that progress because it wants greater ambition from developed nations.

"One of the keys to success here is to get the U.S. to make some new financial commitment," he said.

Poor nations say they need at least 60 billion dollars for 2013 to 2015 to help them cope. Those nations have seen the number of extreme weather events increase 600 percent over the past 30 years, according to insurance giant Munich Re.

Governments found trillions of dollars to bail out the financial sector. This is a far greater crisis, said Charveriat.

Canada is also a major villain blocking progress here, she said.

"Canada has become rich and prosperous from its huge fossil fuel industry. And here they are offering absolutely nothing to pay for their pollution of the atmosphere," she said.

"What has gone wrong in Canada? They used to be a leader. Now they are one of the worst laggards, down at the bottom with the U.S."

32 readings

Irish moss harvest crash divides opinion



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 05 December 2012 21:34

by [CBC News](#) Jul 30, 2012 2:46 PM AT

Irish moss harvest crashing



Traditionally Irish moss is harvested off the beach, and horses are still often used for the task. (Tignish Irish Moss Festival)

P.E.I.'s Irish moss industry is facing a dismal harvest this year, and industry leaders are divided as to the cause.

The harvest of moss this year is at about five per cent of what it was 10 years ago. Junior Shea, part owner of Shea Seaweed and chair of the P.E.I. Sea Plant Harvesters Industry Association, blames a practice called raking.

Traditionally, harvesters waited for Irish moss to be washed up on the beaches and gathered it there. More recently, harvesters have travelled out to the sea beds where it grows and raked it off the bottom.

"They won't let it grow and it's depleting the crop and it's right down to nothing."

Ronnie Costain, owner of the processor Oceanside Seaweed, acknowledges that the harvest is declining, but he believes raking simply ensures the moss gets to shore.

"I don't feel that it's a raking issue," Costain says of the poor harvests.

"If you don't get a storm to bring it in it's just going to break off and drift with the tide and God knows where it'll go."

Costain blames the low yields on limited sea ice, land erosion and the presence of an invasive seaweed, called fucellaria.

Irish moss is harvested for carrageenan, a thickening agent used in a variety of food products, from ice cream to salad dressing and even in toothpaste.

Shea wants the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to ban the raking of the sea floor for the moss. Harvesters should wait for it to be brought ashore by natural means, he said.

Shea sent Fisheries and Oceans Minister Keith Ashfield a letter and met with him, but he said he hasn't heard anything back since February.

"The Department of Fisheries' own laws and rules and regulations have resulted in the decimation of Irish

moss and the loss of livelihood for hundreds of people," he said.

"I told him, I said, you're going to have to be held responsible for your neglect."

Shea said the industry is a shadow of what it once was in western P.E.I. **each**

Last Updated on Sunday, 09 December 2012 19:48

30 readings

UN Resolution Calls for Israel to Disclose Nuclear Arsenal



Peace News

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 05 December 2012 16:13

by - Common Dreams staff <http://www.commondreams.org/headline/2012/12/04-0>
December 4, 2012 by **Common Dreams**

Regional outlier asked to join NPT and back vision of a 'Nuclear-Free Middle East'

The UN General Assembly voted overwhelmingly on Monday to approve a resolution calling on Israel to open up its nuclear weapons program to international inspectors and to end its refusal to join the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, or NPT.



A vote by the United Nations general assembly has called on Israel to open its nuclear programme to weapons inspectors. (Photograph: Chip East/Reuters) The resolution passed with a 174-6 vote, and included 6 abstentions. Israel, the U.S., Canada, Marshall Islands, Micronesia and Palau were the "no" votes.

Also included in the UN measure was a call to reschedule a recently cancelled conference that would push for a 'nuclear-free Middle East,' something that all countries across the region, including Iran, have supported. A meeting on the issue was planned for this month in Helsinki, Finland, but was cancelled, or at least postponed, by the U.S. at the end of November.

Though the Israeli nuclear weapons arsenal is widely known to exist, neither the nation's government or its key ally, the U.S., will publicly acknowledge the program.

This refusal has long helped Israel avoid acknowledging the hypocrisy of its repeated threats against Iran for its nascent nuclear technology program.

As the Associated Press **reports**:

Resolutions adopted by the 193-member General Assembly are not legally binding but they do reflect world opinion and

carry moral and political weight.

Israel refuses to confirm or deny it has nuclear bombs though it is widely believed to have a nuclear arsenal. It has refused to join the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, or NPT, along with three nuclear weapon states — India, Pakistan and North Korea.

And John Glaser, writing at Antiwar.com, **adds**:

If Israel agreed to dismantling its vast stockpiles of nuclear weapons and to a deal enforcing **a nuclear weapons-free zone in the Middle East** - a deal **Iran** and Israel's **Arab neighbors** have repeatedly proposed - the supposed threats Israel faces in the region would **virtually disappear**.

But Israel refuses to give up its nuclear monopoly, insistent on maintaining its excuse to build up its military and distract from the Palestinian issue.

As former CIA Middle East analyst Paul Pillar **has written**, “the Iran issue” provides a “distraction” from international “attention to the Palestinians’ lack of popular sovereignty.”

33 readings

The Big Fight in Doha Is Over Climate Finance



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 04 December 2012 08:27

By Stephen Leahy IPS



COP 18 president Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah addresses a roomful of young delegates. Credit: Sallie Shatz – Courtesy of COP 18

DOHA, Dec 3 2012 (IPS) - The new Green Climate Fund to help developing countries cope with climate change may one day have a bigger budget than the World Bank. At the moment, however, the Fund is empty.

No financial pledges have been made even though the Fund is supposed to begin dispensing money in 2013.

"Finance is at the heart of negotiations here," said Oxfam International climate change policy advisor Tim Gore on the sidelines of the UN climate change negotiations at the 18th meeting of the **Conference of Parties** to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 18), taking place in the capital of Qatar until Dec. 7.

"The issue has come to a head in Doha. Developing countries are bitter and saying rich industrialised countries are once again failing to deliver on their promises," Gore told Tierramérica.

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- [Deep Emissions Cuts Urged at Climate Summit](#)
- [Taking the Knowledge of Doha Back to Kenya's Rural Communities](#)

"The NGO community is calling on the COP president to convene a special roundtable on finance next week during the high-level segment," he said.

Without that call by COP president Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah of Qatar, many ministers will arrive next week without the authority to do anything on finance. "I doubt the meeting will be successful without this," added Gore.

In 2009, at COP 15 in Copenhagen, "developing countries bought into the sales pitch" by industrialised

countries that they would get financial help beginning in 2013 and ramping up to 100 billion dollars a year in new and additional funding by 2020, said Gore.

In exchange for getting this Green Climate Fund – officially adopted at the following COP, in Cancún – they signed on to the Copenhagen Accord, a U.S.-backed voluntary emission reduction agreement.

This was a big compromise. Not only did developing countries want a legally binding agreement, they wanted larger emission reduction commitments from industrialised nations and they wanted a lot more money to help them cope with the impacts of climate change, said Gore.

To bridge the gap between 2010 and 2012, developed countries also agreed to a “Fast Start Finance” programme of 30 billion dollars.

But not all of that promised money has been delivered, and most of it was in the form of loans, not grants. Moreover, much of the money was not new or additional, but came out of development aid, said Nithika Mwenda of the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance.

Tracking a country’s actual contribution to Fast Start Finance and where the money has come from is extremely complex, Mwenda said in a press conference.

The Green Climate Fund must have clear reporting and verification measures along with a forum to independently oversee this, he said.

Should the promised billions for the Fund materialise, this might simply be more bad news for the world’s indigenous peoples if the money goes into massive tree plantations or mega-dams that end up displacing local communities, said Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, an indigenous representative from the Philippines.

“We will be in big trouble if the money goes into the wrong projects,” Tauli-Corpuz told Tierramérica.

The Green Climate Fund is creating environmental and social safeguards intended to prevent this. However, the involvement of indigenous peoples and civil society is limited.

The Fund is run by a board of 24 representatives, 12 each from industrialised and developing nations. There are four observers, two for civil society and two for private industry. Observers cannot vote and are often not allowed inside the room where the board meets, said Mrinal Kanti, a Tripura indigenous person from Bangladesh who has attended meetings as an observer.

“We don’t even get documents in advance. That makes it very difficult for us to participate,” Kanti said at a COP 18 side event. “Many board members are unaware of indigenous issues.”

Strong safeguards will also need to be combined with monitoring and verification and a “grievance” mechanism accessible to local people should a Green Climate Fund-financed project be having a negative impact, said Nira Amerasinghe of the Centre for International Environmental Law.

“Participation by indigenous people is key. The draft rules are very poor right now,” Amerasinghe told delegates.

There is also a major issue around the Fund’s governance. Industrialised countries want the board to run it, while developing countries think it should be under the UNFCCC, which gives every country an equal vote, said Tauli-Corpuz.

“What is happening at this COP is that rich countries are withholding pledges to fund the Green Climate Fund to see what concessions they can get from developing countries,” she said.

“The biggest fight at most of these COPs is over money,” she added.

Costa Rica takes a different view. “We’re not waiting. Acting to reduce our emissions has been very good for our economy,” said Monica Araya, a member of the Costa Rican negotiating team.

Since 2007, Costa Rica has been working towards the goal of becoming carbon-neutral by 2021.

This small Central American country is sometimes criticised by other developing countries for taking ambitious steps outside of the UNFCCC process. “It is can be frustrating here,” Araya said in a press briefing.

“There is no question rich countries should do more. But we have to find more countries willing to compromise and put their national interests aside,” she said.

“It is not well recognised, but developing countries have made unprecedented efforts to reduce emissions in 2012. We can do far more, especially middle-income countries, if we work together,” she maintained.

* This story was originally published by Latin American newspapers that are part of the Tierramérica network. Tierramérica is a specialised news service produced by IPS with the backing of the United Nations

33 readings

COP 18, Sea level rise, & those most affected



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 02 December 2012 22:39

by Rebeka Ryvola · in UNFCCC – Doha November 25, 2012 ·

[on twitter](#)

Kivalina clings to the tip of a wisp of a barrier island jutting into the Chukchi Sea. Home to less than 400 people, Kivalina, Alaska, is a windswept collection of buildings: a school, a store, homes. The Inupiat ancestors of Kivalina's residents have persisted through harsh environmental conditions at or near the village's current location – 80 miles from the Arctic Circle – for thousands of years. But new environmental challenges may force the residents to leave.

In October, a group of FESers traveled to Kivalina to gain a better understanding of this community's experience at the frontline of climate change. They learned from a 77-year-old village elder and whale boat captain that whale hunting – a practice which has coloured Inupiat folklore, and provided sustenance and livelihoods – has yielded no whales since 1994. Why have no whales been caught in recent years? Less sea ice means a wider chasm between whales and land. Loss of whale hunting is just one way in which climate change is presenting problems for this Alaskan community: the FESers also learned that efforts to barricade the rising sea and increasing (and increasingly intense) storm surges out of Kivalina have failed. They learned that the Chukchi Sea's new antics are pushing Kivalina's population into a smaller and smaller space. That water supplies are increasingly contaminated by salt water. And that the only future for Kivalina's Inupiat may require picking the village up and moving it away from its barrier island home.

The two week long **UNFCCC COP 18** is beginning right now in Qatar. At last year's COP 17 in South Africa, governments decided to adopt a new global legal agreement on climate change "as soon as possible, but not later than 2015" (read more about the **Durban Platform**). One focus of COP 18 will be mapping this new agreement. As these conversations unfold, sea level rise will be high on the agenda of at least some delegates. The Association of Small Island States (**AOSIS**), representing 44 low lying coastal and island countries, will be out with all their force, pushing for strong and legally binding commitments under this new agreement. The AOSIS mantra about limiting warming to "1.5. [°C] to stay alive" is not hyperbole: these low-lying island nations already suffer from rising seas and some face a near future of complete submersion. Unfortunately, AOSIS has relatively little power: while the coalition is made up of almost 28 percent of developing countries, it represents only 20 percent of the UN's total membership and about five percent of the global population.

But as the USA's Kivalina shows, a future of increasingly deteriorating coasts, salt water invaded aquifers, and ruthless storm surges is not limited to AOSIS members. **Research in Science** recently revealed that the next few centuries may herald in ice melt and thermal sea expansion such that the world's oceans could swell up an astonishing 18 – 29 feet, an estimate – attained from examining fossilized corals – that's significantly higher than past projections. Even 18 feet of sea level rise would put most major coastal cities under water. And while the amount of sea level rise will be differential around the world, whether it's one or three stories of coastal infrastructure under water, this is a terrifying prognosis. Gone will be Fiji, the Maldives and Vanuatu of AOSIS, yes, but also gone will be most major coastal cities in developed countries

across North America and Europe. And the beginning of this human civilization vs. the sea struggle can already be seen beyond AOSIS nations and Kivalina: Shishmaref and Newtok, two other Alaskan villages, are facing relocation. In eastern Canada, storm surges are relentlessly battering communities and bringing about serious talk of migration away from the coast. And hurricane Sandy's storm surges along the east coast of the United States should have been a sufficient reality check for developed nations about the real threat of rising seas.

New information, new weather events, and new hard decisions have made sea level rise a climate change issue that reaches well beyond AOSIS, and "1.5 to stay alive" is not just for the small island states anymore. As the construction of the concerted international effort to address climate change is pushed along in the COP 18 negotiations, I'll be listening for talk about sea level rise as a global issue, and as a compelling call for a strong international climate agreement. I hope to find constructive dialogue from delegates outside of AOSIS.

(Chukchi Rising photo: Susanna Berkouwer)

Tags: [COP 18](#), [Kivalina](#), [Sea level rise](#), [UNFCCC](#)

ONE RESPONSE

1.

Joan Russow December 3, 2012 at 12:41 am · [Reply](#) →

2.

I just watched the video of the November 30 "stocktaking" at Doha. The presentation by the representative of AOSIS was excellent AOSIS is calling for what must be done;

The Association of Small Island States (AOSIS), representing 44 low lying coastal and island countries, will be out with all their force, pushing for strong and legally binding commitments under this new agreement. The AOSIS mantra about limiting warming to "1.5. [°C] to stay alive" is not hyperbole: these low-lying island nations already suffer from rising seas and some face a near future of complete submersion.

The representative of AOSIS stated that it was for them a matter of survival. If the temperature goes above 1.5, it will be a matter of survival for most of humanity. At COP15 press conference , a scientist stated at a 2 degree rise, the poor, the disenfranchised, and the vulnerable would not survive and at 1.5 rise, they might.

3.

40 readings

The emerging crisis of investment treaties



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 30 November 2012 07:16

An epidemic of international legal suits taken by companies against governments for billions of dollars is causing public concern and leading to reviews of investment treaties.

By Martin Khor

A growing number of international law suits has highlighted an emerging global crisis: the nature and effects of investment treaties signed between governments but which are allowing private companies and investors to sue countries for millions or even billions of dollars.

The most recent cases involving investment include a US\$1.8 billion judgment against Ecuador obtained by the U.S. oil company Occidental Petroleum, a US\$2 billion suit filed against Indonesia by a UK mining company Churchill, cases taken against Uruguay and Australia for public health measures by tobacco companies, suits threatened against India by several multinational companies, and even the seizure of an Argentinian warship in a Ghana port on behalf of a U.S. investment firm.

The law suits, which have resulted in judgments totalling many billions of dollars against governments, were taken by companies and investors claiming that their investments including future profits had been affected by a range of government policies, including non-compliance with contracts or new health, environmental or economic measures.

Most of arbitration cases are taken up in the ICSID (International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes), based in the World Bank in Washington.

The tribunal system is widely criticised for its lack of professionalism and transparency, its conflicts of interest and the secrecy of its cases and outcomes.

The epidemic of cases and the high losses that governments have suffered or will potentially suffer is giving rise to grave concerns and calls by several governments as well as public interest groups and legal experts to review and amend the agreements that have led to the legal suits.

The agreements are of two main types – the bilateral investment treaties (BITS) signed between pairs of governments (of which there are now around 3,000) and the investment chapter contained in bilateral or regional free trade agreements (especially those involving the United States).

Many of these agreements have “investor-to-state” dispute systems, under which a private company or investor can directly sue governments in an international tribunal by claiming that their property or profits have been “expropriated” or adversely affected by a violation of contracts or by recent policy measures.

The following are some recent cases of legal suits taken by investors against countries:

- An ICSID tribunal in October awarded a judgment for US-based Occidental Petroleum (Oxy) against Ecuador of US \$1.8 billion, its largest ever award, in a case taken under the U.S.-Ecuador BIT. In addition, Ecuador has to pay \$589 million in backdated compound interest and half of the costs of the tribunal, making its total penalty around \$2.4 billion. The government had annulled a contract with Oxy because it violated a clause that the company would not sell its rights to another firm without permission. The tribunal agreed the violation took place but judged that the annulment was not fair and equitable treatment to the company. (Ben Beachy, Public Citizen Global Trade Watch)

- The Indonesian government was sued in June for \$2 billion by a London-based mining company Churchill, which claims its right to mine in Busang (East Kalimantan) was violated when the local government revoked the concession rights held by a local company in which it had invested. The government is countering the Churchill case, claiming that Churchill did not have the correct type of mining licenses. Law Minister Amir Syamsuddin said Churchill's acquisition of a local company broke the law as they did not report nor get approval from the regency government and Jakarta. Two Ministers and other senior officials will be representing Indonesia at the case in ICSID. (Straits Times, Singapore, 18 Sept 2012)

- The tobacco company Philip Morris sued Uruguay for alleged breaches to the Uruguay-Swiss BIT for requiring cigarette packs to display graphic health warnings and sued Australia under the Australia-Hong Kong BITS for requiring plain packaging for its cigarettes. The company claims that the packaging requirements in both countries violates its investment, including its trademark which as an intellectual property is an investment asset.

- The Indian government has planned to review its bilateral investment agreements after foreign telecommunication companies gave notice that they would take up BITS cases against India after the 2G licenses given to them were cancelled by the Supreme Court in April 2012. The company Sistema invoked the treaty between India and Russia, while Telenor invoked the agreement with Singapore through which the telecom firm routed its investment, according to an Indian Express report, which also quoted a government official: “We need to relook clauses in such treaties in order to ensure that such an eventuality

does not happen in the future again.”

· There are two known pending cases taken in international tribunals against Vietnam. In 2010, U.S. businessman Michael L. Mackenzie, filed a case claiming that Vietnamese authorities failed to protect his investments in a resort development project in Vietnam. In 2011, the company Dialasie SAS sued Vietnam under the France-Vietnam BIT. Dialasie had a contract with Vietnam’s social security agency to operate a private dialysis clinic in Ho Chi Minh City but it was closed in 2006 amidst a series of disputes with local health-care authorities. (Source: Luke Eric Peterson, IA Reports).

· In November 2012, a US energy company Lone Pine Resources sued Canada under the investment chapter of the NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) for \$250 million because the Quebec provincial government declared a moratorium on fracking (a method of obtaining shale gas) and also banned drilling below the St. Lawrence River, which the company claims is a violation of its drilling permit. (Source: The Star, Ottawa; and Globe and Mail, 15 Nov. 2012).

The ease with which investors are able to bring and win cases against governments for such a wide range of issues is due to the nature of the investment agreements.

First, the definition of “investment” which is the subject of the treaties is usually very broad, covering direct investment, portfolio investment, loans, franchises, licenses, contracts, intellectual property and other assets. Investors can bring up cases in claiming that their rights to any of these have been violated.

Second, the treaties grant national treatment, “fair and equitable treatment” and investor protection to investors. The definitions of these are so flexible that investors are able to claim their rights are violated for a wide range of reasons.

Third, many of the treaties prevent governments from controlling or regulating inflows and outflows of capital, and some restrict or disallow governments from imposing performance requirements on foreign companies.

Fourth, the treaties prohibit expropriation of the investments. The definition of “expropriation” is very broad; it includes direct expropriation such as takeovers of property but also indirect expropriation including “regulatory takings”, or the implementation of new policy measures that affect the potential revenue and profits of the investors. Thus, investors have sued governments for changes to or cancellation of contracts, and for health and environmental policies and regulations.

Fifth, some of the treaties allow for investors to directly sue governments in international tribunals, including ICSID, the Washington-based and World Bank-linked tribunal mentioned in most investment treaties. These cases have caused many governments to divert scarce time and resources to defend several cases.

Sixth, the arbitration system is riddled with major weaknesses that are not found in normal courts. In many cases, the tribunal members are lawyers who have also acted for investors in other cases. For example, in the case taken by Dialasie against Vietnam, the chair of the tribunal is a European lawyer who has also worked extensively as counsel for investors in many other cases.

According to international trade and investment expert, Chakravarthi Raghavan: “The ICSID panels are constituted of lawyers who sometimes are on panel, and sometimes suing for firms against governments, and don't have any obligation to disclose conflicts of interest. It is time that BITs and ICSID system and these quite arbitrary, 'arbitration' panels are exposed.”

Seventh, the BITs arbitration cases are shrouded in secrecy. They are not held in the open, and the existence or results of cases are not officially made known.

Eighth, it is difficult for a country to exit from a BIT even if it has decided it is against its interests, as many BITs have a “survival clause”; the country is bound by its provisions 10-15 years after giving notice of exiting.

The growing number of cases could also be due to the setting up of law firms, especially in the US and Europe, that specialise in investment disputes, and which encourage investors to take up cases in order to

profit or benefit.

The BITs as well as FTAs' investment component have caused outrage among public interest groups which are concerned that these treaties prevent or punish the implementation of required health, safety, environmental and developmental measures.

Governments, especially in developing countries, are also increasingly concerned. Faced with a multitude of law suits, several governments have recently taken action to review or revise their investment treaties.

South Africa, after completing a review of its BITs, has decided not to sign any new BITs, will attempt to exit from or re-negotiate existing ones, and will formulate a new model BIT.

Australia, in April 2011, announced it would not agree to including investor-state dispute settlement provisions in its BITs and free trade agreements.

India in April 2012 announced it is reviewing its BITs, especially their dispute resolution component, after facing the threat of suits arising from a Supreme Court order nullifying the award of 2G contracts to several foreign telecommunication companies.

And some Latin American countries including Ecuador, Venezuela and Bolivia have expressed their serious concerns about BITs and announced their exit from ICSID.

The UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which has been a major promoter of BITs, is also changing its mind about the benefits of these treaties. It now distinguishes between the normal BITs which it calls "agreements for freedom of investors" and a new type of BITs which it terms "investment agreements for sustainable development", and it is promoting the move from the first to the second type.

With so many problems arising and so many cases being taken against countries, the review and reform of investment treaties should be accelerated at both national and international levels.

Author: Martin Khor is the Executive Director of the South Centre.

This article was published in the South Bulletin (21 November 2012).

To view other articles in SouthNews, please click here.

For more information, please contact Vicente Paolo Yu of the South Centre:

Email yu@southcentre.org , or telephone +41 22 791 80 50.

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Last Updated on Sunday, 02 December 2012 13:15

[Raincoast Art Show Against Oil Tankers on BC, Coast](#)

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Administrator Tuesday, 11 December 2012 16:50

What follows is a video introducing the rain coast art show showing why oil tankers should not be able allowed to navigate the bc rain coast. Visit www.raincoast.org Last Updated on Tuesday, 11 December 2012 17:16

Shelter Kitchen Renovated to Serve Seniors

[Justice News](#) Posted by Joan Russow Tuesday, 11 December 2012 16:35

by www.CoolAid.org/housing www.CoolAid.org/food www.bficanada.com

News Release For Immediate Release: December 11, 2012 **Shelter Kitchen Renovated to Serve Seniors**

Until recently, the old Streetlink Emergency Shelter kitchen at Cool Aid's Swift House remained vacant after the move to Rock Bay Landing. In the last few months, however, it has been completely refurbished and is now being used to serve seniors meals in Cool Aid supportive housing buildings. The kitchen will be open for media tours on **Wednesday, December 12 @ 10:30 am** at Cool Aid's Swift House, the corner of Wharf at 467 Swift Street. Meet Cool Aid's Red Seal Chef Ron Curran and food services staff as they bring the second of three Cool Aid seniors building on stream with more nutritious, more delicious and more cost-effective meals. "When the Society vacated Streetlink Shelter, we decided to preserve the old shelter kitchen while converting the rest into 23 additional units of supportive housing," said John Crean, manager of housing. "We're thankful that BFI Canada helped out with a generous cash donation." "We got more than we bargained for," said Chef Ron Curran. "The kitchen needed an extensive overhaul and Cool Aid spent \$45,000 on new and refurbished equipment. But every penny will be recouped through cost savings over time." The kitchen renovation allows the Society to centralize food services for three Cool Aid seniors buildings. By March 2013, 165 daily meals will be prepared and delivered out of Swift House. Assisted living building Hillside Manor came on stream first on Thanksgiving and this month Cool Aid has added FairWay Woods in Langford. In 2013, Olympic Vista in Saanich will also benefit from the new food services for seniors. "Preparing meals in the new kitchen is working very well," said Chef Curran. "Our tenants are eating better and eating more with the improved food services. Our 30-day rotation of meals ensures a wide variety of homemade and nutritious 'comfort' foods that seniors enjoy. We buy and use just about all of our products fresh and make almost everything from scratch, including desserts." Ten thousand dollars was donated by BFI Canada, who handle Cool Aid's recycling and waste, to help with the kitchen equipment costs. "Everyone deserves good food. BFI Canada wanted to help make life better for people in our community who have been through a lot and need support," said Michael Tripp, BFI Canada's district manager. The Victoria Cool Aid Society is helping to build homes and a better community through compassionate people who provide a variety of services that improve people's lives, including: housing, food services, health care, support, and emergency shelter. Cool Aid focuses its services for adults who are homeless or in need of help and provides assistance to over 10,000 individuals every year. Progressive Waste Solutions Ltd. is one of North America's largest full-service,

vertically integrated waste management companies, providing non-hazardous solid waste collection and landfill disposal services to commercial, industrial, municipal and residential customers in six Canadian provinces. Its major brands, IESI, BFI Canada and Waste Services, are leaders in their markets. – 30 –

Information: www.CoolAid.org/housing www.CoolAid.org/food www.bficanada.com John Crean, Manager of Housing 250-414-4793 or jcrean@CoolAid.org Chef Ron Curran, Food Service Coordinator 250-383-6313, rcurran@CoolAid.org Michael Tripp, District Manager, BFI Canada 250-652-4414, michael.tripp@bficanada.com

Alan Rycroft, Community Relations Victoria Cool Aid Society 102-749 Pandora Avenue, Victoria BC, V8R 2Z9 250-414-4781, 250-383-1639 fax www.CoolAid.orgarycroft@CoolAid.org www.Twitter.com/VicCoolAid www.Facebook.com/VicCoolAid www.YouTube.com/VicCoolAid

Youth Call for ‘Change of Course’ to Solve Climate Crisis

Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow Thursday, 13 December 2012 09:46

Youth Call for ‘Change of Course’ to Solve Climate Crisis By [Isolda Agazzi](#) Mexico is facing its worst drought in seven decades. Credit: Mauricio Ramos/IPSGENEVA, Dec 11 2012 (IPS) – While world leaders were wrapping up the United Nations conference on climate change (COP 18) in Doha, Qatar this past weekend with the annual vague promise to tackle the enormous crises brought on by extreme weather and global warming, a delegation of youth gathered far from the high-level conference halls to say “no” to advocacy without action. At the invitation of the Club of Rome – a renowned think tank that turned heads 40 years ago with the publication of a groundbreaking report, ‘[The Limits to Growth](#)’, which brought the concept of sustainable development into mainstream discourse – artists, activists and representatives of major youth coalitions around the world flocked to the [Change-Course-Conference](#) in Winterthur, Switzerland, to discuss viable alternatives to the [prevailing order](#). Calling for a “change of mindset” to stop the warming of the planet, some 60 participants engaged in workshops from Dec. 8 to 11, stressing that high-level political summits such as the one in Doha have, once too often, proven the [limits of their efficacy](#). Fed up with politicians’ inability to reach [binding agreements on carbon emissions cuts](#) and find lasting solutions – beyond the paradigm of continued industrialisation – to the climate crisis, these young people have gone back to the basics, focusing on grassroots action to help communities adapt to climate change. Referring to a pledge made by rich developed nations in Doha to [provide funds to poorer states](#) – particularly to the least developed countries (LDCs) – to deal with the loss and destruction brought on by extreme weather events, Ibrahim Ceesay, executive coordinator of the African Youth Initiative on Climate Change (AYICC), asked IPS, “How do we make sure this is translated into practice?” The answer, he believes, lies in young people, who have “an important role to play in adaptation and mitigation because they are innovative, energetic and can make the bridge between those who make the policies and those who are affected by them”. “When I go back to Gambia (his home country), my task will be to tell a woman in a village how she is going to be affected by

the warming of the planet.”The 27-year-old activist and filmmaker said that the AYICC, [the biggest youth climate change network in Africa](#), comprised of 42 country chapters representing a total of 10,000 members around the continent, has done advocacy for the past five years. “Now we want to stop and help the communities adapt to climate change. Practice what you preach and preach what you practice,” Ceesay added. Africa currently contributes [less than four percent](#) of total global carbon emissions, but the impact of global warming on the continent is [disproportionately severe](#). **Related IPS Articles** [Indonesia Galvanises Youth Ahead of Rio+20](#) [Civil Society, Youth Pushed to the Margins at Doha](#) [The Big Fight in Doha Is Over Climate Finance](#) This, combined with industrialised nations’ weak track record in adhering to their own emissions reduction targets, has pushed the youth network to work directly with local communities to identify and implement long-lasting solutions to climate change. “We want to come up with resilience measures and coping strategies, because adaptation funds are not trickling down to those who need them. We have to develop contingency plans and help people to tell their stories. People are dying, we have to move fast,” Ceesay stressed. A young Namibian named Justine Braby, programme director of AYICC, told IPS, “The new generation is pushing for change because with the world leaders that are in place nothing happens, we are not moving forward. “Everybody at this conference acknowledges that the current economic system is a problem. We need a global paradigm shift.” She believes Africa is in a unique position to nurture just this kind of systemic change. “We can either copy-paste the industrialisation (model), which does not work, or we can come up with innovative (alternatives) at the country level.” A small group of AYICC members recently conducted a survey in a former township in Namibia’s capital, Windhoek, asking people about their values and what makes them happy – be it access to basic education or free time. The results will feed into municipal and national development plans, in an attempt to move beyond gross domestic product (GDP) growth as the sole measure of a country or population’s wellbeing. “We are not chasing financial growth, which is unrealistic, but the contentment of the people, the well-being of the society,” she explained. Erdenechimeg Baasandamba, a 30-year-old biologist from Mongolia, is concerned not only about the rapid changes taking place in her country, but also the lack of awareness about the severity of the problem. “The environment is damaged, rivers are shrinking, [mining has become a big issue](#) in my country. But since 60 percent of the population lives in the capital, they are not aware of the changes taking place in the countryside,” she told IPS. In her opinion, the government doesn’t communicate effectively with mining companies, allowing some of them to wreak havoc on the environment, use up vast quantities of water and avoid conducting any rehabilitation work, thus fuelling conflict with the local population. Through the People’s Centre for Conservation, a local NGO, Baasandamba has run a radio programme to educate listeners about individual responsibility in the face of a global climate crisis and the choices one can make: such as eating vegetables instead of meat; recycling paper; or riding bicycles instead of having two cars. She also works with communities in rural areas and organises meetings between researchers and the general public. “Everybody is aware of climate change because it is obvious that it is happening, but most people don’t know how to solve the problem”, even though simple solutions are staring humanity in the face, she said. Referring to the Mongolian government’s efforts to make changes in response to the climate crisis, she said, “We

have wind and 320 days of sun per year, so we produce solar power and are even trying to export it to China.”

North Korean Missile Test Reveals U.S. Double Standard

Justice News Posted by Joan Russow Wednesday, 12 December 2012 16:32

by David Krieger Nuclear Age Peace Foundation December 12 2012

From Vandenberg Air Force U.S. policy makers reacted strongly to North Korea’s launch of a long-range missile on December 12. U.S. National Security Council spokesman Tommy Vietor called it “another example of North Korea’s pattern of irresponsible behavior.” U.S. officials had a similarly strong response to North Korea’s nuclear test in 2009. At that time, President Obama said, “North Korea’s nuclear and ballistic missile programs pose a grave threat to the peace and security of the world, and I strongly condemn their reckless action.” Sen. John Kerry, Chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said after North Korea’s 2009 nuclear test, “North Korea’s leaders have yet to realize that the only way for them to achieve genuine security is to abandon their pursuit of weapons of mass destruction.” At the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, we believe that the above comments by U.S. officials could be appropriately made regarding not only North Korea, but all countries, including the U.S., that possess nuclear weapons and possess and test long-range missiles as delivery devices for nuclear weapons. Following today’s missile launch by North Korea, David Krieger, President of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, said, “We condemn all long-range missile testing, including the recent launch by North Korea. However, we see North Korea’s nuclear and ballistic missile programs as indistinguishable from the missile testing programs of the other eight nuclear weapon states. Why does the US characterize North Korea’s long-range missile test as ‘highly provocative’ while treating U.S. long-range missile tests, such as those launched regularly from Vandenberg Air Force Base, as business as usual?” Krieger continued, “This double standard makes no sense and is not acceptable. The U.S. should be leading a global effort to negotiate a ban not only on long-range missiles tests but on long-range missiles themselves, and on a new treaty for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, the only weapons capable of destroying civilization. Rather than focusing on North Korea, the U.S. should bring the issue of a global ban on long-range missiles and nuclear weapons to the UN Security Council for action. Such leadership by the U.S. would constitute the responsible behavior that is needed to prevent the further spread and use of nuclear weapons.” *The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation is a non-profit, non-partisan international organization based in Santa Barbara, California. It has consultative status to the United Nations. For 30 years, the Foundation’s mission has been to educate and advocate for a peace and a world free of nuclear weapons, and to empower peace leaders. For more information, visit www.wagingpeace.org or call (805) 965-3443.*

[The Botox Solution Why the Formerly Grand Old Party Needs to Change and Won't](#)

[Justice News](#) Posted by Joan Russow Thursday, 13 December 2012 09:49

By [Jeremiah Goulka](#)<http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175628/>

Mitt Romney had hardly conceded before Republicans started fighting over where to head next. Some Republicans — and many Democrats — now claim that the writing is on the wall: demography is destiny, which means the GOP is going the way of the Whigs and the Dodo. Across the country, they see an aging white majority shrinking as the U.S. heads for the future as a majority-minority country and the Grand Old Party becomes the Gray Old Party. Others say: not so fast. In the month since [51%](#) of the electorate chose to keep Barack Obama in the White House, I've spent my time listening to GOP pundits, operators, and voters. While the Party busily analyzes the results, its leaders and factions are already out front, pushing their own long-held opinions and calling for calm in the face of onrushing problems. Do any of their proposals exhibit a willingness to make the kind of changes the GOP will need to attract members of the growing groups that the GOP has spent years antagonizing like Hispanics, Asian Americans, unmarried women, secular whites, and others? In a word: no. Instead, from my informal survey, it looks to this observer (and [former Republican](#)) as if the party is betting all its money on cosmetic change. Think of it as the Botox Solution. It wants to tweak its talking points slightly and put more minority and female Republicans on stage as spokespeople. Many in the GOP seem to believe that this will do the trick in 2014 and beyond. Are they deluded? You've heard the expression "putting lipstick on a pig," haven't you? **The Blame Game and the Short-Term Outlook** Although most Republicans see hints of future demographic challenges in the exit polls, many prefer to focus on other factors to explain Romney's loss out of a desire [not to](#) "blow up the party if there are less radical solutions." (Hence, the delusional quality of so many of their post-mortems and the lack of interest in meaningful change.) First, they cite the Romney factor: a weak candidate, too moderate — or too conservative — who failed to fight the Obama campaign's early efforts to paint him as an out-of-touch plutocrat. In other words, his history (Bain Capital and Romneycare) depth-charged him before demographics could even kick in. He was, unfortunately, the perfect [quarter-billionaire](#) candidate for a Democratic narrative that the GOP is only out for the rich and doesn't "care about people like me." (He predictably lost [that](#) exit poll question by a margin of 81% to 18%). Running a "[vulture capitalist](#)" (and a Mormon) [drove](#) a number of Republican voters to stay home or even — gasp! — vote for Obama. It's a mistake that won't be repeated in 2016. Second, they point to the Obama factor. In both [2008](#) and [2012](#), he attracted unprecedented levels of minority and [young](#) voters, a phenomenon that might not be repeated in 2016. Some Republican operatives are also [convinced](#) that his campaign simply had a much better "ground game" and grasp of how to employ technology to turn out voters. ([Half](#) of self-identifying Republican voters think, as they did in 2008, that Obama simply stole the election through registration fraud involving African Americans.) Third, they emphasize the powers of incumbency. Romney only became the presumptive front-runner because the GOP's [A-list](#) — mostly too young in any case — feared the [huge](#) advantage an incumbent president enjoys and stayed home. 2016, they swear, will be different. Nor do they seem

to fear a reprise of the 2008 and 2012 primary circuses because the A-listers in 2016, they insist, will all have well-established conservative bona fides and won't have to bend over backwards to cultivate the conservative base. Trying to appeal to the Right while facing various nutcase candidates, Romney shot himself in both feet, labeling himself a "severe conservative" and staking an [extreme](#) anti-immigration position. George W. Bush, on the other hand, could run as a "compassionate conservative" in 2000 because his street cred on the Right was unchallengeable. Indeed, Paul Ryan is [already](#) talking up "compassion," while Ted Cruz, the new (extreme) senator from Texas, is [hawking](#) "opportunity conservatism." Fourth, there is the perceived success of Republicans other than Romney, particularly in what white Republicans call the "Heartland." GOP operatives are still angry at Todd Akin and Richard Mourdock for losing two gimme Senate seats to the Dems by "saying stupid things" (in the [words](#) of Bobby Jindal, Louisiana governor and frequent visitor to Iowa), and they wonder how they lost in Montana and North Dakota.

Still, they kept their majority in the House of Representatives, losing only a handful of seats. (That the GOP lost the majority of [total votes cast](#) gets less attention.) The Party also added a 30th governor to its roster, and held onto its control of [the majority](#) of top offices and legislative chambers in the states. Come 2014, GOP operatives expect the Party to do quite nicely, as the opposition party often does in midterm elections, especially if turnout demographics [look like](#) 2006 and 2010. Another lesson many movement conservatives have learned is that the more they pound away on their issues, the more they shift American politics rightward even when they lose. All of this suggests to anxious Republicans that they are not crazy for seeing no immediate need to make big changes to appeal to demographic groups outside the Party's aging white base. But the short term is likely to be short indeed. Think of them, then, as the POD or the Party of Denial. **Meanwhile, on the Bridge of the Titanic** Avoid it as they may, the long-term picture couldn't look grimmer for the Party. Demographics may well be destiny. Even a cursory look at the numbers exposes the looming threat to the Party's future prospects.* **Whites:** [About](#) three-quarters of the electorate (and [88%](#) of Romney's voters) this year were white, but their numbers are steadily sinking — by 2% since 2008. Yes, many whites may have stayed home this year, turned off by [Mr. Car Elevator](#), but whites are projected to become a demographic minority by [2050](#) — or possibly even before [2040](#) — and minority births are now [outpacing](#) white births.* **White Christians:** The bulk of Romney's supporters ([79%](#)) were white Christians (40% of whom were evangelicals), but this is an aging and [shrinking](#) group. Three-quarters of senior voters but only a quarter of millennial voters are white Christians, and the generations in between are much [less likely](#) to consider themselves "strong" members of their religion than seniors. (Non-white Christians, Jews, observers of other faiths, and the growing number of the religiously-unaffiliated [all](#) overwhelmingly vote for Democrats.)* **Hispanics:** [According to](#) the *Washington Post* exit polls, Obama received 71% of the Hispanic vote in 2012 (67% in 2008). Already 10% of this year's voters (9% in 2008), the Hispanic population is exploding, accounting for [half](#) of U.S. population growth.* **Asian Americans:** The nation's fastest growing demographic group — now 3% of this year's voters (2% in 2008) — gave Obama 73% of its vote in 2012 (62% in 2008).* **Unmarried Women:** The percentage of unmarried women has been growing slowly since the 1970s, up to [53%](#) of women as of last year. Even among subgroups favoring Obama, there was a [marriage](#)

[gap](#) in which unmarried women (23% of this year's voters) favored Obama by huge margins. Despite winning 53% of (mostly white) married women, 31% of this year's voters (down from 33% in 2008), Romney lost women overall by 11 points.* *The Young*: The millennial generation (born between 1978 and 2000) has been voting overwhelmingly for Democrats ([66%](#) for Obama in 2008, 60% this year). They are projected to be [40%](#) of the eligible voting pool by 2020. Because they are relatively diverse and secular, the GOP cannot assume that enough will emulate previous generations and swing to the right as they age. Such polling figures should frighten GOP leaders. There's no reason to believe that what we saw on November 6th was anything but the tip of the iceberg. The factions in the party that are not socially conservative see these looming threats as an opportunity to get the GOP to drop the social stuff. But movement conservatives aren't going to cede ideological ground, not when they (correctly) think it's a necessity if they are to attract their base voters. "This country doesn't need two liberal or Democratic parties," is the [way](#) Bobby Jindal puts it, typically enough. Like right-wing pundit Fred Barnes, many movement conservatives and Tea Party leaders will [continue to insist](#) that whites are going to remain "the nation's dominant voting bloc... for many elections to come." Hedging their bets, they have decided to become more "inclusive" or at least just inclusive enough in these days of micro-targeting and razor-thin election margins. After all, Romney would have [won](#) New Mexico, Florida, Nevada, and Colorado if he had captured even slightly higher shares of the Hispanic vote and he could have [won](#) in the Electoral College if fewer than 200,000 voters in key states had switched their votes. To get more inclusive, however, these leaders offer an entirely cosmetic approach: emphasize the Party's middle-class message, increase outreach or "partnership" with Hispanics and Asian Americans, back off the anti-immigration message a tad, say fewer stupid things à la Akin and Mourdock, cross your fingers, and hope for the best. **A Nonsense Strategy**

When it comes to why this won't work down the line, it's hard to know where to start. Take that middle-class message. Many Republicans think that it should offer "[crossover appeal](#)" on its own, so long as it's said loudly enough. But what exactly is it? After all, it's never about jobs going abroad, retirement worries (except insofar as the GOP wants to increase insecurity by privatizing Social Security), underwater mortgages, missing childcare for working families, exploding higher education costs, or what global warming is doing to the Midwestern breadbasket and coastal agriculture (much less the long-term capability of the planet to sustain life as we know it). Instead, it remains about "choice," lowering taxes (again), "entitlement reform," and getting the government out of the way of economic growth. As if what the middle class really wants or needs is "choice" in education (Jindal's plan to divert tax funds to private and parochial schools through vouchers was just ruled [unconstitutional](#)); "choice," not affordability, in health care (the [#1](#) cause of personal bankruptcy in America); and ever more environmental pollution, as well as further challenges to getting workman's comp if you get injured on the job. Studies have repeatedly shown that most Americans are "[operationally](#)" [liberal](#) on the substance of most policy issues. In other words, Republicans will support "small government," until you ask about cutting spending on anything other than anti-poverty programs. In fact, less than a third of self-identifying Republicans [surveyed](#) [by](#) Reuters/Ipsos this year "somewhat" or "strongly" disagreed with the proposition that the wealthiest Americans should pay higher tax rates. As a counter to the charge that the

GOP is the party of the rich, Jindal offered [this](#) on Fox News: “We... need to make it very clear... that we’re not the party of Big: big businesses, big banks, big Wall Street, big bailouts.”Um... who other than Republican true believers will buy that?

The Jerk Factor

As for those demographic groups the GOP needs to start winning over in the medium- and long-term, putative 2016 A-lister Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker wants to see a [middle class](#) “message of prosperity and freedom for all” communicated loudly to immigrants and the young. But as one astute Republican insider said to me, “Hispanics won’t hear our message so long as they think our immigration platform says, ‘We hate Mexicans.’” Bobby Jindal was right to say, “If we want people to like us, we have to like them first.” But the Party hasn’t truly begun to grasp what might be called *the liking gap* between the GOP and the groups it needs to cultivate. It’s time for Republicans to take a long, hard look in the mirror. It’s not just recent anti-immigration fervor that repels Hispanics and others from the party. The GOP needs to internalize the fact that the dead bird hanging from its neck is its entire modern history. It’s true that the Democrats were once the segregationists and Abraham Lincoln and the conservationist, trust-busting Teddy Roosevelt were Republicans, as Republicans are fond of pointing out. But that’s ancient history. The Party’s modern history began when business leaders got politicized in response to the New Deal and then the GOP began courting the Dixiecrats after President Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act in 1965 (despite [knowing](#) that he had “just delivered the South to the Republican Party”). The white South started voting for GOP presidential candidates in the Nixon years and would soon become [solidly](#) Republican. At 70% of the electorate (nearly 90% in Mississippi), it remains so today. White-flight suburbs around the country followed suit. Add in the fervent cultivation of evangelical Protestant Christians — anti-gay, anti-choice, anti-evolution, anti-science — and the various modern incarnations of nativist Know Nothings. Don’t forget the [ejection](#) of moderates from the Party, and you have the essential history of the modern GOP in two paragraphs. So the GOP can *say* that it wants to and plans to like Hispanics, Asian Americans, unmarried women, and secular youth, but to be believable, merely easing off on its anti-immigration message or going quiet on abortion won’t do the trick. And if it wants to *prove* that it cares, it will have to put some real money where its mouth is.

What the Party Should Do — and Won’t

Here’s an idea: how about some “[extraordinary financial gifts](#)” like the ones Mitt Romney denounced just days after his loss! To really go after the groups it needs, the GOP would have to do the inconceivable: drop the “entitlement reform” racket, open the wallet, and reach below a restrictive definition of the middle class. It might, for instance, mean adding more money to Food Stamps, rather than poking fun at the “food stamp president,” because a full [quarter](#) of Hispanics and 35% of Hispanic children are poor. According [to](#) the Census, the median income for Hispanics in 2009 was \$38,039 versus \$51,861 for whites. The difference is far starker when you compare median net worth: Thanks to the economic crisis, Hispanic households lost [66%](#) of their median net worth, falling to \$6,325 in 2009, compared to \$113,149 for white households (a 16% loss). It would undoubtedly mean supporting equal pay for equal work, which the GOP has consistently opposed. It would mean working to make healthcare more affordable for everyone. That’s how you prove you care in politics — and it would also be good for the nation. Similarly, if the Republicans want to be taken seriously as “defenders” of the middle class, they

would need to do something to defend it from its predators. No, not the lower class but the *upper* class, the predatory lenders and speculators, the fraudsters, the manipulators of the financial system, the folks who got bailed out while everyone else shouldered the risk. It hardly needs to be said that this isn't likely to happen in any of our lifetimes. So far the only Republican suggestion I've heard that seems more than (barely) cosmetic is for the Party to drop its aversion to gay marriage. That would, at least, be a beneficial, if cynically motivated, move to look less hateful.

Hesitation in the Face of Change

It is, of course, theoretically possible that Senator Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) could attract enough Hispanic and other voters in 2016 to win the presidency. Provided that the primaries don't turn into another bizarre battle. Provided that the tone set by Rick Santorum, Michele Bachmann, or fringe candidates of their ilk doesn't sink the A-listers. Provided that not too many "stupid" things are said — on abortion, immigration, evolution, or global warming. (Rubio has [already](#) gotten to work on that one by punting on a question about the Earth's age to keep the [creationists](#) happy.) But come 2020, 2024, or 2028, whatever's left of the GOP is going to be kicking itself for not having built a foundation of anything other than words that no one outside its rank-and-file actually believed. Texas, after all, could go purple by [2020](#) or [2024](#). Of all the signals emanating from the GOP since Election Day, perhaps the most significant came last week when the socially and fiscally conservative Tea Party kingmaker Jim [DeMint](#) voted with his feet. The man who would rather have "30 Republicans in the Senate who believe in principles of freedom than 60 who don't believe in anything" is leaving that body [for](#) the Heritage Foundation — a [hint](#) about the future of what is arguably the most important GOP organization in the country. It looks like the GOP is at the wheel of the *Titanic*, sailing toward that iceberg, while the band plays "Nearer My God to Thee" for all it's worth. *Jeremiah Goulka, a TomDispatch regular, writes about American politics and culture, focusing on the Republican Party, race, and security. He was formerly an analyst at the RAND Corporation, a Hurricane Katrina recovery worker, and an attorney at the U.S. Department of Justice. You can follow him on Twitter @jeremiahgoulka or contact him through his website [jeremiahgoulka.com](#).* Copyright 2012 Jeremiah Goulka Last Updated on Thursday, 13 December 2012 09:53

West Coast oil tanker spill clean-up could cost \$9.6B

[Earth News](#) Posted by Joan Russow Thursday, 13 December 2012 12:59

UBC study looks at impacts of major spill from tankers servicing Northern Gateway Pipeline by [CBC News](#) Dec 12, 2012 3:00 PM PT see video

at <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/story/2012/12/12/bc-ubc-oil-spill-study.html?cmp=rss>

[High costs of oil tanker spills in B.C.:16](#) A new study says the cost of cleaning up a major oil spill on the North Coast of B.C. could hit \$9.6 billion, wiping out any economic

benefits from the Northern Gateway Pipeline project for the region. The UBC study was sponsored by the World Wildlife Federation and conducted by Prof. Rashid Sumaila, the director of the UBC Fisheries Centre and UBC fisheries economist Ngaio Hotte. Sumaila said the figures show how a major tanker spill off the coast of northern British Columbia could offset any potential economic gains from the proposed Northern Gateway Pipeline project. "There is a lot of rhetoric around the 'potential' economic gains of this proposed project, but the hard numbers are showing the risks can outweigh the gains," he said. According to the study, the proposed Northern Gateway Pipeline could create up to 8,500 full time jobs and more than \$600 million in economic benefits over the lifetime of the project. But in addition to the clean-up costs of \$9.6 billion, a major oil spill could also cost the region's commercial fisheries, port, ferry transportation and tourism industries more than \$300 million. The study used information provided by the [Enbridge Northern Gateway Project](#) to estimate the cost of cleaning up a high impact spill involving about a quarter of a million barrels of oil. *Clean-up crews shovel oil from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill off Fourchon Beach in Port Fourchon, La., in May, 2010. (AP Photo/Patrick Semansky)* "Spill response, clean up and litigation costs were calculated based on previous estimates of the cost per barrel published by Wright Mansell Research Ltd., a firm hired by Enbridge to analyze the socio-economic impacts of the project," said a statement issued by Sumaila on Wednesday morning. The study was funded by the World Wildlife Fund Canada which is opposed to the pipeline, but UBC says the environmental organization had no influence over the analysis or the conclusions. **Enbridge says study flawed** Enbridge spokesman Todd Nogier said the report is flawed because it underestimates the economic benefits of the pipeline to the Canadian economy and overemphasizes the risk of a spill. "At the root of our disagreement with the World Wildlife Fund study is the decision by the authors to compare economic benefits that are certain to occur with spill costs that are very highly improbable to occur." "Each year, ocean-based industries on the North Coast of B.C. generate about \$1.2 billion, provide employment for more than 9,000 people and contribute approximately \$700 million to GDP," said the statement. Related Stories [Special Report: The Northern Gateway Pipeline](#) **External Links** [UBC: Potential economic impact of a tanker spill on ocean-based industries in British Columbia](#) (Note: CBC does not endorse and is not responsible for the content of external links.)

Northern Gateway and marine safety live from Prince Rupert **20:4 Coalition of environmentalists, farmers, First Nations says no to Site C Dam**

[Earth News](#) Posted by Joan Russow Thursday, 13 December 2012 14:18

By Larry Pynn, Vancouver Sun December 12,

2012 <http://www.vancouversun.com/news/metro/Coalition+environmentalists+farmers+First+Nations+says+Site/7691209/story.html> The proposed Site C dam on the Peace River would flood about 3,000 hectares of prime B.C. farmland. **Photograph by:** Brian Churchill, Submitted **Groups argue Peace region has suffered from unrestrained**

resource developmentAboriginals, farmers, and environmentalists are joining forces to defeat BC Hydro's planned Site C dam on the Peace River. They say the northeast has given up much for resource development — oil and gas, coal mining, logging, hydro power, and wind farms — and that the last best stretch of the Peace River should be permanently protected. "Enough is enough," Roland Willson, chief of the West Moberly First Nations, told The Vancouver Sun. "We need to slow down. It's more important to maintain the integrity of what's there than put it under water ... all to expand the industrial footprint." Natives say they won't be bought off by BC Hydro. "This valley is priceless," insisted Liz Logan, tribal chief of the Treaty 8 Tribal Association. "There is no amount of money or land they can give us." A new report by the David Suzuki Foundation and Global Forest Watch Canada finds there are 28,587 kilometres of pipelines, 45,293 kilometres of roads, and 116,725 kilometres of seismic lines used for oil and gas exploration within the Peace region. Laid end to end, all these roads, pipelines and seismic lines would circle the Earth nearly five times, the report finds. "This is not about NIMBY — not in our backyard," Willson said. "Everything is in our backyard." Site C is a planned third dam and 1,100-megawatt hydroelectric generating station on the Peace River between Hudson's Hope and Taylor. It is currently undergoing a joint provincial-federal environmental assessment process. BC Hydro says Site C is needed to meet future power demands, and predicts that the province's electricity needs will grow by about 50 per cent over the next 20 years, driven by economic expansion and a projected population increase of more than one million residents. The Crown corporation expects to deliver its environmental impact statement — thousands of pages of technical documents — early next year, after which the public has just 60 days to comment. Willson emphasized that natives are not opposed to development in the northeast, but are drawing a line with the Site C dam. "What we are opposed to is the flooding of that valley," he said, calling for talks on alternative ways to meet B.C.'s energy needs. Natives would prefer to win in the court of public opinion, but are prepared to take legal action if necessary to stop the dam. "At the end of the day, if that's what it takes, that's where my nation is going to be," he said. "We'll go to court if we have to." Treaty 8, signed in 1899 with the federal government, allows northern natives, including those in B.C.'s Peace region, to maintain their traditional ways of life, Logan noted. "That's getting extremely hard for our people to do. We're getting extremely concerned about the impact of what's happening in our territory." She said Site C will flood a wildlife-rich landscape that also contains aboriginal burial and other archeological sites. "Being nomadic people, we have sensitive areas through the entire territory," Logan said. "The rivers were our corridors of transportation. Wherever our people got sick and died is where we left them. There is potential disturbance of ancestral remains." Farmer Ken Boon, located at Bear Flat on the Peace River, said the dam would destroy the best farmland north of Quesnel, and that BC Hydro's property acquisitions over the decades in preparation for Site C have stifled agricultural development. The dam would flood about 3,000 hectares of class-one and class-two farmland. "I would describe Site C as the biggest threat to farmland in B.C. from a single project, by far," said Boon, whose wife, Arlene, is a third-generation farmer in the Peace. The David Suzuki Foundation commissioned Global Forest Watch Canada to conduct an analysis of land use from 1974 to 2010 over 56,000 square kilometres in the Peace. That analysis finds that the region has been hacked to bits by unrestrained industrial development. That includes: 16,267 oil and gas well sites; 8,517 petroleum and

natural gas facilities; 3,868 square kilometres of coal tenures; 243 square kilometres of mineral tenures; four existing and four proposed coal mines and two coal exploration projects; thousands of existing and planned logging cutblocks covering 5,097 square kilometres; two large-scale hydroelectric dams — W.A.C. Bennett and Peace Canyon, with reservoirs — and 247 potential run-of-river hydro-power sites. In comparison, just 4.2 per cent of the region is designated as parks and protected areas. The foundation recommends the B.C. government: BC Hydro proposes an earth-fill dam 1,050 metres long and 60 metres high, an 83-kilometre-long reservoir, re-alignment of four sections of Highway 29, and two 77-kilometre transmission lines along existing transmission line right-of-way connecting Site C to Peace Canyon. lpynn@vancouver.sun.com Protect critical remaining ecological and farmland resources, such as the Peace River Valley from the Site C dam. Expand recovery efforts for species at risk such as woodland caribou and grizzly bear. Expand the existing network of protected areas in the region, including the establishment of K'ih tsaa'dze Tribal Park proposed by Doig River First Nation. Ensure land-use planning addresses and mitigates historical and ongoing cumulative industrial impacts. © Copyright (c) The Vancouver Sun

Read more:

<http://www.vancouver.sun.com/Coalition+environmentalists+farmers+First+Nations+says+Site/7691209/story.html#ixzz2EyQ16oMA> Last Updated on Thursday, 13 December 2012 14:30

[Gitga'at fear prevailing winds will blow pollutants from Kitimat to their territory](#)

[Earth News](#) Posted by Joan Russow Thursday, 13 December 2012 21:20 **First Nation wary of Kitimat LNG industry emissions**

By Gordon Hamilton, Vancouver Sun December 5,

2012 <http://www.vancouver.sun.com/business/energy/First+Nation+wary+Kitimat+industry+emissions/7657071/story.html>

Although Gitga'at is located 70 kilometres from Kitimat, the band council fears prevailing winds would sweep pollutants into their territory if LNG proponents use natural gas rather than electricity in the liquefaction process. Photograph by:

Courtesy of Apache Canada Ltd. , Handout VANCOUVER — The Gitga'at First Nation says it is concerned that huge volumes of pollutants could be pumped into the air associated with the development of a liquefied natural gas industry at Kitimat, affecting the health of the aboriginal community. Although Gitga'at is located 70 kilometres down Douglas Channel from Kitimat, the band council says it fears the prevailing winds would sweep pollutants into their territory if LNG proponents use natural gas, rather than electricity, in the liquefaction process. The Gitga'at concerns mark the beginnings of a push-back on environmental issues over the development of an LNG industry on the northwest coast. So far, LNG has been immune from the opposition that has engulfed proposals to transport crude from the Alberta oilsands to West Coast ports. Gitga'at councillor Marven Robinson said the First Nation is not opposed to LNG, but is

questioning the risks and is seeking more information. “We are not getting any firm numbers right now on the Kitimat expansion projects,” said Robinson. He said the issue is not just emissions from the projects proposed for Kitimat — two large LNG facilities and one smaller one — but also from tankers. Estimates on the number of tankers a year that would ply Douglas Channel in and out of Kitimat run from 500 to 1,000. “A lot of these vessels planned for these places basically have to pass through our territory twice — right in front of our village,” he said. “We have everything to lose. It’s one thing if there an accident, but we are also trying to look at all the emissions.” He said the First Nation sees risks, especially if the LNG projects use natural gas-fired processes to cool the gas to minus 162 degrees Celsius, the temperature required to create LNG. That would result in more emissions blowing down the channel, he said. If the proponents choose electricity, which is more costly, the Gitga’at see one potential benefit: They could be involved in developing a green energy industry within their territory. The David Suzuki Foundation has developed an info-graphic showing it would require 14,500 gigawatt-hours of electricity to achieve the B.C. government’s goal of establishing an industry capable of exporting 1.9 trillion cubic feet of LNG a year. That’s enough electricity to power 75 per cent of all the residences in B.C., according to the Suzuki Foundation. Further, when the LNG is used to generate electricity in Asia, the Suzuki Foundation says it will release the equivalent of double British Columbia’s total greenhouse gas emissions. In a controversial move last June, Premier Christy Clark declared natural gas a clean source of energy if it is used to produce LNG, opening the door to it being used to power LNG plants. The government’s position on greenhouse gas emissions is that LNG will be replacing coal, producing fewer emissions overall. Clark acknowledged that the Site C dam, plus the province’s run-of-river and wind energy projects, would not provide enough energy to power the new LNG industry. ghamilton@vancouver.sun.com © Copyright (c) The Vancouver Sun Read more:

<http://www.vancouver.sun.com/business/energy/First+Nation+wary+Kitimat+industry+emissions/7657071/story.html#ixzz2F06DEn2J>

Chile Follows South Africa’s Lead in Climate Change Mitigation

[Earth News](#) Posted by Joan Russow Wednesday, 12 December 2012 08:40

By **[Marianela Jarroud](#)** The Chilean government has decided to adopt a model developed by South Africa to explore pathways to a low-carbon economy. The glaciers of the Andes Mountains are threatened by global warming. Credit: Julieta Sokolowicz/IPSSANTIAGO, Dec 11 2012 (IPS) – Chile is turning to South-South cooperation to help define the most effective strategies and options for reducing its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the face of global climate change. The Mitigation Action Plans and Scenarios (MAPS) initiative, being promoted in Chile by the government of Sebastián Piñera, is a collaboration among developing countries to explore each individual nation’s options for mitigating climate change while fostering economic development and poverty alleviation. The aim is to develop “a solid base of evidence and information on what the country can do to reduce GHG emissions in different sectors of the economy,” Hernán Blanco, who is leading the MAPS process in Chile, told

Tierramérica*.MAPS grew out of the experience of the government-mandated Long Term Mitigation Scenarios (LTMS) process that took place in South Africa between 2005 and 2008.The LTMS informed South Africa’s position for negotiations at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 15), held in 2009 in Copenhagen.**Related IPS Articles**[The Big Fight in Doha Is Over Climate Finance](#)[The Planet’s Thermostat Moves to Doha](#)[The Environmental Fight Starts in Your Neighborhood](#)[Africa Must Earn Its Climate Change Adaptation Finance](#)[SOUTH AFRICA: While Politicians Deliberate Climate Change, Others Adapt](#) “It was very successful, because it allowed them as a country to develop their position in a way that was solidly based on scientific research and on a process involving the participation of all of the relevant stakeholders from the South African economy,” said Andrés Pirazzoli, the executive coordinator of MAPS Chile.This success gave rise to MAPS International, directed by the University of Cape Town’s Energy Research Centre in partnership with the NGO SouthSouthNorth, and with financial support from the Children’s Investment Fund Foundation, based in the United Kingdom.In the search for developing countries interested in solutions for mitigating their GHG emissions, the initiative came to Latin America, and MAPS country projects are now underway in Brazil, Colombia and Peru, as well as Chile.Although Chile is a minor contributor to global GHG emissions (0.2%), the country’s emissions have grown at an alarming rate, increasing by 232 percent between 1990 and 2006, according to the Ministry of Environment.In response, the South American country made a voluntary commitment at the COP in Copenhagen to reduce its emissions by 20 percent by 2020.The “exponential growth” in GHG emissions is a result of the expansion of the energy sector. “There has been very high development of thermoelectric power generation, while the share of hydroelectric power in our energy mix has decreased for various reasons,” explained Pirazzoli.For environmental activist Juan Pablo Orrego, president of the Chilean NGO Ecosistemas (Ecosystems), this trend “is very troubling and is due to an extreme lack of caution, but also, and above all, to the sharp rise in the carbon intensity of the energy mix.”“Obviously, Chile’s emissions are insignificant compared to those produced by countries like the United States and China,” said Orrego. Nevertheless, “we all know that the central region of the country is suffering from desertification, that there are 104 municipalities facing emergency situations in terms of water supply, and that the glaciers in the south are melting,” he said.Orrego, who holds a Master’s degree in environmental studies and was the winner of a 1998 Right Livelihood Award (considered the “Alternative Nobel Prize”), believes that MAPS does not reflect “a sense of urgency proportional to the problem we are facing in terms of climate change.”“I don’t see alarm, I see a very superficial level of concern,” he stated.Pirazzoli, for his part, stressed that MAPS Chile involves the participation of seven different ministries (environment, foreign relations, energy, mining, finance, transportation and agriculture), “something unprecedented in the country, which demonstrates the political importance that the government has given to it.”For the moment, MAPS Chile is focusing on laying the groundwork for the project, assessing potential emissions trajectories under two possible scenarios.The first is the “business as usual” scenario, in which no changes are made to the current situation. The other is the “required by science” scenario, which would entail following the most stringent recommendations of climate experts to limit and reduce GHG emissions.Orrego criticised the fact that a business as usual scenario is

being assessed as a potential option, because he believes that the situation is much more complex than it seems. “These types of projects are totally out of synch with the views of the scientific community. What is being done is still very superficial, and is presented as if there were different options, when there are none,” he maintained. During the first phase of MAPS Chile, these two trajectories are being studied to establish an emissions baseline. “In addition, and in order to gather essential background, we have commissioned two preliminary studies, one of which evaluates the state of development of climate models to determine what will happen with the climate in the particular case of Chile, and this work has been completed,” said Blanco. The second study theoretically estimates future volumes of Chilean GHG emissions based on data from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The second phase of the project will involve the development of alternative pathways to the mitigation of emissions. Finally, the third phase, scheduled for late 2013, will focus on the dissemination of the findings and the analysis of mitigation initiatives, both public and private, with decision makers in the government, private sector and civil society. “MAPS Chile is not a binding project, it does not constitute an obligation and will not be converted into a public policy or new legislation,” explained Pirazzoli. It is essentially “an exploratory exercise” aimed at “generating relevant information so that decision makers can adopt the measures they deem appropriate in the future,” he added. The project also provides space for participation, in which different stakeholders can form part of a group for the development of scenarios and a working group. “The level of complexity, of the information and knowledge required, has led us to design a process in which specialists and representatives from different productive and institutional sectors actively participate,” said Blanco. But participation should begin at the grassroots, with prior consultations, because it is the Chilean people who live with the devastating impacts of climate change, stressed Orrego.* This story was originally published by Latin American newspapers that are part of the Tierramérica network. Tierramérica is a specialised news service produced by IPS with the backing of the United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme and the World Bank.

Will Monsanto destroy Mexico’s corn?

[Earth News](#) Posted by Joan Russow Friday, 14 December 2012 10:05

by Charlotte Silver Introducing GE corn to Mexico would sound the death knell for the country’s precious ecology, argues author. Last Modified: 14 Dec 2012 13:28

In 2007, Mexico’s Chambers and Congress passed the “Law of Seeds” that prohibits farmers from trading or selling seeds they had cultivated [EPA]Felipe Calderon, the president of Mexico until the start of this month, has already relocated to his Cambridge, Massachusetts, home to fulfill his [year-long fellowship at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government](#). On the way out of his country, he left the door open for multinational biotech companies, including Monsanto, DuPont and Dow Chemicals, that are on the prowl for new land to plant their genetically engineered crops after being [all but booted from the European markets](#). When GE corn was introduced in the mid-90s, Mexico was inhospitable to the new-fangled crop. The country’s National Biosecurity Commission established a (non-legally binding) moratorium on genetically engineered corn in 1998 as

a means to safeguard what is considered to be the planet's cradle of maize cultivation. Corn has been carefully tended in Mexico for eight millennia and environmental conservationists report that thousands of peasant varieties are still grown throughout the country. With an estimated [75 per cent of the planet's biodiversity vanished](#) as of 1995, Mexico's heterogeneous corn fields are a rare vestige of the age prior to the "Green Revolution" era that is responsible for the artificially and unhealthily homogenous industrial agriculture that is prevalent now. Introducing GE corn to Mexico would sound the death knell for this precious ecology as it is widely agreed that GE crops cannot co-exist with conventionally bred seeds.

Traces of GE in corn Despite institutional protections against GE corn, neoliberal policies have already enabled certain strains of GE corn to intermingle with Mexican maize, a fact that was discovered in 2001 by UC Berkeley Professor, Ignacio Chapela. **Mexico's 'people of corn'** Thousands of tonnes of corn that began inundating Mexico from, primarily, the US (mostly for non-human consumption) after the signing of NAFTA in 1994 ensured that the [promiscuous plant's pollen blew](#) onto the pristine fields of small farms. As of today, it is estimated that at least one per cent of Mexico's corn has traces of GE. But perhaps of more immediate threat to the magnificent biodiversity of Mexico's maize is the country's politicians' willingness to succumb to the pressure of big biotech companies. Over his past six years in office, Calderon has overseen the whittling away of the above-mentioned safeguards. In [2007](#), Mexico's Chambers and Congress passed the "Law of Seeds" that prohibits farmers from trading or selling seeds they had cultivated. And two months after Calderon met with the president of Monsanto, Hugh Grant, at the annual World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, in January 2009, he lifted the 1998 moratorium on GE corn. This triggered a flood of applications for permits – the first of which came from Monsanto – to begin planting genetically modified maize. And, earlier [this year](#), Mexican legislators came close to passing a bill that would modify the Federal Law on Plant Varieties which would promote privatising patents of certain breeds of plants. Comparable to how the enclosure acts in England created a landless working class, this legislation in Mexico would create a class of seedless farmers, planting the "property" (seeds) of transnational corporations that have monopolised the market for maize seeds. Thus, what is now controlled by the country's farmers would become the private property of corporations. However, Mexican farmers, small and large, responded to the proposed bill with forceful opposition, knowing full well the devastation that mono-cropping with bioengineered seeds would have on them – the examples provided by South and East Asia doubtless providing a stark warning. Veronica Villa, from the Colonia Insurgentes Mixcoac in Mexico City, explained to me that both commercial farmers of maize in the North and small indigenous farmers in the South (whose agricultural fields remain largely collective property and are used primarily to feed themselves) both fear the onslaught of GE corn. Those in the North fear the high costs and debts associated with transgenic corn, while the farmers in the South are the primary protectors of thousands of ancient varieties.

Ecological destruction On the eve of elections, in a small but important victory, the highly unpopular bill was not presented to Congress, and the grassroots agricultural movement succeeded in keeping their own demise at bay for that moment. However, the bill is still pending and will likely be floated before Congress at a more politically opportune time. **"While biotech companies have tried to float their products as being necessary in an era of climate-change, empirical studies have shown that the best defence for corn-farmers**

is diversity.” Also still [pending approval are requests](#) by Monsanto and DuPont to plant 2,500,000 hectares of GM corn, which would signal a watershed in the agricultural landscape of Mexico. While Calderon left office before granting his blessing on the arrangement, all signs indicate that new President of Mexico, Enrique Pena Nieto, will be happy to put his imprimatur on the sweetheart deal for Big Biotech. Mexico’s deputy agriculture secretary, Mariano Ruiz, [told the press](#) that the new president supported the introduction of large-scale GMO corn cultivation, saying, “I think we are in agreement generally over the importance of having this instrument, and that farmers have the tool of genetically modified organisms”. Of course, farmers have all the tools they need without the meddling of chemical companies. While [biotech companies](#) have tried to float their products as being necessary in an era of climate-change, [empirical studies](#) have shown that the best defence for corn-farmers is diversity. Doug Gurian-Sherman, Senior Scientist with the Union for Concerned Scientists, warns of the far-reaching impact that supplanting Mexico’s diverse maize plants with an industrial model could have. “Their diverse seeds contains many important traits like drought tolerance and pest resistance that we need going forward. If we lose them, we’re going reduce our ability to respond to climate change and other threats to maize.” Meanwhile, as Monsanto burrows into Mexico’s cornfields, the biotech giant digs its rapacious claws further into the US – its single largest source of profits. The US Congress is expected to pass the FY 2013 Agriculture Appropriations Bill with the disturbingly anti-democratic “[Monsanto-rider](#)” embedded in the 90-page agreement, which would require the Secretary of Agriculture to override any federal court injunction on a GE crop and grant it a temporary permit. As long as politicians do not stand up for the health of their citizens or their land, biotech companies will reap profits in the grim wake of human and ecological destruction. **Charlotte Silver is a journalist based in San Francisco and the West Bank. She is a graduate of Stanford University. Follow her on Twitter: [@CharEsilver](#)**

[Corporation Uses NAFTA to Sue Canada for \\$250 Million Over Fracking Ban](#)

Posted by Joan Russow Sunday, 16 December 2012 13:29 -by Common Dreams staff <http://www.commondreams.org/headline/2012/11/27-8>

Delaware company uses trade agreement to have profit trump environmental interests A US company is taking advantage of a corporate-friendly NAFTA provision in suing the Canadian government for over \$250 million due to lost profits from Quebec’s moratorium on fracking. photo: Toban Black via flickr The company, Lone Pine Resources Inc., which is incorporated in the state of Delaware and headquartered in Calgary, Alberta, held mining permits in the Saint Lawrence Valley and has already spent “millions of dollars” to get the permits and approvals, according to the company, but the moratorium passed in 2011 by the province to study environmental risk revoked those permits. Last Updated on Sunday, 16 December 2012 21:31

[Roundup Herbicide Linked To Overgrowth of Deadly Bacteria](#)

[Earth News](#) Posted by Joan Russow Sunday, 16 December 2012 09:52

By [Sayer Ji, Founder Greenmedinfo.com](#) December 14th 2012 at 5:00 am **Could Monsanto's glyphosate-based herbicide Roundup be leading to the overgrowth of deadly bacteria in animals and humans consuming genetically-modified food contaminated with it?** This question follows from a new study published in the journal *Current Microbiology* titled, "The Effect of Glyphosate on Potential Pathogens and Beneficial Members of Poultry Microbiota In Vitro," which found that the active ingredient in [Monsanto's Roundup herbicide](#), known as glyphosate, negatively impacted the gastrointestinal bacteria of poultry in vitro. **The researchers presented evidence that highly pathogenic bacteria resisted glyphosate, whereas beneficial bacteria were moderately to highly susceptible to it.** Some of the beneficial species that were found to be suppressed by glyphosate were *Enterococcus faecalis*, *Enterococcus faecium*, *Bacillus badius*, *Bifidobacterium adolescentis* and *Lactobacillus* spp. The pathogenic species which were found to resist glyphosate toxicity were *Salmonella* *Enteritidis*, *Salmonella Gallinarum*, *Salmonella Typhimurium*, *Clostridium perfringens* and *Clostridium botulinum*. The researchers stated that "A reduction of beneficial bacteria in the gastrointestinal tract microbiota by ingestion of glyphosate could disturb the normal gut bacterial community." Even more alarming was their observation that the toxicity of glyphosate to the most prevalent beneficial species, *Enterococcus*, **"could be a significant predisposing factor that is associated with the increase in Clostridia botulinum-mediated diseases by suppressing the antagonistic effect of these bacteria on clostridia."** Clostridia are a class of anaerobic bacteria including some of the most dangerous known to man, such as *C. tetani* and *C. botulinum*, which produce tetanus and botulin toxin, respectively. Consider that botulin is the most acutely toxic substance known, and that despite the fact it is FDA-approved for use "cosmetically," e.g. Botox injections, it is being looked at as a potential [bioweapon](#) because it only takes 75 billionths of a gram (75 ng) to kill a person weighing 75 kg (165 lbs). **It has been estimated that only 1 kilogram (2.2 lbs) would be enough to kill the entire human population.** The researchers noted that the glyphosate-sensitive beneficial strains of bifidobacteria, lactobacilli, propionibacteria and enterococci were found to inhibit the growth of *C. botulinum*. They also found that pathogenic *Salmonella* and *E. coli* strains, increasingly found contaminating poultry products, were highly resistant to glyphosate. Lastly, the researchers pointed out that glyphosate also has the potential to induce genetic mutations within bacteria, making it possible for a new level of pathogenicity to emerge following chronic exposure to this chemical. **What Does This Mean For Our Food?** One of the obvious implications of this research is that poultry fed glyphosate-laced [genetically modified](#) corn or soy, for instance, would likely experience unhealthy changes in the make-up of their intestinal flora (known as [dysbiosis](#)), resulting in increasing harm not only to the animals, but to those consuming them. Factory-farmed chickens are already routinely fed antibiotics, arsenic and even antidepressants, all of which represent serious health threats, both by contributing to the generation of communicable disease vectors, as well as contamination of the meat itself. This new study adds to a growing concern that concentrated animal feeding operation (CAFO) chickens

may becoming a breeding ground for botulism, and related pathogenic organisms. Deadly botulism outbreaks in cattle, in fact, have recently been linked to poultry litter contamination in Ireland. [\[i\]](#) Also, this month the FDA broadened the use of highly [controversial food irradiation](#) by increasing the allowable dose in poultry from 3 to 4.5 Kilograys (keep in mind a Kilogray is equivalent to 2,500,000 chest x-rays (40 millirems each) or 166 times a human lethal dose (5 Grays)), citing concerns that lower levels do not eliminate radiation-resistant spore-forming bacteria such as *Clostridium botulinum*. [\[ii\]](#) **More Than Just A Food Contamination Problem** Research published earlier this year, also in the journal *Current Microbiology*, indicated that [glyphosate formulations](#), at concentrations lower than presently used in agricultural applications, are capable of destroying food organisms widely used as starters in traditional and industrial dairy technologies, such as *Geotrichum candidum*, *Lactococcus lactis* subsp. *cremoris* and *Lactobacillus delbrueckii* subsp. *Bulgaricus*. [\[iii\]](#) The study authors concluded that Roundup herbicide's inherent toxicity to soil organisms may explain what is behind "...the loss of microbial diversity and microbial concentration observed in raw milk for many years." The reality is that GM farming practices, which are heavily reliant on glyphosate-based herbicide formulations, are creating a more serious long-term threat to our food security by drastically altering the composition of the soil, threatening its very fertility and ability to produce food for present and future generations. For more details read our article on the topic: [Un-Earthed: Is Monsanto's Glyphosate Destroying The Soil? Resources](#) [\[i\]](#) BBC, News Northern Ireland, [Farmers fear poultry litter may be source of botulism](#), Nov. 19th, 2012 [\[ii\]](#) FoodQualityNews.com, [FDA broadens irradiation use](#), Dec. 11th, 2012 [\[iii\]](#) Emilie Clair, Laura Linn, Carine Travert, Caroline Amiel, Gilles-Eric S eralini, Jean-Michel Panoff. [Effects of Roundup\(®\) and Glyphosate on Three Food Microorganisms: Geotrichum candidum, Lactococcus lactis subsp. cremoris and Lactobacillus delbrueckii subsp. bulgaricus](#). *Curr Microbiol.* 2012 Feb 24. Epub 2012 Feb 24. PMID: [22362186](#) Last Updated on Sunday, 16 December 2012 14:23 ['Tar Sands Oil Orgy' blockades Canada House in London](#) Posted by Joan Russow Monday, 17 December 2012 06:34 by No Tar Sands November 20, 2012 <http://www.no-tar-sands.org/2012/11/tar-sands-oil-orgy-blockades-canada-house-in-london/> Canada House blockaded by tar sands 'oil orgy'. Photo by David Hoffman. **Canada-EU Energy Summit disrupted as Canada's aggressive lobbying threatens EU climate legislation** Yesterday morning an 'oil orgy' performance-protest disrupted the [Canada Europe Energy Summit](#), at Canada House, in London. The annual energy summit was hosted by Canadian High Commissioner Gordon Campbell and featured top officials from Shell, Total and Enbridge, along with Conservative Energy and Climate Minister John Hayes (who has recently received media attention for an [alleged plot to promote the anti-wind farm agenda](#) in the Coalition Government). The aim of the event was to promote Canada's tar sands in Europe, and discussions included how to deal with 'public policy risks' such as impending [European transport legislation](#) which would discourage imports of highly-polluting fuels like tar sands into the EU market. Last Updated on Monday, 17 December 2012 06:54

Rising anger of Canada's First Nations over living conditions

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 21 December 2012 17:57

Chronic underfunding of essential services
and fears over land losses prompt
Attawapiskat chief to go on hunger strike

by Isabeau Doucet in
Montreal [guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk),

Friday 21 December 2012 11.38 GMT

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/dec/21/candas-first-nations-people-protest>



Chief Theresa Spence has been on hunger strike in a teepee across from parliament since 11 December. Photograph: Chris Wattie/Reuters

When images of Canada's First Nations people living in mouldy shacks and frosty tents, without toilets or running water, emerged last year, Canadians were shocked.

It was Canada's "Katrina moment" says Charlie Angus, New Democratic party member for Timmins-

James Bay in north Ontario.

No expanded doc

Nuclear Weapons Waste in Your Silverware, Pants Zipper, Baby Toys?

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 21 December 2012 15:55

By Nuclear Information and Resource Service

December 21, 2012



6930 Carroll Avenue, #340, Takoma Park, MD 20912; [301-270-6477](tel:301-270-6477); nirsnet@nirs.org ;
www.nirs.org

Nuclear Weapons Waste in Your Silverware, Pants Zipper, Baby Toys?

**ACT NOW to Prevent Radioactive Metal being Added to Everyday Recycling
Tell DOE what you think by Feb 9, 2013**

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The Bribery Aisle: How Wal-Mart Got Its Way in Mexico

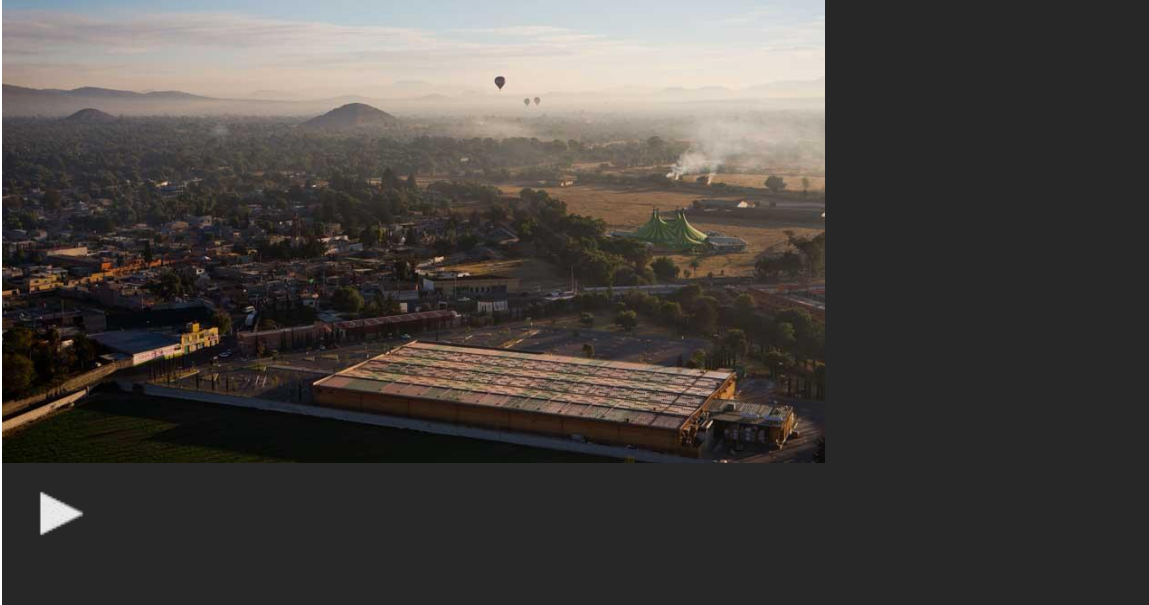
Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 21 December 2012 07:32

By [DAVID BARSTOW](#) and ALEJANDRA XANIC von BERTRAB Published: December 17, 2012

[http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/18/business/walmart-bribes-teotihuacan.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0#h\[\]](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/18/business/walmart-bribes-teotihuacan.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0#h[])

Wal-Mart de Mexico was an aggressive and creative corrupter, offering large payoffs to get what the law otherwise prohibited, an examination by The New York Times found.



Josh Haner and Brent McDonald/The New York Times

A preview of a New York Times investigation revealing bribery by Wal-Mart as it sought to build in the shadow of Mexico's most revered cultural landmark, the pyramids of Teotihuacán. [More photos »](#)

No expanded doc

[Fossil fuel divestment campaign spreading like wildfire](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 19 December 2012 17:41

By Katherine Bagley

Contributing Writer 17th December 2012 · <http://www.louisianaweekly.com/fossil-fuel-divestment-campaign-spreading-like-wildfire/>

(Special Report from Inside Climate News/New America Media) — A divestment campaign aimed at fossil fuel companies has swept college campuses across the country since it began just four weeks ago, catching university presidents by surprise.

No expanded doc

[Pesticides: Now More Than Ever](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 19 December 2012 17:31

Opinionator

Exclusive Online Commentary From The Times

by [Mark Bittman](#) December 11, 2012,
an Opinion columnist and the Times magazine' s food
columnist;[http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/12/11/pesticides-
now-more-than-ever/](http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/12/11/pesticides-now-more-than-ever/)

How quickly we forget.

After the publication of “[Silent Spring](#),” 50 years ago, we (scientists, environmental and health advocates, birdwatchers, citizens) managed to curb the use of pesticides^[1] and our exposure to them — only to see their application grow and grow to the point where American agriculture uses more of them than ever before.

And the threat is more acute than ever. While Rachel Carson^[2] focused on their effect on “nature,” it’s become obvious that farmworkers need protection from direct exposure while applying chemicals to crops^[3]. Less well known are the [recent studies](#) showing that routine, casual, continuing — what you might call chronic — exposure to pesticides is damaging not only to flora but to all creatures, including the one that habitually considers itself above it all: us.

As usual, there are catalysts for this column; in this case they number three.

No expanded doc

[U.S. must approve sale of Nexen to Chinese](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 19 December 2012 12:46

by **Tanya Talaga** Global Economics Reporter

Tuesday December 18, 2012

<http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/article/1304315--u-s-must-approve-sale-of-nexen-to-chinese>



Nexen

TODD KOROL/Reuters A Nexen building in downtown Calgary, Alberta,

Now that the Canadian government has cleared the \$15.1-billion [Nexen](#) deal, the focus shifts to the United States, where regulators must do the same.

While only a fraction of Calgary-based Nexen's holdings are in the United States, if the sale to a Chinese state-owned company gets the green light from U.S. government regulators, the People's Republic of China will have a firm stake in oilfields in the Gulf of Mexico.

Last Updated on Wednesday, 19 December 2012 12:50

No expanded doc

[Canadians want Stephen Harper to block foreign investment: poll](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 19 December 2012 12:22

By Mark Kennedy, Postmedia News December 18, 2012

68 per cent of Canadians believe the Conservative government should block the sale of Canadian firms to “all foreign investors.”



Prime Minister Stephen Harper speaks with the media.

Photograph by: Adrian Wyld/The Canadian Press , Postmedia NewsOTTAWA — Most Canadians want the Harper government to stop the sale of Canadian companies to foreign investors, particularly if the buyer is a state-owned enterprise, a new poll has found.

The Ipsos Reid survey, conducted exclusively for Postmedia News and Global TV, found that 68 per cent of Canadians believe the Conservative government should block the sale of Canadian firms to “all foreign investors.”

Last Updated on Friday, 21 December 2012 07:38

No expanded doc

[City in Colorado Is Sued Over a Drilling Ban](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 18 December 2012 17:48

By [JACK HEALY](#) December 18, 2012 Denver

[http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/19/us/suit-seeks-to-overturn-a-city-drilling-ban-in-](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/19/us/suit-seeks-to-overturn-a-city-drilling-ban-in-colorado.html?_r=0#h)



colorado.html?_r=0#h[]

Ed Andrieski/Associated Press

A rig in Frederick, Colo., near Longmont. In November, citizens of Longmont voted overwhelmingly to ban fracking despite heavy opposition from the oil and gas industry.

¶DENVER — An industry group representing oil and gas companies has sued a city in Colorado that outlawed hydraulic fracturing, saying voters had no right to ban the drilling practice

Last Updated on Tuesday, 18 December 2012 18:02

No expanded doc

[Red Deer Homicide Rate Highest In Canada in 2011, Alberta Most Murderous Province](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 18 December 2012 17:34

by **The Huffington Post Alberta**12/16/2012



Red Deer had the highest rate of homicides per 100,000 residents in 2011, according to a Maclean's magazine survey. (Wikimedia Commons)

Is the Wild West back? If a comparative report by [Maclean's magazine, using Statistics Canada numbers and law enforcement figures](#), is any indication, Alberta was the most murderous province in Canada in 2011.

Last Updated on Tuesday, 18 December 2012 17:44

No expanded doc

[Environmental Uncertainties Halt Deep Sea Mining](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 18 December 2012 06:45

By [Catherine Wilson](#)

The Asia Pacific region is characterised by high marine biodiversity. Credit: Andrew Heyward/AIMS

SYDNEY, Dec 17 2012 (IPS) - The world's first deep sea mineral (DSM) mining venture in the Bismarck Sea off the northern coast of Papua New Guinea in the southwest Pacific has come to a halt after two years of development.

2013

2680 readings

US Coast Guard to Probe BC Oil Tanker Expansion Plans



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 10 January 2013 19:55

By Justina Reichel [Epoch Times](#) January 9, 2013

An oil tanker plies the waters off California. The U.S. Coast Guard will review oil tanker traffic from Vancouver in light of Kinder Morgan's plan to more than double the capacity of its Trans Mountain pipeline. (David McNew/Getty Images)

Oil tanker traffic off the British Columbia coast is coming under scrutiny as U.S. authorities launch a review of proposed increases in oil exports out of Vancouver harbour.

A legislative amendment proposed by Washington State Sen. Maria Cantwell and signed into law by

President Barack Obama gives the U.S. Coast Guard six months to conduct a risk assessment of potential expansion of oil pipeline capacity to the West Coast. The review comes in light of Kinder Morgan's plan to twin its 1,150-kilometre Trans Mountain pipeline system between Strathcona County, Alberta, and Burnaby, B.C. If approved, the expansion would increase the nominal capacity of the system from 300,000 barrels per day to 750,000 barrels per day.

"A supertanker oil spill near our shores would threaten Washington State's thriving coastal economy and thousands of jobs," Cantwell said in a statement. "This bill will provide crucial information for Washington coastal communities by requiring a detailed risk analysis within 180 days."

The review will assess the risk of transporting oil via tanker and barge through the Salish Sea waterways, which encompass both U.S. and Canadian waters between southern Vancouver Island and the mainland.

The Coast Guard will also examine regulations that apply to oil tankers in U.S. waters compared to Canadian waters, and analyze whether extra safety measures are needed to transport what Cantwell calls "tar sands" oil.

A supertanker oil spill near our shores would threaten Washington State's thriving coastal economy and thousands of jobs.

— *Washington State Sen. Maria Cantwell*

In addition, the review will include an analysis of the properties of the oil, "which are likely different than other types of oil and therefore could require special cleanup technology," according to Cantwell's statement.

A spokesperson for federal Transport Minister David Lebel says Canada has long worked closely with the U.S. to ensure goods are transported safely across their shared border.

"Our government has been clear: If any project does not meet or surpass our stringent environmental standards, it will not proceed," said Mike Winterburn.

"Canada has strong environmental protection measures including double-hulled tanker requirements, mandatory pilotage, and improved navigational tools. Oil tankers have been moving safely and regularly along Canada's West Coast for 80 years."

PEJ Editor's Comment

If the Endbridge goes through, and if tankers go along the coast, Canada could be in violation of the transboundary principle under the legally binding UN Convention on the Law of the Seas.

Under Art 194 2 of the Law of the Sea is the obligation

To take all measures necessary to ensure that activities under their jurisdiction or control are so conducted as not to cause damage by pollution to other States and their environment, and that pollution arising from incidents or activities under their jurisdiction or control does not spread beyond the areas where they exercise sovereign rights in accordance with this Convention. (Art. 194. 2., Law of the Seas, 1982)

And also from universally adopted Rio Declaration is principle 2 related to the transboundary principle:

States have, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental and developmental policies, and the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other States or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction.

Canada cannot ensure that the damage from tankers emanating from Canada will not extend beyond its boundaries, and damage to the environment of other states in violation of the transboundary principle; the US is legitimately concerned.

Last Updated on Friday, 11 January 2013 08:28

615 readings

Learning to Love Torture, Zero Dark Thirty- Style

Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 10 January 2013 09:35

By **Karen J. Greenberg** <http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175636/>

Seven Easy, Onscreen Steps to Making U.S. Torture and Detention Policies Once Again Palatable

On January 11th, 11 years to the day after the Bush administration opened its **notorious prison** at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, Zero Dark Thirty, Kathryn Bigelow's deeply flawed movie about the hunt for Osama bin Laden, opens nationwide. The filmmakers and distributors are evidently ignorant of the significance of the date -- a perfect indication of the carelessness and thoughtlessness of the film, which will unfortunately substitute for actual history

in the minds of many Americans.

The sad fact is that *Zero Dark Thirty* could have been written by the tight circle of national security advisors who counseled President George W. Bush to create the post-9/11 policies that led to Guantanamo, the global network of borrowed “**black sites**” that added up to an offshore universe of injustice, and the **grim torture practices** -- euphemistically known as “enhanced interrogation techniques” -- that went with them. It’s also a film that those in the Obama administration who have championed non-accountability for such shameful policies could and (**evidently did**) get behind. It might as well be called *Back to the Future, Part IV*, for the film, like the country it speaks to, seems stuck forever in that time warp moment of revenge and hubris that swept the country just after 9/11.

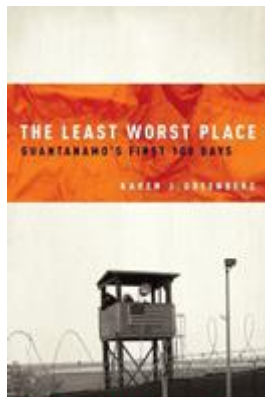
As its core, Bigelow’s film makes the bald-faced assertion that torture did help the United States track down the perpetrator of 9/11. *Zero Dark Thirty* -- for anyone who doesn’t know by now -- is the story of Maya (Jessica Chastain), a young CIA agent who believes that information from a detainee named Ammar will lead to bin Laden. After weeks, maybe months of torture, he does indeed provide a key bit of information that leads to another piece of information that leads... well, you get the idea. Eventually, the name of bin Laden’s courier is revealed. From the first mention of his name, Maya dedicates herself to finding him, and he finally leads the CIA to the compound where bin Laden is hiding. Of course, you know how it all ends.

However compelling the heroine’s determination to find bin Laden may be, the fact is that Bigelow has bought in, hook, line, and sinker, to the ethos of the Bush administration and its apologists. It’s as if she had followed an old government memo and decided to offer in fictional form step-by-step instructions for the creation, implementation, and selling of Bush-era torture and detention policies.

Here, then, are the seven steps that bring back the Bush administration and should help Americans learn how to love torture, Bigelow-style.

First, Rouse Fear. From its opening scene, *Zero Dark*

Thirty equates our post-9/11 fears with the need for torture. The movie begins in darkness with the actual heartbreaking cries and screams for help of people trapped inside the towers of the World Trade Center: “I’ m going to die, aren’ t I?... It’ s so hot. I’ m burning up...” a female voice cries out. As those voices fade, the black screen yields to a full view of Ammar being roughed up by men in black ski masks and then strung up, arms wide apart.



Buy the book.

The sounds of torture replace the desperate pleas of the victims. “Is he ever getting out?” Maya asks. “Never, ” her close CIA associate Dan (Jason Clarke) answers. These are meant to be words of reassurance in response to the horrors of 9/11. Bigelow’ s first step, then, is to echo former Vice-President Dick Cheney’ s mantra from that now-distant moment in which he **claimed** the nation needed to go to “the dark side.” That was part of his impassioned demand that, given the immense threat posed by al-Qaeda, going beyond the law was the only way to seek retribution and security.

Bigelow also follows Cheney’ s lead into a world of fear. The Bush administration understood that, for their global dreams, including a future invasion of Iraq, to become reality, fear was their best ally. From Terre Haute to El Paso, Portland, Oregon, to Portland, Maine, Americans were to be regularly reminded that they were deeply and eternally endangered by terrorists.

Bigelow similarly keeps the fear monitor bleeping whenever she can. Interspersed with the narrative of the bin Laden chase, she provides often blood-filled footage from terrorist attacks around the globe in the decade after 9/11:

the 2004 bombings of oil installations in Khobar, Saudi Arabia, that killed 22; the 2005 suicide bombings in London that killed 56; the 2008 Marriott Hotel bombing in Islamabad that killed 54 people; and the thwarted Times Square bombing of May, 2010. We are in constant jeopardy, she wants us to remember, and uses Maya to remind us of this throughout.

Second, Undermine the Law. Torture is illegal under both American and international law. It was only pronounced “legal” in a series of [secret memorandums](#) produced by the Bush Justice Department and approved at the highest levels of the administration. (Top officials, including Cheney and National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, evidently even had torture techniques [demonstrated](#) for them in the White House before green-lighting them.) Maintaining that there was no way Americans could be kept safe via purely legal methods, they asked for and were given secret legal authority to make torture the go-to option in their Global War on Terror. Yet Bigelow never even nods toward this striking rethinking of the law. She assumes the legality of the acts she portrays up close and personal, only hedging her bets toward the movie’s end when she indicates in passing that the legal system was a potential impediment to getting bin Laden. “Who the hell am I supposed to ask [for confirmation about the courier], some guy at Gitmo who’s all lawyered up?” asks Obama’s national security advisor in the filmic run-up to the raid.

Just as new policies were put in place to legalize torture, so the detention of terror suspects without charges or trials (including people who, we now know, were [treated horrifically](#) despite being innocent of anything) became a foundational act of the administration. Specifically, government lawyers were employed to create particularly tortured (if you’ll excuse the word) legal documents [exempting detainees](#) from the Geneva Conventions, thus enabling their interrogation under conditions that blatantly violated domestic and international laws.

Zero Dark Thirty accepts without hesitation or question the importance of this unconstitutional detention policy as crucial to the torture program. From the very first days of

the war on terror, the U.S. government rounded up individuals globally and began to question them brutally. Whether they actually had information to reveal, whether the government had any concrete evidence against them, they held hundreds -- in the end, **thousands** -- of detainees in U.S. custody at secret CIA black sites worldwide, in the prisons of allied states known for their own torture policies, at Bagram Detention Center in Afghanistan, and of course at Guantanamo, which was the crown jewel of the Bush administration's offshore detention system.

Dan and Maya themselves not only travel to secret black sites to obtain valuable information from detainees, but to the cages and interrogation booths at Bagram where men in those now-familiar orange jumpsuits are shown awaiting a nightmare experience. Bigelow's film repeatedly suggests that it was crucially important for national security to keep a pool of potential information sources -- those detainees -- available just in case they might one day turn out to have information.

Third, Indulge in the Horror: Torture is displayed onscreen in what can only be called pornographic detail for nearly the film's first hour. In this way, Zero Dark Thirty eerily mimics the obsessive, essentially fetishistic approach of Bush's top officials to the subject. Cheney, former Secretary of Defense **Donald Rumsfeld**, Cheney's former Chief of Staff David Addington, and **John Yoo** from the Office of Legal Counsel, among others, plunged into the minutiae of "enhanced interrogation" tactics, micro-managing just what levels of abuse should and should not apply, would and would not constitute torture after 9/11.

In black site after black site, on victim after victim, the movie shows acts of torture in exquisite detail, Bigelow's camera seeming to relish its gruesomeness: waterboarding, stress positions, beatings, sleep deprivation resulting in memory loss and severe disorientation, sexual humiliation, containment in a small box, and more. Whenever she gets the chance, Bigelow seems to take the opportunity to suggest that this mangling of human flesh and immersion in brutality on the part of Americans is at least understandable and probably worthwhile. The film's almost subliminal message

on the subject of torture should remind us of the way in which a form of sadism-as-patriotic-duty filtered down to the troops on the ground, as evidenced by the [now infamous 2004 photos](#) from Abu Ghraib of smiling American soldiers offering [thumbs-up responses](#) to their ability to humiliate and hurt captives in dog collars.

Fourth, Dehumanize the Victims. Like the national security establishment that promoted torture policies, Bigelow dehumanizes her victims. Despite repeated beatings, humiliations, and aggressive torture techniques of various sorts, Ammar never becomes even a faintly sympathetic character to anyone in the film. As a result, there is never anyone for the audience to identify with who becomes emotionally distraught over the abuses. Dehumanization was a necessary tool in promoting torture; now, it is a necessary tool in promoting Zero Dark Thirty, which desensitizes its audience in ways that should be frightening to us and make us wonder who exactly we have become in the years since 9/11.

Fifth, Never Doubt That Torture Works. Given all this, it's a small step to touting the effectiveness of torture in eliciting the truth. "In the end, everybody breaks, bro' : it's biology," Dan says to his victim. He also repeats over and over, "If you lie to me, I hurt you" -- meaning, "If I hurt you, you won't lie to me." Maya concurs, telling Ammar, bruised, bloodied, and begging for her help, that he can stop his pain by telling the truth.

How many times does the American public need to be told that torture did not yield the results the government promised? How many times does it need to be [said](#) that waterboarding Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the mastermind of 9/11, 183 times obviously didn't work? How many times does it need to be pointed out that torture can -- and did -- produce misleading or false information, notably in the torture of [Ibn al-Shaykh al-Libi](#), the Libyan who ran an al-Qaeda training camp in Afghanistan and who confessed under torture that there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq?

Sixth, Hold No One Accountable. The Obama administration made the [determination](#) that holding Bush administration figures, CIA officials, or the actual torturers responsible

for what they did in a court of law was far more trouble than it might ever be worth. Instead, the president chose to [move on](#) and officially [never look back](#). Bigelow takes advantage of this passivity to suggest to her audience that the only downside of torture is the fear of accountability. As he prepares to leave Pakistan, Dan tells Maya, “You gotta be real careful with the detainees now. Politics are changing and you don’ t want to be the last one holding the dog collar when the oversight committee comes...”

The sad truth is that *Zero Dark Thirty* could not have been produced in its present form if any of the officials who created and implemented U.S. torture policy had been held accountable for what happened, or any genuine sunshine had been thrown upon it. With scant public debate and no public record of accountability, Bigelow feels free to leave out even a scintilla of criticism of that torture program. Her film is thus one more example of the fact that without accountability, the pernicious narrative continues, possibly gaining traction as it does.

Seventh, *Employ the Media*. While the Bush administration had the Fox television series *24* as a weekly reminder that torture keeps us safe, the current administration, bent on its no-accountability policy, has Bigelow’ s film on its side. It’ s the perfect piece of propaganda, with all the appeal that naked brutality, fear, and revenge can bring.

Hollywood and most of its critics have [embraced](#) the film. It has already been named among the best films of the year, and is considered a shoe-in for [Oscar nominations](#). Hollywood, that one-time bastion of liberalism, has provided the final piece in the perfect blueprint for the whitewashing of torture policy. If that isn’ t a happily-ever-after ending, what is?

Karen J. Greenberg, a [TomDispatch regular](#), is the Director of the Center on National Security at Fordham Law School. She is the author of [The Least Worst Place: Guantanamo’ s First 100 Days](#) and the co-editor of [The Torture Papers: The Road to Abu Ghraib](#).

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[Cool Aid's Winter Coat Giveaway at the Downtown Community Centre](#) 

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 09 January 2013 11:38

MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release: January 9, 2012

Cool Aid's Winter Coat Giveaway at the Downtown Community Centre

The chill of winter can be felt by all of us in Victoria, and it is especially chilly for those struggling with homelessness. To help people stay warm the Victoria Cool Aid Society's Casual Labour Pool has been accepting donations of winter coats and other cold weather gear.

On Thursday, Cool Aid staff will start spreading that warmth by giving away over 300 winter coats of all sizes for men, women and children.

[Read more...](#)

[Villagers Wail Against Nuclear Power](#) 

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 09 January 2013 06:41

By [K. S. Harikrishnan](#)



Fishermen and their families protesting against the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant.
Credit K. S. Harikrishnan/IPS

KUDANKULAM, India, Jan 6 2013 (IPS) - Mahalakshmi, a housewife married to a farmer, is afraid for her family's future. The fifty-two-year-old woman is also frustrated that Indian authorities have "betrayed" poor villagers.

A huge nuclear power plant under the control of the government-run Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) is the source of her woes.

The Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP), situated 24 kilometres from the world famous tourist town of Kanyakumari on the southern tip of the Indian peninsula, is likely to be commissioned this month.

Last Updated on Wednesday, 09 January 2013 06:44

No expanded doc

[Native bands challenge omnibus budget bill in court](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 08 January 2013 10:23

By Leslie MacKinnon, [CBC News](#) Jan 8, 2013 see video <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/story/2013/01/07/pol-two-bands-duty-to-consult-court-challenge.html?cmp=rss>

Mikisew Cree and Frog Lake First Nation spokespersons holding press conference at 10 a.m. ET

Two native bands are attempting to challenge parts of the federal government's omnibus budget bill in court.

The bands are the Mikisew Cree and the Frog Lake First Nation, both from Alberta.

The chiefs of both bands arrived in Ottawa Monday to present their application to the Federal Court on Tuesday.

They are asking for a judicial review of the environmental provisions in two budget bills — Bill C-38 and Bill C-45 — because of proposed changes to the Fisheries Act and the Navigable Waters Protection Act.

Last Updated on Tuesday, 08 January 2013 10:32

No expanded doc

1671 readings

Pacific Island Wakes Up to Threat of Oil Spills



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 08 January 2013 04:54

By **Catherine Wilson**



An oil spill has threatened the coral reefs and marine ecosystems in the Milne Bay Province of Papua New Guinea. Credit: Mauricio Ramos/IPS

SYDNEY, Jan 7 2013 (IPS) - Coral reefs and marine ecosystems in the Milne Bay Province of the Pacific Island nation of Papua New Guinea are at serious risk of long-term environmental damage. The reason: an oil spill from a ship that ran aground on a reef on Kwaiawata Island on Christmas Eve, and authorities' long delay in mobilising an appropriate response to the accident.

"The area has some of the fastest currents in the world and this delay has increased the likelihood of the oil spreading quickly beyond the vessel," Chalapan Kaluwin, professor of environmental science at the University of Papua New Guinea, told IPS.

"It is too early to assess the full scale of the damage, but there are fragile marine and island ecosystems in this area and the impacts on reefs, marine life and the marine resources that island communities depend on is likely to be long term, rather than short term."



The MV Asian Lily aground on a reef on the remote Kwaiawata Island in Milne Bay Province, Papua New Guinea. Photo Credit: National Maritime Safety Authority.

The Japanese-owned 136-metre reefer vessel MV Asian Lily, which wasn't carrying any refrigerated cargo at the time, was negotiating Milne Bay – a province comprising 160 islands to the southeast of the Papua New Guinean mainland – en route from New Zealand to the Philippines, when the incident occurred.

Milne Bay Governor, Titus Philemon, only learned the news from local villagers several days after the ship ran aground.

Nurur Rahman, executive manager of Maritime Operations at the National Maritime Safety Authority (NMSA), told IPS that fuel oil, which leaked from one of the ship's tanks, had spread along approximately 115 metres of the island's coastline.

The remote Kwaiawata Island, which is no more than three kilometres long and located in the Samarai Murua District north of the Jomard Passage – a busy international shipping lane – has a population of about 200 people. Henry Vailasi, Milne Bay Provincial Administrator, said there weren't any coastal villages in the direct vicinity of the stricken vessel, but the oil spill had impacted the island's shoreline.

Milne Bay contains a high diversity of corals and marine life, including more than 1,000 species of fish, 630 species of molluscs and 360 species of hard coral, as well as seagrasses and mangrove forests. Coral reefs are vital to the livelihoods of local communities, providing habitats for fish and protection to island coastlines. Seventy percent of households in the Samarai Murua District depend on fisheries and other marine resources for subsistence.

In a public statement the NMSA said a Papua New Guinea tugboat has been at the site of the MV Asian Lily since Dec. 27 and a team of international salvage experts was currently onboard the vessel with its crew.

Representatives of the ship owners met with local villagers last week regarding the incident, a meeting that will likely be followed in due course by a consultation between national and provincial authorities and affected communities.

Related IPS Articles

- [Coral Triangle Fights to Save Reefs from Extinction](#)
- [Pacific Coastal Fisheries in Dire Need of Protection](#)
- [ENVIRONMENT-SENEGAL: Oil Spills Threaten Marine Life – 1999](#)
- [Ecosystem in Peril after Gulf Oil Spill](#)

A spokesperson for Pacific Towing PNG Ltd, which is working to salvage the vessel, said the oil leak had been contained and the scale of the damage to the vessel was being assessed. Preparations are currently underway for an attempted refloating of the ship on Jan. 10.

On Jan. 5, the International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation, which has been engaged to advise the government on how best to address the oil spill, presented a [shoreline clean up proposal](#) to authorities in Papua New Guinea.

Milne Bay presents serious navigational challenges to shipping, with hazards including extensive reef systems and many maritime areas not yet properly charted. The Jomard Passage, which lies to the west of the Louisiade Archipelago in the south of the province,

connecting the Coral and Solomon Seas, is plied by up to 1,000 ships, including bulk carriers, every year. Many are engaged in commerce between the Australian east coast and North Asia.

There have been several maritime mishaps in recent years. In 2006, the bulk carrier, Zhi Qiang, with a cargo of 40,000 tonnes of raw sugar, **ran aground on a reef in the Louisiade Archipelago** during a voyage from northern Queensland, Australia, to Korea, releasing heavy fuel oil and raw sugar into the sea.

Vailasi told IPS that the provincial government was seriously concerned about the level of guidance and monitoring of ships through Milne Bay and the Jomard Passage.

"This vessel did not have a pilot onboard at the time it went aground," he said. "We want the region to be a compulsory pilot area and we have asked the NMSA to advise us on how this can be done."

"This is a wakeup call for the government and ship owners," Kaluwin stressed. "There is a regional oil spill contingency plan, but developing national and provincial oil spill contingency plans remains a challenge facing the government."

A recent **National Marine Pollution Risk Assessment** conducted by the NMSA and PNG Ports Corporation, in association with international consultants, reported that the country's maritime laws need to be updated and aligned with all International Maritime Organisation (IMO) conventions.

The report further stated that until five new marine pollution bills, drafted by the NMSA, are fully enacted, the government's powers to prevent and control marine pollution from ships, and enforce the payment of compensation from polluters, are constrained

Last Updated on Tuesday, 08 January 2013 04:59

[De Beers decision to dump sewage into Attawapiskat played role in current housing crisis](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 07 January 2013 20:06

By Ossie Michelin *APTN National News*

[NATIONAL NEWS | 13. DEC, 2011 BY APTN NATIONAL NEWS](#)
<http://aptn.ca/pages/news/2011/12/13/de-beers-decision-to-dump-sewage-into-attawapiskat-played-role-in-current-housing-crisis/>

While the housing crisis in Attawapiskat has the country's full attention, it was an event on March 5, 2005, that pushed the community toward its current dire state of affairs.

Attawapiskat resident Jackie Hookimaw still remembers that moment.

“My father, he noticed at three in the morning...there was a big awful smell and there was something leaking into the basement,” said Hookimaw.

Last Updated on Monday, 07 January 2013 20:12

No expanded doc

54 readings

A Presidential Decision That Could Change the World



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 10 February 2013 21:39

The Strategic Importance of Keystone XL

By [Michael T. Klare](#) <http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175648/>

Presidential decisions often turn out to be far less significant than imagined, but every now and then what a president decides actually determines how the world turns. Such is the case with the Keystone XL pipeline, which, if built, is slated to bring some of the “dirtiest,” carbon-rich oil on the planet from Alberta, Canada, to refineries on the U.S. Gulf Coast. In the near future, President Obama is expected to give its construction a definitive thumbs up or thumbs down, and the decision he makes could prove far more important than anyone imagines. It could determine the fate of the Canadian tar-sands industry and, with it, the future well-being of the planet. If that sounds overly dramatic, let me explain.

Sometimes, what starts out as a minor skirmish can wind up determining the outcome of a war -- and that seems to be the case when it comes to the mounting battle over the [Keystone XL pipeline](#). If given the go-ahead by President Obama, it will daily carry more than 700,000 barrels of tar-sands oil to those Gulf Coast refineries, providing a desperately needed boost to the Canadian energy industry. If Obama says no, the Canadians (and their American backers) will encounter possibly insuperable difficulties in exporting their heavy crude oil, discouraging further investment and putting the industry's future in doubt.

The battle over Keystone XL was initially joined in the

summer of 2011, when environmental writer and climate activist Bill McKibben and [350.org](#), which he helped found, organized a series of non-violent [anti-pipeline protests](#) in front of the [White House](#) to [highlight](#) the links between tar sands production and the accelerating pace of climate change. At the same time, farmers and politicians in Nebraska, through which the pipeline is set to pass, expressed grave concern about its threat to that state's crucial aquifers. After all, tar-sands crude is highly corrosive, and leaks are a [notable risk](#).

In mid-January 2012, in response to those concerns, other worries about the pipeline, and perhaps a looming presidential campaign season, Obama [postponed](#) a decision on completing the controversial project. (He, not Congress, has the final say, since it will cross an international boundary.) Now, he must decide on a suggested new route that will, supposedly, take Keystone XL around those aquifers and so reduce the threat to Nebraska's water supplies.

Ever since the president postponed the decision on whether to proceed, powerful forces in the energy industry and [government](#) have been mobilizing to press ever harder for its approval. Its supporters [argue](#) vociferously that the pipeline will bring jobs to America and enhance the nation's "energy security" by lessening its reliance on Middle Eastern oil suppliers. Their true aim, however, is far simpler: to save the tar-sands industry (and many billions of dollars in U.S. investments) from possible disaster.

Just how critical the fight over Keystone has become in the eyes of the industry is suggested by a recent pro-pipeline editorial in the trade publication *Oil & Gas Journal*:

"Controversy over the Keystone XL project leaves no room for compromise. Fundamental views about the future of energy are in conflict. Approval of the project would acknowledge the rich potential of the next generation of fossil energy and encourage its development. Rejection would foreclose much of that potential in deference to an energy utopia few Americans support when they learn how much it costs."

Opponents of Keystone XL, who are planning a mass demonstration at the White House [on February 17th](#), have

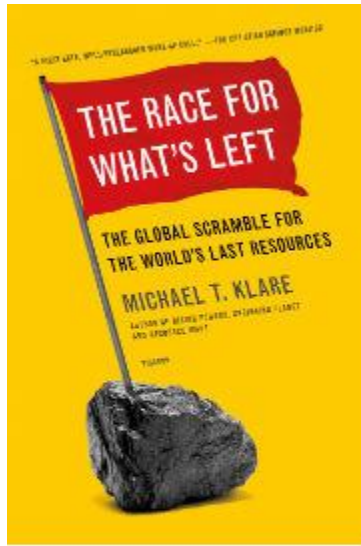
also come to view the pipeline battle in epic terms. “Alberta’s tar sands are the continent’s biggest carbon bomb,” McKibben [wrote](#) at TomDispatch. “If you could burn all the oil in those tar sands, you’d run the atmosphere’s concentration of carbon dioxide from its current 390 parts per million (enough to cause the climate havoc we’re currently seeing) to nearly 600 parts per million, which would mean if not hell, then at least a world with a similar temperature.” Halting Keystone would not by itself prevent those high concentrations, he argued, but would impede the production of tar sands, stop that “carbon bomb” from further heating the atmosphere, and create space for a transition to renewables. “Stopping Keystone will buy time,” he [says](#), “and hopefully that time will be used for the planet to come to its senses around climate change.”

A Pipeline With Nowhere to Go?

Why has the fight over a pipeline, which, if completed, would provide only 4% of the U.S. petroleum supply, assumed such strategic significance? As in any major conflict, the answer lies in three factors: logistics, geography, and timing.

Start with logistics and consider the tar sands themselves or, as the industry and its supporters in government prefer to call them, “oil sands.” Neither tar nor oil, the [substance in question](#) is a sludge-like mixture of sand, clay, water, and bitumen (a degraded, carbon-rich form of petroleum). Alberta has a colossal supply of the stuff -- at least a trillion barrels in known reserves, or the equivalent of all the conventional oil burned by humans since the onset of commercial drilling in 1859. Even if you count only the reserves that are deemed extractible by existing technology, its tar sands reportedly are the equivalent of [170 billion barrels](#) of conventional petroleum -- more than the reserves of any nation except Saudi Arabia and Venezuela. The availability of so much untapped energy in a country like Canada, which is private-enterprise-friendly and where the political dangers are few, has been a [magnet](#) for major international energy firms. Not surprisingly, many of them, including ExxonMobil,

Chevron, ConocoPhillips, and Royal Dutch Shell, have invested heavily in tar-sands operations.



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Tar sands, however, bear little resemblance to the conventional oil fields which these companies have long exploited. They must be **treated** in various energy-intensive ways to be converted into a transportable liquid and then processed even further into usable products. Some tar sands can be strip-mined like coal and then “upgraded” through chemical processing into a synthetic crude oil -- SCO, or “syncrude.” Alternatively, the bitumen can be pumped from the ground after the sands are exposed to steam, which liquefies the bitumen and allows its extraction with conventional oil pumps. The latter process, known as steam-assisted gravity drainage (SAGD), produces a heavy crude oil. It must, in turn, be diluted with lighter crudes for transportation by pipeline to specialized refineries equipped to process such oil, most of which are located on the Gulf Coast.

Extracting and processing tar sands is an extraordinarily expensive undertaking, far more so than most conventional oil drilling operations. Considerable energy is needed to dig the sludge out of the ground or heat the water into steam for underground injection; then, additional energy is needed for the various upgrading processes. The **environmental risks** involved are enormous (even

leaving aside the vast amounts of greenhouse gases that the whole process will pump into the atmosphere). The massive quantities of water needed for SAGD and those upgrading processes, for example, become **contaminated** with toxic substances. Once used, they cannot be returned to any water source that might end up in human drinking supplies -- something environmentalists **say** is already occurring. All of this and the expenses involved mean that the multibillion-dollar investments needed to launch a tar-sands operation can only pay off if the final product fetches a healthy price in the marketplace.

And that's where geography enters the picture. Alberta is theoretically **capable of producing** five to six million barrels of tar-sands oil per day. In 2011, however, Canada itself **consumed** only 2.3 million barrels of oil per day, much of it supplied by conventional (and cheaper) oil from fields in Saskatchewan and Newfoundland. That number is not expected to rise appreciably in the foreseeable future. No less significant, Canada's refining capacity for all kinds of oil is limited to 1.9 million barrels per day, and few of its refineries are equipped to process tar sands-style heavy crude. This leaves the producers with one strategic option: exporting the stuff.

And that's where the problems really begin. Alberta is an interior province and so cannot export its crude by sea. Given the geography, this leaves only three export options: pipelines heading east across Canada to ports on the Atlantic, pipelines heading west across the Rockies to ports in British Columbia, or pipelines heading south to refineries in the United States.

Alberta's preferred option is to send the preponderance of its tar-sands oil to its biggest natural market, the United States. At present, Canadian pipeline companies do operate a **number of conduits** that deliver some of this oil to the U.S., notably the original Keystone conduit extending from Hardisty, Alberta, to Illinois and then southward to Cushing, Oklahoma. But these lines can carry less than one million barrels of crude per day, and so will not permit the massive expansion of output the industry is planning for the next decade or so.

In other words, the only pipeline now under development that would significantly expand Albertan tar-sands exports is Keystone XL. It is vitally important to the tar-sands producers because it offers the sole short-term -- or possibly even long-term -- option for the export and sale of the crude output now coming on line at dozens of projects being developed across northern Alberta. Without it, these projects will [languish](#) and Albertan production will have to be sold at a deep discount -- at, that is, a per-barrel price that could fall below production costs, making further investment in tar sands unattractive. In January, Canadian tar-sands oil was already [selling](#) for \$30-\$40 less than West Texas Intermediate (WTI), the standard U.S. blend.

The Pipelines That Weren' t

Like an army bottled up geographically and increasingly at the mercy of enemy forces, the tar-sands producers see the completion of Keystone XL as their sole realistic escape route to survival. "Our biggest problem is that Alberta is landlocked, " the province ' s finance minister Doug Horner [said](#) in January. "In fact, of the world' s major oil-producing jurisdictions, Alberta is the only one with no direct access to the ocean. And until we solve this problem... the [price] differential will remain large."

Logistics, geography, and finally timing. A presidential stamp of approval on the building of Keystone XL will save the tar-sands industry, ensuring them enough return to justify their massive investments. It would also undoubtedly prompt additional investments in tar-sands projects and further production increases by an industry that assumed opposition to future pipelines had been weakened by this victory.

A presidential thumbs-down and resulting failure to build Keystone XL, however, could have lasting and severe consequences for tar-sands production. After all, no other export link is likely to be completed in the near-term. The other three most widely discussed [options](#) -- the Northern Gateway pipeline to Kitimat, British Columbia, an expansion of the existing Trans Mountain pipeline to Vancouver, British Columbia, and a plan to use existing, conventional-oil conduits to carry tar-sands oil across Quebec, Vermont,

and New Hampshire to Portland, Maine -- already face intense opposition, with initial construction at best still years in the future.

The Northern Gateway project, proposed by Canadian pipeline company Enbridge, would stretch from Bruderheim in northern Alberta to Kitimat, a port on Charlotte Sound and the Pacific. If completed, it would allow the export of tar-sands oil to Asia, where Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper **sees** a significant future market (even though few Asian refineries could now process the stuff). But unlike oil-friendly Alberta, British Columbia has a strong pro-environmental bias and many senior provincial officials have expressed **fierce opposition** to the project. Moreover, under the country's constitution, native peoples over whose land the pipeline would have to travel must be consulted on the project -- and most tribal communities are **adamantly opposed** to its construction.

Another proposed conduit -- an expansion of the existing Trans Mountain pipeline from Edmonton to Vancouver -- presents the same set of obstacles and, like the Northern Gateway project, has aroused **strong opposition** in Vancouver.

This leaves the third option, a plan to pump tar-sands oil to Ontario and Quebec and then employ an existing pipeline now used for oil imports. It connects to a terminal in Casco Bay, near Portland, Maine, where the Albertan crude would begin the long trip by ship to those refineries on the Gulf Coast. Although no official action has yet been taken to allow the use of the U.S. conduit for this purpose, anti-pipeline protests have already erupted in Portland, including one on **January 26th** that attracted more than 1,400 people.

With no other pipelines in the offing, tar sands producers are increasing their reliance on deliveries by rail. This is producing **boom times** for some long-haul freight carriers, but will never prove sufficient to move the millions of barrels in added daily output expected from projects now coming on line.

The conclusion is obvious: without Keystone XL, the price of tar-sands oil will remain substantially lower than

conventional oil (as well as unconventional oil extracted from shale formations in the United States), discouraging future investment and dimming the prospects for increased output. In other words, as Bill McKibben hopes, much of it will stay in the ground.

Industry officials are painfully aware of their predicament. In an Annual Information Form released at the end of 2011, Canadian Oil Sands Limited, owner of the largest share of Syncrude Canada (one of the leading producers of tar-sands oil) noted:

“A prolonged period of low crude oil prices could affect the value of our crude oil properties and the level of spending on growth projects and could result in curtailment of production... Any substantial and extended decline in the price of oil or an extended negative differential for SCO compared to either WTI or European Brent Crude would have an adverse effect on the revenues, profitability, and cash flow of Canadian Oil Sands and likely affect the ability of Canadian Oil Sands to pay dividends and repay its debt obligations.”

The stakes in this battle could not be higher. If Keystone XL fails to win the president's approval, the industry will certainly grow at a far slower pace than forecast and possibly witness the failure of costly ventures, resulting in an industry-wide contraction. If approved, however, production will soar and global warming will occur at an even faster rate than previously projected. In this way, a presidential decision will have an unexpectedly decisive and lasting impact on all our lives.

Michael Klare is a professor of peace and world security studies at Hampshire College, a [TomDispatch regular](#) and the author, most recently, of [The Race for What's Left](#), just published in paperback. A documentary movie based on his book *Blood and Oil* can be previewed and ordered at www.bloodandoilmovie.com. You can follow Klare on Facebook by clicking [here](#).

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Missleading

Posted by Dragonslayer

Sunday, 10 February 2013 16:26

One barrel of oil produces over 400kg of carbon dioxide. When calculating the environmental cost of the xl pipeline we need to assume that if the oil stayed in the ground there would be no environmental impact. All the enablers of getting that barrel of oil burned are responsible for the environmental damage caused by that 400kg of carbon dioxide. Add on to that the damage caused by extraction, transportation, refining, storage and distribution and you can see that the damage done is much greater than the 400kg/barrel. The best place to limit the number of barrels is at the point of extraction. The next best is to limit transport which is where we are now.

Last Updated on Sunday, 10 February 2013 16:35

79 readings

News of actions against genetically engineered food and crops

Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 10 February 2013 10:58

By Lucy Sharratt, from CBAN (Canadian Biotechnology Action Network)

February 10, 2013

The Supreme Court of Costa Rica has halted permission to plant genetically engineered corn. All pending permits are suspended. Groups also claimed that "confidential" documents behind GM approvals violate the rights of citizens to participate.

BASF, the world's biggest chemical company, will no longer seek approval of its genetically modified potatoes (for starch production) in Europe because of stiff (hehe - starch pun) resistance: "continued investment cannot be justified due to uncertainty in the regulatory environment and threats [over the destruction of crops]." There are no GM potatoes currently on the market anywhere in the world (GM potatoes were taken off the market in North America in 2005). <http://www.cban.ca/Resources/Topics/GE-Crops-and-Foods-Not-on-the-Market/Potato>

A soybean farmer is challenging Monsanto's patent rights at the US Supreme Court after being sued for planting feed grain. An earlier court ruled that "farmers cannot 'replicate' Monsanto's patented technology by planting it in the ground to create newly infringing genetic material, seeds, and plants" http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/farmers-use-of-genetically-modified-soybeans-grows-into-supreme-court-case/2013/02/09/8729f05a-717c-11e2-ac36-3d8d9dcaa2e2_story.html?hpid=z2

ACTION APPEALS:

In BC, please contact your Member of the Legislative Assembly before February 22, before Legislature breaks for the election, to express your opposition to the GM "non-browning" apple and to ask the provincial government to take action. Search for your MLA using your postal code here <http://www.leg.bc.ca/mla/3-1-1.htm> For more information see <http://www.cban.ca/apple> Thank you for taking this action!

CBAN has issued a special appeal to conservation groups, River Keepers, fishermen's unions, angler

associations, aboriginal peoples' associations: Sign the statement in opposition to genetically modified fish before March 1st. <http://www.cban.ca/Resources/Topics/GE-Fish/Sign-your-organization-s-objection-to-GE-fish>

For other current strategic actions please check <http://www.cban.ca/Take-Action>

SCIENCE NEWS:

US and European regulators have discovered a hidden viral gene present in many commercialized GM crops - a substantial segment of the multifunctional Gene VI from Cauliflower Mosaic Virus (CaMV). Scientists working for the European Food Safety Authority published a scientific paper which concluded that functions of Gene VI are potential sources of harmful consequences. Read the explanatory blog from Independent Science News <http://independentsciencenews.org/commentaries/regulators-discover-a-hidden-viral-gene-in-commercial-gmo-crops/print/>

A new website helps explain the important 2012 French GM corn safety study (Seralini et al.) and respond to critics. (Prof. Seralini will be in Toronto Feb 16 at the Canadian Organic Growers Conference with CBAN Coordinator Lucy Sharratt.) <http://gmoseralini.org/> CBAN's factsheet on this study is posted at <http://www.cban.ca/content/view/full/1343>

A new article from the UK exposes the pro-GM "seven sins against science" including that "the pro-GM lobby has failed to acknowledge our growing understanding of the complexity of gene expression. They have ignored new developments in science which have added complexity and uncertainty to what they initially assumed was a simple process." <http://www.soilassociation.org/motherearth/viewarticle/articleid/4752/the-pro-gm-lobbys-seven-sins-against-science>

"Genetic engineering is based on a dramatically incomplete knowledge of the genome. It is fundamentally based on an early naïve understanding that the genome produces DNA, which produces pieces of RNA, which produce proteins and that is the end of the story. But we now know that there are an enormous number of complications that are involved in that basic story. Molecular biology has now advanced to the point that we now understand that the genome is like a complicated ecosystem. Doing just one thing such as inserting a piece of DNA into a big genome and expecting just the single protein you are planning for and nothing else is probably not possible." - John Vandermeer, Asa Gray Distinguished University Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Michigan interviewed at <http://www.non-gmoreport.com/articles/february2013/genetic-engineering-based-on-incomplete-knowledge.php>

NEW VIDEOS:

Farmer Testimonials on GM Alfalfa - thanks to the National Farmers Union Youth http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=qkWfGXIU8gA

Short video from Operation Maple exposes the GM issue in Canada including approval of 2.4-D resistant GM crops. "If you care about where your food comes then you need to care about who controls our seeds" - Ann Slater, Dairy farmer, National Farmers Union Ontario. <http://www.operationmaple.com/big-business/seeds-of-deception>

PRO-GM PUBLIC RELATIONS:

Many people have expressed their frustration at the intense amount of media attention given to UK blogger Mark Lynas who claims to have converted from anti-GM activist to GM supporter. The upside of this story is that it has spurred many people to contact media in response: every time you call or write to respond to a media story on GM, you help let media know that this issue matters to you.

- A great article from Mother Jones magazine <http://www.motherjones.com/tom-philpott/2013/01/mark-lynas-failed-attempt-end-gm-debate>

- 2011 emails leaked to The Guardian newspaper showed Europe's leading biotech industry lobby group was working to recruit high-profile international "ambassadors" for pro-GM public relations including Mark Lynas. "conversion". <http://www.spinwatch.org/-articles-by-category-mainmenu-8/46-gm->

[industry/5557](#)

CBAN THANKS:

It was the Great Organic Apple Give-Away at the CBAN booth at the Guelph Organic Conference thanks to BC organic growers of Ambrosia apples! Thank you for donating 100 apples to help CBAN alert people to the GM "non-browning" apple! Ambrosia are naturally slow browning apples and they are deeeee-licious!

Lucy Sharratt, Coordinator
Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN)
Collaborative Campaigning for Food Sovereignty and Environmental Justice
Suite 206, 180 Metcalfe Street
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, K2P 1P5
Phone: **613 241 2267 ext. 25**
Fax: **613 241 2506**
coordinator@cban.ca
www.cban.ca

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76 readings

1,500 Colonies of Honeybees Die in Campeche



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 10 February 2013 06:19

By the Yucatan times

february 9. 2023

1,500 colonies of honeybees, from a community in Hopelchen, Campeche, died this February 6 from the fumigation of Monsanto's GMO's in a nearby area.

This has directly impacted more than 50 impoverished families, who recently suffered a poor corn crop due to drought. The community was relying on their sale of organic honey to compensate for the lack of maize. The current honey left by the bees is also lost due to the contamination of pesticides and transgenic pollen.

Alvaro Mena, a mayan farmer from Hopelchen and member of the Network in Defense of Maize, estimated losses at nearly 10 million pesos and is the equivalent of one year's worth of corn and honey production for the community.

Fumigation has intensified where GM crops have been planted in Mexico. GMO's are known to be resistant to pesticides and are planted in large monocultures, applying huge amounts of Roundup. It is no accident says Mena: it is the toxic onslaught that comes with GM crops and the threat of allowing millions of acres of GM Maize to be planted.

Mena attended the debate at which officials failed to attend and began with his witness of GMO's. Thousands showed up to participate in the debate on GM maize on Thursday, February 7, in a packed auditorium of the Faculty of Science, organized by several networks, including #YoSoy132 Environmental Via Campesina Popular Urban Movement, and the Network in Defense of Maize.

The officials were called to discuss the authorities of Agriculture, Environment and the Interministerial Commission on Biosafety and Genetically Modified Organisms (Cibiogem), but did not attend the meeting of social organizations and visiting scientists. The two secretariats claimed that they had no position on the issue. Currently, there are thousands of hectares of experimental and pilot fields in Mexico contaminating transgenic maize fields. Cibiogem, is reported to have had a busy schedule and could not attend.

Semarnat's response, sent the day of the debate, stated that the "reports that are pending will not go away because of a think tank debate." The debate was composed of academics from UNAM, CINVSTAV, Colpi, Conacyt UAAAN and was meant to determine a "public policy on GM corn."

Several opinions are not in favor of GMOs, and many scientific recommendations have been given to the recently elected Mexico Government from the first day they took office. They have received a solid flow of documents signed by researchers from the above mentioned institutions and others (over 3,000 scientists and experts, who have a high number of national and international awards) calling to cancel transgenic maize crops in centers of origin for the risks involved, and to establish "an immediate review of the environmental and social aspects that would be impacted by planting transgenic maize in Mexico, based on rigorous science and broad public participation (...) for the consideration of the best technological options to address food production in our country."

In favor of GMO's, Dr. Antonio Turrent, president of the Union of Scientists Committed to Society (www.uccs.mx) showed that transgenic maize is necessary to increase maize production in Mexico, and that the country has land conditions, water, seeds and diversity of public resources and technologies to meet all of Mexico's current and future needs without jeopardizing economic independence, diversity, health or the environment, as implied by the GM. Dr. Turrent who recently published a study detailing these options.

On the other hand, Peter Rosset, biologist and researcher, presented a list of papers published in refereed scientific journals, particularly a compilation of studies conducted in 2009 by scientists and Ioannis S. Dona Artemis Arvanitoyannis, indicating that GM crops are associated with toxic effects, hepatic, pancreatic, renal, reproductive and immune and blood disorders and cancer effects. He said the study by Dr. Séralini in France (2012), where it studied the Monsanto GM maize planted in 700,000 hectares in Mexico, caused cancer in rats. In this regard, Rosset said that since Mexico is a country that consumes more corn than any other country, and because of the risks that have been observed in several studies for years, recommended that Mexico does not expose the public to GM Maize. He said the risk is greater for children who will be most affected. He considers it urgent to apply the precautionary principle, and cancel the transgenic, for future generations.

At the debate, the convening organizations, including urban, rural and students expressed their critical views on GMOs from their perspectives. They manifested their intent to stop the planting of GM maize and will continue through all struggles and will do all that they can to not allow the government to impose, against the interests of the vast majority of the population, GM Maize for the benefit of Government and a few multinationals. They agreed to promote further discussions, forums and activities, and strengthen the links between the organizations to avoid GM foods and crops. Also they will promote the widest possible participation in the pre-hearings on Corn and Food Sovereignty of the Permanent Peoples Tribunal, which among other topics will hold a pre-hearing of scientific evidence on GM and failures and corruption of the biosecurity system in the country.

Alvaro Mena called to the public to support the growth of 2013 becoming the "Year of resistance to transgenic corn and native corn in defense of life and independence of the peoples of the Maize."

**Related Scientific Study: <http://independentsciencenews.org/commentaries/regulators-discover-a-hidden-viral-gene-in-commercial-gmo-crops/>

Silvia Ribeiro

ETC Group researcher

Translated and edited by: Sylvia Lahoma Ponce de Leon

Other stories on PEJnews on Mexico rallies against GMO corn

"Sin Maiz no hay Pais" Workers and Labour rebel against NAFTA

http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7158:qsin-maiz-no-hay-paisq-workers-and-labour-rebel-against-nafta&catid=74:ijustice-news&Itemid=216

January 31, 2008 "Mega Marcha" Against NAFTA in Mexico City

[//pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7169&catid=74:ijustice-news&Itemid=216](http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7169&catid=74:ijustice-news&Itemid=216)

143 readings

Open Letter from World Scientists to All Governments Concerning Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 09 February 2013 21:44

- BY institute of Science and Society
- The scientists are extremely concerned about the hazards of GMOs to biodiversity, food safety, human and animal health, and demand a moratorium on environmental releases in accordance with the precautionary principle.
- They are opposed to GM crops that will intensify corporate monopoly, exacerbate inequality and prevent the essential shift to sustainable agriculture that can provide food security and health around the world.
- They call for a ban on patents of life-forms and living processes which threaten food security, sanction biopiracy of indigenous knowledge and genetic resources and violate basic human rights and dignity.
- They want more support on research and development of non-corporate, sustainable agriculture that can benefit family farmers all over the world.

Previous versions of this letter were submitted to many governments and international forums including:

- **World Trade Organization** Conference in Seattle (November 30 – Dec. 2, 1999)
- **UN Biosafety Protocol Meeting** in Montreal (24 – 28, Jan. 2000)
- **UN Commission on Sustainable Development** Conference on Sustainable Agriculture in New York (April 24-May 5, 2000)
- **UN Convention on Biological Diversity** Conference in Nairobi (May 16-24, 2000)
- **United States Congress** (29 June, 2000)

Signed by 828 scientists from 84 different countries, including:

Dr. David Bellamy, Biologist and Broadcaster, London, UK
Prof. Liebe Cavalieri, Mathematical Ecologist, Univ. Minnesota, USA
Dr. Thomas S. Cox, Geneticist, US Dept. of Agriculture (retired), India
Dr. Tewolde Egziabher, Spokesperson for African Region, Ethiopia
Dr. David Ehrenfeld, Biologist/Ecologist, Rutgers University, USA
Dr. Vladimir Zajac, Oncovirologist, Geneticist, Cancer Research Inst, Czech Republic
Dr. Brian Hursey, ex FAO Senior Officer for Vector Borne Diseases, UK
Prof. Ruth Hubbard, Geneticist, Harvard University, USA
Prof. Jonathan King, Molecular Biologist, MIT, Cambridge, USA
Prof. Gilles-Eric Seralini, Laboratoire de Biochimie & Moléculaire, Univ. Caen, France
Dr. David Suzuki, Geneticist, David Suzuki Foundation, Univ. British Columbia, Canada
Dr. Vandana Shiva, Theoretical Physicist and Ecologist, India
Dr. George Woodwell, Director, Woods Hole Research Center, USA
Prof. Oscar B. Zamora, Agronomist, U. Philippines, Los Banos, Philippines

add your name to the list!

1.9.2000

Open Letter from World Scientists to All Governments

SUMMARY

We, the undersigned scientists, call for the immediate suspension of all environmental releases of GM crops and products, both commercially and in open field trials, for at least 5 years; for patents on living processes, organisms, seeds, cell lines and genes to be revoked and banned; and for a comprehensive public enquiry into the future of agriculture and food security for all.

Patents on life-forms and living processes should be banned because they threaten food security, sanction biopiracy of indigenous knowledge and genetic resources, violate basic human rights and dignity, compromise healthcare, impede medical and scientific research and are against the welfare of animals.

GM crops offer no benefits to farmers or consumers. Instead, many problems have been identified, including yield drag, increased herbicide use, erratic performance, and poor economic returns to farmers. GM crops also intensify corporate monopoly on food, which is driving family farmers to destitution, and preventing the essential shift to sustainable agriculture that can guarantee food security and health around the world

The hazards of GMOs to biodiversity and human and animal health are now acknowledged by sources within the UK and US Governments. Particularly serious consequences are associated with the potential for horizontal gene transfer. These include the spread of antibiotic resistance marker genes that would render infectious diseases untreatable, the generation of new viruses and bacteria that cause diseases, and harmful mutations which may lead to cancer.

In the Cartagena Biosafety Protocol negotiated in Montreal in January 2000, more than 130 governments have pledged to implement the precautionary principle and to ensure that biosafety legislations at the national and international levels take precedence over trade and financial agreements at the World Trade Organization.

Successive studies have documented the productivity and the social and environmental benefits of sustainable, low-input and organic farming in both North and South. They offer the only practical way of restoring agricultural land degraded by conventional agronomic practices, and empower small family farmers to combat poverty and hunger.

We urge the US Congress to reject GM crops as both hazardous and contrary to the interest of family farmers; and to support research and development of sustainable agricultural methods that can truly benefit family farmers all over the world.

We, the undersigned scientists, call for the immediate suspension of all environmental releases of GM crops and products, both commercially and in open field trials, for at least 5 years; for patents on living processes, organisms, seeds, cell lines and genes to be revoked and banned; and for a comprehensive public enquiry into the future of agriculture and food security for all.

1. Patents on life-forms and living processes should be banned because they threaten food security, sanction biopiracy of indigenous knowledge and genetic resources, violate basic human rights and dignity, compromise healthcare, impede medical and scientific research and are against the welfare of animals(1). Life-forms such as organisms, seeds, cell lines and genes are discoveries and hence not patentable. Current GM techniques which exploit living processes are unreliable, uncontrollable and unpredictable, and do not qualify as inventions. Furthermore, those techniques are inherently unsafe, as are many GM organisms and products.

2. It is becoming increasingly clear that current GM crops are neither needed nor beneficial. They are a dangerous diversion preventing the essential shift to sustainable agricultural practices that can provide food security and health around the world.

3. Two simple characteristics account for the nearly 40 million hectares of GM crops planted in 1999(2). The majority (71%) are tolerant to broad-spectrum herbicides, with companies engineering plants to be tolerant

to their own brand of herbicide, while most of the rest are engineered with bt-toxins to kill insect pests. A university-based survey of 8200 field trials of the most widely grown GM crops, herbicide-tolerant soya beans - revealed that they yield 6.7% less and required two to five times more herbicides than non-GM varieties(3). This has been confirmed by a more recent study in the University of Nebraska(4). Yet other problems have been identified: erratic performance, disease susceptibility(5), fruit abortion(6) and poor economic returns to farmers(7).

4. According to the UN food programme, there is enough food to feed the world one and a half times over. While world population has grown 90% in the past 40 years, the amount of food per capita has increased by 25%, yet one billion are hungry(8). A new FAO report confirms that there will be enough or more than enough food to meet global demands without taking into account any yield improvements that might result from GM crops well into 2030 (9). It is on account of increasing corporate monopoly operating under the globalised economy that the poor are getting poorer and hungrier(10). Family farmers around the world have been driven to destitution and suicide, and for the same reasons. Between 1993 and 1997 the number of mid-sized farms in the US dropped by 74,440(11), and farmers are now receiving below the average cost of production for their produce(12). The farming population in France and Germany fell by 50% since 1978(13). In the UK, 20 000 farming jobs were lost in the past year alone, and the Prime Minister has announced a £200m aid package(14). Four corporations control 85% of the world trade in cereals at the end of 1999(15). Mergers and acquisitions are continuing.

5. The new patents on seeds intensify corporate monopoly by preventing farmers from saving and replanting seeds, which is what most farmers still do in the Third World. In order to protect their patents, corporations are continuing to develop terminator technologies that genetic engineer harvested seeds not to germinate, despite worldwide opposition from farmers and civil society at large(16).

6. Christian Aid, a major charity working with the Third World, concluded that GM crops will cause unemployment, exacerbate Third World debt, threaten sustainable farming systems and damage the environment. It predicts famine for the poorest countries(17). African Governments condemned Monsanto's claim that GMOs are needed to feed the hungry of the world: "We..strongly object that the image of the poor and hungry from our countries is being used by giant multinational corporations to push a technology that is neither safe, environmentally friendly, nor economically beneficial to us... we believe it will destroy the diversity, the local knowledge and the sustainable agricultural systems that our farmers have developed for millennia and ...undermine our capacity to feed ourselves.(18)" A message from the Peasant movement of the Philippines to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) of the industrialized countries stated, "The entry of GMOs will certainly intensify landlessness, hunger and injustice.(19)"

7. A coalition of family farming groups in the US have issued a comprehensive list of demands, including ban on ownership of all life-forms; suspension of sales, environmental releases and further approvals of all GM crops and products pending an independent, comprehensive assessment of the social, environmental, health and economic impacts; and for corporations to be made liable for all damages arising from GM crops and products to livestock, human beings and the environment(20). They also demand a moratorium on all corporate mergers and acquisitions, on farm closures, and an end to policies that serve big agribusiness interests at the expense of family farmers, taxpayers and the environment(21). They have mounted a lawsuit against Monsanto and nine other corporations for monopolistic practices and for foisting GM crops on farmers without adequate safety and environmental impact assessments(22).

8. Some of the hazards of GM crops are openly acknowledged by the UK and US Governments. UK Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) has admitted that the transfer of GM crops and pollen beyond the planted fields is unavoidable(23), and this has already resulted in herbicide-tolerant weeds(24). An interim report on UK Government-sponsored field trials confirmed hybridisation between adjacent plots of different herbicide tolerant GM oilseed rape varieties, which gave rise to hybrids tolerant to multiple herbicides. In addition, GM oilseed rape and their hybrids were found as volunteers in subsequent wheat and barley crops, which had to be controlled by standard herbicides(25). Bt-resistant insect pests have evolved in response to the continuous presence of the toxins in GM plants throughout the growing season, and the US Environment Protection Agency is recommending farmers to plant up to 40% non-GM crops in order to create refugia for non-resistant insect pests(26).

9. The threats to biodiversity from major GM crops already commercialized are becoming increasingly clear. The broad-spectrum herbicides used with herbicide-tolerant GM crops decimate wild plant species indiscriminately, they are also toxic to animals. Glufosinate causes birth defects in mammals(27), and glyphosate is linked to non-Hodgkin lymphoma(28). GM crops with bt-toxins kill beneficial insects such as bees(29) and lacewings(30), and pollen from bt-corn is found to be lethal to monarch butterflies(31) as well

as swallowtails(32). Bt-toxin is exuded from roots of bt-plants in the rhizosphere, where it rapidly binds to soil particles and become protected from degradation. As the toxin is present in an activated, non-selective form, both target and non-target species in the soil will be affected(33), with knock on effects on species above ground.

10. Products resulting from genetically modified organisms can also be hazardous. For example, a batch of tryptophan produced by GM microorganisms was associated with at least 37 deaths and 1500 serious illnesses(34). Genetically modified Bovine Growth Hormone, injected into cows in order to increase milk yield, not only causes excessive suffering and illnesses for the cows but increases IGF-1 in the milk, which is linked to breast and prostate cancers in humans(35). It is vital for the public to be protected from all GM products, and not only those containing transgenic DNA or protein. That is because the process of genetic modification itself, at least in the form currently practised, is inherently unsafe.

11. Secret memoranda of US Food and Drug Administration revealed that it ignored the warnings of its own scientists that genetic engineering is a new departure and introduces new risks. Furthermore, the first GM crop to be commercialized - the Flavr Savr tomato - did not pass the required toxicological tests(36). Since then, no comprehensive scientific safety testing had been done until Dr. Arpad Pusztai and his collaborators in the UK raised serious concerns over the safety of the GM potatoes they were testing. They conclude that a significant part of the toxic effect may be due to the "[gene] construct or the genetic transformation (or both)" used in making the GM plants(37).

12. The safety of GM foods was openly disputed by Professor Bevan Moseley, molecular geneticist and current Chair of the Working Group on Novel Foods in the European Union's Scientific Committee on Food(38). He drew attention to unforeseen effects inherent to the technology, emphasizing that the next generation of GM foods - the so-called 'nutraceuticals' or 'functional foods', such as vitamin A 'enriched' rice - will pose even greater health risks because of the increased complexity of the gene constructs.

13. Genetic engineering introduces new genes and new combinations of genetic material constructed in the laboratory into crops, livestock and microorganisms(39). The artificial constructs are derived from the genetic material of pathogenic viruses and other genetic parasites, as well as bacteria and other organisms, and include genes coding for antibiotic resistance. The constructs are designed to break down species barriers and to overcome mechanisms that prevent foreign genetic material from inserting into genomes. Most of them have never existed in nature in the course of billions of years of evolution.

14. These constructs are introduced into cells by invasive methods that lead to random insertion of the foreign genes into the genomes (the totality of all the genetic material of a cell or organism). This gives rise to unpredictable, random effects, including gross abnormalities in animals and unexpected toxins and allergens in food crops.

15. One construct common to practically all GM crops already commercialized or undergoing field trials involves a gene-switch (promoter) from the cauliflower mosaic virus (CaMV) spliced next to the foreign gene (transgene) to make it over-express continuously(40). This CaMV promoter is active in all plants, in yeast, algae and E. coli. We recently discovered that it is even active in amphibian egg(41) and human cell extract(42). It has a modular structure, and is interchangeable, in part, or in whole with promoters of other viruses to give infectious viruses. It also has a 'recombination hotspot' where it is prone to break and join up with other genetic material(43).

16. For these and other reasons, transgenic DNA - the totality of artificial constructs transferred into the GMO - may be more unstable and prone to transfer again to unrelated species; potentially to all species interacting with the GMO(44).

17. The instability of transgenic DNA in GM plants is well-known(45). GM genes are often silenced, but loss of part or all of the transgenic DNA also occurs, even during later generations of propagation(46). We are aware of no published evidence for the long term stability of GM inserts in terms of structure or location in the plant genome in any of the GM lines already commercialized or undergoing field trials.

18. The potential hazards of horizontal transfer of GM genes include the spread of antibiotic resistance genes to pathogens, the generation of new viruses and bacteria that cause disease and mutations due to the random insertion of foreign DNA, some of which may lead to cancer in mammalian cells(47). The ability of the CaMV promoter to function in all species including human beings is particularly relevant to the potential hazards of horizontal gene transfer.

19. The possibility for naked or free DNA to be taken up by mammalian cells is explicitly mentioned in the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) draft guidance to industry on antibiotic resistance marker genes(48). In commenting on the FDA's document, the UK MAFF pointed out that transgenic DNA may be transferred not just by ingestion, but by contact with plant dust and air-borne pollen during farm work and

food processing(49). This warning is all the more significant with the recent report from Jena University in Germany that field experiments indicated GM genes may have transferred via GM pollen to the bacteria and yeasts in the gut of bee larvae(50).

20. Plant DNA is not readily degraded during most commercial food processing(51). Procedures such as grinding and milling left grain DNA largely intact, as did heat-treatment at 90deg.C. Plants placed in silage showed little degradation of DNA, and a special UK MAFF report advises against using GM plants or plant waste in animal feed.

21. The human mouth contains bacteria that have been shown to take up and express naked DNA containing antibiotic resistance genes, and similar transformable bacteria are present in the respiratory tracts(52).

22. Antibiotic resistance marker genes from GM plants have been found to transfer horizontally to soil bacteria and fungi in the laboratory(53). Field monitoring revealed that GM sugar beet DNA persisted in the soil for up to two years after the GM crop was planted. And there is evidence suggesting that parts of the transgenic DNA have transferred horizontally to bacteria in the soil(54).

23. Recent research in gene therapy and nucleic acid (both DNA and RNA) vaccines leaves little doubt that naked/free nucleic acids can be taken up, and in some cases, incorporated into the genome of all mammalian cells including those of human beings. Adverse effects already observed include acute toxic shock, delayed immunological reactions and autoimmune reactions(55).

24. The British Medical Association, in their interim report (published May, 1999), called for an indefinite moratorium on the releases of GMOs pending further research on new allergies, the spread of antibiotic resistance genes and the effects of transgenic DNA.

25. In the Cartagena Biosafety Protocol successfully negotiated in Montreal in January, 2000, more than 130 governments have agreed to implement the precautionary principle, and to ensure that biosafety legislations at the national and international levels take precedence over trade and financial agreements at the WTO. Similarly, delegates to the Codex Alimentarius Commission Conference in Chiba Japan, March 2000, have agreed to prepare stringent regulatory procedures for GM foods that include pre-market evaluation, long-term monitoring for health impacts, tests for genetic stability, toxins, allergens and other unintended effects(56). The Cartagena Biosafety Protocol has now been signed by 68 Governments in Nairobi in May, 2000.

26. We urge all Governments to take proper account of the now substantial scientific evidence of actual and suspected hazards arising from GM technology and many of its products, and to impose an immediate moratorium on further environmental releases, including open field trials, in accordance with the precautionary principle as well as sound science.

27. Successive studies have documented the productivity and sustainability of family farming in the Third World as well as in the North(57). Evidence from both North and South indicates that small farms are more productive, more efficient and contribute more to economic development than large farms. Small farmers also tend to make better stewards of natural resources, conserving biodiversity and safeguarding the sustainability of agricultural production(58). Cuba responded to the economic crisis precipitated by the break up of the Soviet Bloc in 1989 by converting from conventional large scale, high input monoculture to small organic and semi-organic farming, thereby doubling food production with half the previous input(59).

28. Agroecological approaches hold great promise for sustainable agriculture in developing countries, in combining local farming knowledge and techniques adjusted to local conditions with contemporary western scientific knowledge(60). The yields have doubled and tripled and are still increasing. An estimated 12.5 million hectares worldwide are already successfully farmed in this way(61). It is environmentally sound and affordable for small farmers. It recovers farming land marginalized by conventional intensive agriculture. It offers the only practical way of restoring agricultural land degraded by conventional agronomic practices. Most of all, it empowers small family farmers to combat poverty and hunger.

29. We urge all Governments to reject GM crops on grounds that they are both hazardous and contrary to ecologically sustainable use of resources. Instead they should support research and development of sustainable agricultural methods that can truly benefit family farmers the world over.

[\[sort by surname\]](#)[\[sort by country\]](#)

signed by

1 Dr. Dennis Smith poopy den s Afghanistan

2 Prof. Calum Wright M.Phil I am an expert on the study of life in Afghanistan

3 Prof. Polycap Dank B.Sc science polycap research institute Angola

4 Prof. Adolfo E. Boy Horticulture and Sustainable Agri. Univ. Moron Chair of Inst. of Sustainable Agriculture Argentina

5 Alfredo Galli Agronomist Groupo de Reflexion Rural Argentina

6 Dr. Jorge Kaczewer M.D MD complementary medicines scientific journalism author of the book in Spanish language Transgenic Risks for Human Health ECOMEDICOS Argentina

7 Jorge Eduardo Roulli Ecologist Groupo de Reflexion Rural Argentina

8 Damien Beaumont B.Sc Postgraduate student at the University of New England Armidale Australia

9 Peter Belbin B.Sc Land Management Consultant Tafe Australia

10 Dr. Graeme E. Browne General Practitioner Melbourne PSRAST Australia

11 Dr. Judy A. Carman Epidemiologist Flanders University Adelaide Australia

12 Dr. Catherine Clinch-Jones General Practitioner Adelaide Australia

13 Mr Sid Cowling B.Sc Environmental Biology Consultant Australia

14 Dr. Philip A. Davies Geneticist Adelaide Australia

15 Rocco Di Vincenzo M.Sc Chief Dietitian Swinburne University Hospital Australia

16 Prof. Horst W. Doelle Microbiologist Univ. Queensland retired Chair of International Organisation for Biotechnology and Bioengineering Director MIRCEN-Biotechnology Brisbane and Pacific Regional Network Australia

17 Dr. Lynette J. Dumble Medical Scientist Women's Health and Environment University of Melbourne Australia

18 Doug N Everingham Physician MB BS Univ Syd 1946 Ex MPs Association Australia

19 Angela Fehring Anthropology Student Sydney Australia

20 Prof. Frank G.H.P. Fisher Graduate School of Environmental Science Clayton Australia

21 Kasia E. Gabrys Environmental Scientist Environmental Science National Trust of Australia Melbourne Australia

22 Prof. Adrian Gibbs Ph.D Virologist retired Australia

23 Dr. Dion Giles Ph.D Analytical chemistry organic chemistry chemical education Stop MAI (WA) Australia

24 Stephen Glanville PDC ECOS Design Australia

25 Dr. Veronica R. Griffin Consultant Nutrition and Environmental Medicine Cairns Australia

26 Vince Halpin B.Sc Acupuncturist Herbalist Pharmacist Australia

27 Dr. Richard Hindmarsh Environmental Social Scientist Univ. Queensland Australia

28 Margaret Jackson B.Sc. Genetics National Genetics Awareness Alliance Australia

29 Dr. Warren Kinne Ph.D Philosopher theologian Society of St Columban Australia

30 Steven Kiss B.Sc Biological/ Organic Farm Manager broad acre crops sheep cattle medicinal herbs Australia

31 Dr. Elmar Klucis Ph.D Biochemistry Biology Retired Australia

32 Keith Loveridge B.Sc Bachelor Environmental Soc Sci RMIT University Croydon Conservation Society Australia

33 Lisa McDonald Agronomist CRC for Sustainable Sugar Production James Cook University Australia

34 Michelle McLaren Bach Nutrition and Dietetics Australia

35 Dr. Peter J. McMachon Plant Physiologist Genetics Australia Conservation Foundation Australia

36 Elham Monavari B.Sc Bsc Maj Biology Masters in Env. Management Student Cities for Climate Protection Project Officer Australia

37 Dr. Angela Morris Ph.D Root nodule development Research School of Biological Sciences ANU Australia

38 Dr. Paul Nelson CSIRO Land and Water PMB Australia

39 Tim Osborn Web Development Australia

40 Dr. Sharron L. Pfueller Biochemistry/Environmental Studies School of Geography and Environmental Science Monash University Melbourne Australia

41 Katrina E. Preski Environmental Science Monash University Melbourne Australia

42 Dr. Peter Renowden Strategic Planner Melbourne Australia

43 Sandra Russo Principal of College As a Homoeopath I lecture have a private clinic and mentor students of Homoeopathy Adelaide Training College of Complementary Medicine Australia

44 Frank Samson B.Sc R & D Project Manager (Physics) Sola International Holdings Australia

45 Glenn Sorensen B.Sc Natural Products Chemist/Phytochemist Jurlique Australia

46 Dr. Rosemary Stanton Ph.D Nutritionist Australia

47 Dr. Maarten Stapper Ph.D Farming Systems Agronomist Australia

48 Michelle Starr Ph.D student Natural Therapist none Australia

49 Dr Corinna-Britta Steeb Ph.D Pathophysiology Medical Sciences Nutrition Klein Research Institute Australia

50 Dr. Ted Steele Molecular Immunologist U. Wollongong Australia

51 Dr. Philip Stowell M.D GP working in Nutritional and Environmental Medicine in Australia

52 DI Gertrude Kaffenbock Ph.D student Ph.D. candidate Agricultural Economist St. Polton Austria

53 Thomas Klemm Psychologist Konrad Lorenz Institute Austria

54 Dr. Maria G. Neunteufel Economist Vienna Austria

55 Dr. SYED NAZMUL HUDA Ph.D IN NUTRITION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT NUTRITION AND FOOD SCIENCE UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA Bangladesh

56 Muhammed Saiful Islam M.Sc Entomologist DAE Bangladesh

57 Golam Kibria M.Phil Ecology Culture Biodiversity UBINIG Bangladesh

58 Zakir Kibria M.Phil Ecology Biodiversity Culture BanglaPraxis Bangladesh

59 Dr Farhad Mazhar Ecologist New Agricultural Movement Bangladesh

60 Dharendra Panda Ph.D student MOBILISATION AND ACTIVISM the collective Bangladesh

61 De Beer Daniel M.Sc Lawyer Lawyers Without Borders and Vrije universiteit Brussel Belgium

62 Dr. Gaëtan du Bus Forest Engineer Univ. Catholique de Louvain INRA Belgium

63 Verstraeten Guy B.Eng have an engineering education in biochemistry education I have ethical objections to do work in most of the current industries and research Belgium

64 Pablo Servigne Ph.D agronomist engineer PhD in Biology ULB Belgium
65 Dr. Michel Somville Ph.D GMO s Health environmental risks GREENS EFA group in the European parliament Belgium
66 Els Torreele Ph.D student biotechnology Vrije Universiteit Brussels Belgium
67 Flavia Camargo De Oliveira Biologist UFPR Brazil
68 Prof. MOHAMED HABIB Ph.D 39 years of research experience Biological Control and Agro Ecology University of Campinas Brazil
69 Prof. Antonio Carlos Junqueira Do Val Filho B.Sc Engineer Agronomist CDA Brazil
70 Samuel MacDowell Ph.D Plant Molecular Biology IBAMA Brazil
71 Paulo Roberto Martins Research Institute of Technology Brazil
72 Dr. Leovegildo Matos Ph.D Animal nutritionist Research Embrapa Brazil
73 Renata Menasche Anthropologist Federal Un. of Rio Grande do Sul Brazil
74 Prof. Luís César Nunes B.Sc Education PCRJ Brazil
75 Ventura Eduardo Souza Barbeiro Engineer agronomist ABRAMA Brazilian association of Enviroment Brazil
76 Franco Werlagn M.Sc Business Administration GaiaVillage Project Brazil
77 Dr. Stefan Panaiotov Ph.D molecular microbiology National Center of Infectious and Parasitic Diseases Bulgaria
78 Dr Thomas R. Preston Un. of Tropical Agriculture Cambodia
79 Prof. Lonnie Aarssen Ph.D Ecologist Queen s University Canada
80 Prof. Paul Antze Ph.D medical anthropology Canada
81 Dr. Sandra Awang Ph.D Sociologist/Writer on biodiversity biodemocracy and food security Canada
82 Prof.em Henry Becker Ph.D 7 years in applied biology 35 years teaching research in chemical engineering currently writing book on nutrition health disease Queen s University Canada
83 Dr Warren Bell MD Canad. Assoc. of Physicians for the Environ. Canada
84 Prof. emeritus Alfred M. Braxton Anthropologist Univ. British Columbia Canada
85 John A Brown watchdog on growing power of corporacy in our world and the world s governments lack of will stop it Education Canada
86 Denis Cauchon M.Sc. Ph.D. candidate Toxicology Ecole HEC Montreal Canada
87 Dr. Samit Chakrabarty Ph.D Systems Neurophysiologist Canada
88 Yoon C. Chen B.Sc. DPM Podiatrist Foot Clinic Lethbridge Alberta Canada
89 Bert R. Christie Plant Breeding Research Scientist Agriculture and AgriFood Canada Charlotte Town Canada
90 Dr. E. Ann Clark Ph.D crop physiologist Plant Agriculture University of Guelph Canada
91 Una Coghlan interested in securing a healthy food chain Voice of Women Canada
92 Prof. Alain Cuerrier Taxonomy/Botany Quebec Univ. of Montreal Canada
93 Prof. Joe Cummins Geneticist University of Western Ontario Canada
94 Prof. Edwin E. Daniel FRSC Health Science McMaster Univ. Ontario Canada
95 Prof. Dennis Dennis pooppy none Canada
96 Justin Duncan B.Sc Environmental biology law and policy Queen's University Canada
97 Prof. Chavez Eduardo R Ph.D Animal nutrition production and mangement agricultural production systems McGill University Canada
98 Virginia F. Flamarique AMD Consultant Agrologist Edmonton Canada
99 Glenn Fletcher M.Sc Masters degree research in toxicology occupational health McMaster University Canada
100 Dr. Josh Gallant Ph.D surgery general Canada
101 Dr. Imme Gerke Ph.D Cell biologist BIOTEPP Canada
102 Julie Guenette M.Phil Philosophical enquiry into our relationship to nature Ottawa University Canada
103 Tanya Handa M.Sc. Ecologist Univ. Toronto Toronto Canada
104 Virginia Jacobsen organic growers Canada
105 Aaron Jette Anthropology student McGill Univ. Montreal Canada
106 Prof. Leonard Kasdan Ph.D Social Anthropology and Resource and environmental studies Dalhousie University (retired) Canada
107 Dr. Gavin A. Kemp ret. Researcher Vegetable Crop Breeding Lethbridge Canada
108 Zorica Knezevic M.Sc Senior Consultant Environment Stantec Consulting Ltd Canada
109 Prof. Ronald Labonte Population Health Research Director Ontario Canada
110 William J. Lewis Linguist Univ. of Victoria British Columbia Canada
111 Prof. Abby Lippman Epidemiologist & Geneticist McGill Un. Canada
112 Jan Martel B.Sc Student in biology University of Sherbrooke Canada
113 Prof. Ralph C. Martin Plant Science Nova Scotia Agricultural College Truro Canada
114 Prof. Dennis R. McCalla Biochemist & Geneticist emeritus McMaster University Hamilton Canada
115 Laura Mitchell Earth Scientist APEGGB Canada
116 Mary Mitchell teacher Canada
117 Dr. Anne Morgan Waterloo Climate Change Entomolgist/ Univ. of (retired) Canada
118 Dr. M. Murphy Pediatrician NAMBLA Canada
119 Dr. James A. Nero D.C. General Practitioner neuromusculoskeletal medicine Coquitlam Canada
120 Anna D. Noikov B.A.B.Ed. B.A.B.Ed. Wholistic Practitioner Edmonton Canada
121 Lise Norgren Concerned Consumer Canada
122 Prof. Ann Oaks Botany (retired) Univ. Guelph Canada
123 Steve Robak Canadian Department of National Defence Canada
124 Leslirae Rotor Economist consultant Ottawa Canada
125 Dr. Bassam Ismaeil Sam Ph.D Information Systems Ismaeil Consulting Canada
126 Vere Scott ecologist Canada
127 Dr. John Scull Psychologist University of Victoria Victoria Canada
128 Dr. Carolyn A. Simmerman ND.DC Docotr. Whole Health Centre Edmonton Canada

129 Prof. David Suzuki David Suzuki Foundation Geneticist U.B.C. Canada
130 Prof. Stephen Talmage Philosopher (retired) Carleton University Ottawa Canada
131 Dr. Wee Chong Tan Ph.D 5 years of research and several papers on sustainable farming and the dangers of GM foods Canadian College for Chinese Studies Canada
132 Mark Thompson Ph.D student Molecular Evolutionary Genetics The University of Calgary Canada
133 Noemi Tousignant M.Sc history of science technology and medicine Canada
134 Caroll Tranchant Ph.D Enseignant chercheur Sciences et technologies des aliments Canada
135 Dr. Pierre Turcotte Ph.D Plant breeder Canada
136 John B. Van Loon M.Sc. Storage Entomologist retired Canadian Grain Commission Winnipeg PSRAST Canada
137 Dr. Susan Walsh Ph.D Phd cultural anthropology Executive Director of NGO focussed on food security in the South USC Canada Canada
138 Roland Wilhelm B.Sc One who choses to think and take on problems that effect the environment Guelph Canada
139 Prof. R.M. Wolfson Physicist Maharishi Vedic College Ottawa Canada
140 Prof. Howard Woodhouse Ph.D Philosopher of Education and Co Director of Saskatchewan Process Philosophy Research Unit University of Saskatchewan Canada
141 Dr. John C. Worketin Retired computer scientist Ontario Canada
142 Werner Zimmermann interested informed and concerned citizen Canada
143 Tea Garcia-Huidobro M.Sc Biochemistry (B.Sc) and Environmental Technology (M.Sc) Chile
144 Diana Medel Studies on Anthropol Soc Soc Psy Member Anthroposophic Society Volunteer for Children sRights Garden s Constr Inv Med Plants Food Environm Stud ONG to supervise Children s Rights Chile
145 JUAN DU B.Eng civil Engineering Warwick U K China
146 Dr. Ye Hua over 20 000 pieces hand painted oil painting and picture frames in stock for sale at lowest prices <http://www.art98.com> China
147 Dr. Alexander Jablanczy General Practitioner Doctor's Building Saulte Ste. Marie China
148 Dr. Jesse LiLing M.D Bioinformation Tsinghua University China
149 William Bingbin Lui Ph.D student I strongly support such an effort I think both National and International legal regimes should accept this open letter Law School Fudan University Shanghai China
150 Elias Gomez Ph. D. student Dept. of Geology University of Cornell Colombia
151 Dr. Jaime E García González Ph.D Pesticides Organic Agriculture Universidad Estatal a Distancia UNED Costa Rica
152 Damjan Bogdanovic Ph. D. student Un Zagreb Croatia
153 Prof. Marijan Jost Plant Geneticist Agricultural College Krizevci Croatia
154 Damir Magdic Food Scientist Osijek Un Croatia
155 Dr. Zora Matrovic MD MD MS Vice-President Croatia Natural Law Party Croatia
156 Vesna Samobor M.Sc. Agricultural College Krizevci Croatia
157 Prof. Drasko Seman Ecologist Univ. Zagreb Medical School Croatian Man and Biosphere Committee UNESCO South Eastern Mediterranean Sea Project UNESCO Comm. Ed. & Communication INCN European Committee on Environmental Ed. IUCN Croatia
158 Prof Anton Svajger Un Zagreb Medical School Croatia
159 Prof. Valerije Vrcek Ph.D organic chemistry University of Zagreb Croatia
160 Dr. Vladimir Zajac Ph.D oncovirology genetics microbiology Cancer Research Institute Czechoslovakia
161 Henrik Westergaard Odense University Hospital Odense Denmark
162 Alexandra Almeida biochemist Accion Ecologica Ecuador
163 Dr. Elizabeth Bravo biologist Accion Ecologica Ecuador
164 Ziad Abdel Razak Aly Ph.D student Radar and Optic remote sensing images analysis applied on soil Université de Sherbrooke Qc Canada Egypt
165 Ziad Aly Ph.D student Soil survey and classification Optic and Radar Images Analysis CARTEL Université de Sherbrooke Qc Canada Egypt
166 Dr. Bahaa Awwad M.Sc oncology hematology bmt landguardians Egypt
167 Mahrous Kandil Ph.D student soil microbiology and concerning with Genetics Univ. of Minnesota (USA) Egypt
168 Ahmed Said Mohamed Kamel sweet corn Egypt
169 Dr. Mohamed Salem Ph.D Molecular Plant Pathology Biological Control Genetic Engineeering and Biotechnology Research In Egypt
170 Prof. Fathy Mahmoud Salem Ph.D Professor of Nematology Faculty Of Agriculture Shibin El Kom Minufiya Univ Egypt
171 Dr. Ehab Zayed Ph.D student tissue culture Breeding ARC FCRI CRD Egypt
172 Dr. Gennadi Kobzar Senior Scientist Biomedicine Institute of Chemistry Tallinn Technical Univ. Estonia
173 Prof. Anne Luik Ph.D Entomology plant protection Estonian Agricultural University Estonia
174 Sue Edwards M.Sc botanist and scientific editor lover of all life forms Institute for Sustainable Development Ethiopia
175 Dr. Tewolde Egziabher Agronomist Min. of the Environment Spokesperson for African Region Ethiopia
176 Dr. Liisa Kuusipalo Ph.D cellbiologist North Carelian Central Hospital Finland
177 Dr. Mark Rawlings Ph.D Astrophysicst Finland
178 Sylvain Allombert M.Sc. Ph.D. Student Ecology Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique Montpellier PSRAST France
179 Dr. Thierry Baussant Biochemist Senior Scientist Pharmaceutical Industry Bellegard France
180 Dr. Jean-Pierre Berlan Directeur de Recherches INR/CTESI France
181 Dr. Luc G. Bulot Researcher ESA CNRS 6019- Centre de Sedimentologie- Paleontologie Marseille PSRAST France
182 Dr. Pierre Calinaud Ph.D organic chemistry France

183 Dr. George Capouthier Biologist Univ. Paris France
 184 MORAND CEDRIC c LCR Faucheurs Volontaires France
 185 Dr. Dominique Cellier Prof Statistics in Bioinformatics Laboratoire LMRS ABISS Université France
 186 Dr. Marie Christine BRGM Environment & Procédés Unite Biotechnologie Orlean France
 187 Nathalie Cialdella Ph.D student agronomist France
 188 Olga Daric M.Phil linguistics France
 189 Bertrand desClers M.Sc Scientific research/Aeronautics/Conservation/Environment IGF France
 190 Dr. QUEIROS CONDE Diogo theoretical biology turbulence geometry of multi scale systems Ecole des mines de Paris France
 191 Dr. Jean Estrangin MK General Practice Grenoble France
 192 Alain Fardif Certificat of therapist Paris France
 193 PRAT Frederic B.Sc Information about GMO Geyser France
 194 Dr. Du Bus De Warnaffe Ga Tan sustainable management of temperate forests INRA France
 195 Dr. Du Bus De Warnaffe Gaetan Ph.D Sustainable forest management INRA France
 196 Prof. Pierre Henri Gouyon Ph.D Geneticist specialist of Evolutionary biology Population biology and Plant breeding Université de Paris Sud France
 197 Jacques Hallard Plant breeding Plant pathology Genetics Independant France
 198 BAZIN Jean Pierre B.Eng Medical Imaging INSERM France
 199 Dr. Arthur MacKenzie Ph.D physical chemistry France
 200 Etienne Maillet Logic Philosophy Mathematic Ethic Polititics Anthropology China France
 201 Dr. Herve Le Meur Biomathematician Univ. Paris France
 202 Cécilia Meynet Ph.D student géographe France
 203 Ruby Michel B.Eng chicken breeder ATTAC France
 204 Dr. Birgit Müller Ph.D Social Anthropologist LAIOS CNRS France
 205 Dr. Vic Norris IFR Systems Integres Univ. Rouen France
 206 Dr. Jean-Michel Panoff Microbiologist Univ. of Caen Caen France
 207 Dr. J. Pelt Institut Europeen d'Ecologie France
 208 Dr. Bernard PINTUREAU Ph.D Entomologist INRA France
 209 Dr. Christian PRAT Soil Scientist Agronomist in Latin America Institut de Recherche pour le Développement France
 210 Thierry Raffin Sociologue President de 'Inf'OGM France
 211 Prof. Gilles-Eric Seralini Laboratoire de Biochimie& Moleculaire Univ. Caen France
 212 Dr. Jean Staune Ph.D Post Darwinian Evolutionist Interdisciplinary University Paris France
 213 Dr. Christophe Vieren Ph.D Automatique Universit des Sciences et Techonologies de Lille France
 214 Anwar Abo Amer Ph.D student fluorine chemistry and organometallic chemistry Duisburg Essen University Germany
 215 Hudson Angeyo Ph.D student Physics: Analytical atomic spectroscopy and nuclear techniques in analysis University of Duisburg Germany
 216 Dr. Elisabeth B?cking Ph.D Biologist Germany
 217 Dr. Jurgén Boxberger Ph.D Cell and tissue culture ProCellula Germany
 218 Dr. Reinald Doebel Institute of Sociology Rural and Development Soc. Westfaelische Wilhelms Univ. Germany
 219 Dr. Tarek Elsherif Molecular Biologist TU Munich Germany
 220 Lotz Frank Wolfgang Expert in The Vedic Health System Bestselling Author Germany
 221 Brian Gentry Ph.D student Soft matter physics biophysics Germany
 222 Dr. Anita Idel Author and Zoologist Op'n Dorp 17 Barsbek Germany
 223 Dr. Martha Martens Biologist Bund Naturschutz in Bayern e. V. Munich Germany
 224 Ilaria Mazzini Ph.D paleontologist Germany
 225 Dr. Werner Mittelstaedt President Future Research/Peace Studies Gelsenkir Germany
 226 Dr. Jennifer Schmid Ph.D Plant Ecology; Plant Population Genetic OEko Institut e.V.; Institute for Applied Ecology Germany
 227 Dr. Eckart Stein Physicist Univ. Regensburg Germany
 228 Dr. Beatrix Tappeser Head of Dept. Risk analysis of genetic engineering Institute for Applied Ecology Freiburg Germany
 229 Dr. Stefan Thiesen Ph.D Astronomer and Geographer author of several popular science books one on climate change one on the perils of Biotech German Genterror und Lebenspatente independent Germany
 230 Dr. Rebecca C. Wade Molecular Biology Heidelberg Germany
 231 Dr. Christine von Weisaeker Ecoropa Germany
 232 Frank Wolfgang Research on Vedic Health Food and Bestselling Author Germany
 233 EMMANUEL KWAW M.Sc FOOD SCIENCE STUDENT Ghana
 234 Prince K.N Nkrumah B.Sc Biochemist Development and Advocacy Foundation Ghana
 235 Dr. Maria Caparis Marine Biologist Greece
 236 Yannis Coconis translation Greece
 237 Prof. Nicholas Fanourakis Ph.D Vegetable geneticist Technological Education Institute of Crete Greece
 238 Dr. Costas Giannakenas Consultant Nuclear Medicine Univ. Patras Medical School Rion-Patras Greece
 239 Prof. Tasos Kourakis B.Sc Geneticist Dept. General Biology & Genetics Medical Faculty Aristotelian University Thessaloni Greece
 240 Harry Papageorgiou M.Sc Agricultural Sciences Environmental Impact Assessment Greece
 241 Anna Gigli statistical modelling for medicine and biology national research council Greenland
 242 Dr Christiane Boecker MCommH MCommH Community Health Haiti
 243 Kevin Li B.Sc. Hong Kong
 244 Prof. Julissa Martin Ph.D student i do not know what your talking about t idk Hong Kong

245 Iren Karacsony B.Sc social medicine Hungary
246 Prof. Ervin Laszlo President The Club of Budapest Hungary
247 Prof. Dr Fenyvesi Peter Ph.D ONCOVIROLOGY MTKKFI Hungary
248 Dr. Nikki Broglowskhini Ph.D I am well equipped with all things scientific. The society for science Iceland
249 Dr. Ibrahim Abdul Azeez Ph.D Effect of acidification on the ecophysiology of freshwater fishes Fathima college of pharmacy kadayanallur 627759 India
250 Dr. Muhua Achary Environmentalist St. Joseph's College Bangalore India
251 Dr. TANVEER ANSARI Ph.D Natural Product Chemistry DABUR GROUP India
252 Dr. Muthukumarasamy Arunachalam Ph.D fish biodiversity fish ecology conservation of ecosystems Manonmaniam Sundaranar university Alwarkurichi Tir India
253 Prof. Jayapaul Azariah Ecology Environmental Ethics Head of Dept.of Zoology and Director of School of Life Sciences Univ. Madras Chennai India
254 MOHAN BAJIKAR B.Sc Has introduced important first entry in India biotechnologies Was a Member of Task Force Mission Mode Program of the Dept of Biotechnology Govt of India Fetchus Consultancy Innovators Pvt Ltd India
255 Dr. Sarath Babu Balijepalli Ph.D Research Scientist with experience in collection evaluation and conservation of agrobiodiversity and natural resources management for crop protection National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources India
256 Dr. CHANDRESH BORAD Ph.D Ecology Evolution and Conservation Biological Control Research Laboratory India
257 Dr. Tushar Borse Ph.D Biochemistry University of pune India
258 Dr. Gopal Yadav Boyina Ph.D In organic chemistry Sanmar speciality chemicals India
259 Dr. Gopal Yadav Boyina Ph.D In organic chemistry Sanmar speciality chemicals India
260 Dr. Sreenivas Burra Ph.D consultant in Natural Resource management Agronomist AMR APARD India
261 Dr. Amar Chouhan Ph.D master in environment analysis i i f t r India
262 Candice Coates M.Sc Lecturer in Biotechnology, Mumbai University, India
263 Dr. Thomas S. Cox Research Geneticist U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Manhattan KS (retired) - present address Hyderabad India
264 Dr. M I H Farooqi Ph.D Plant Chemist NBRI India
265 Prof. em Jahnavi Jahnavi M.Sc mol bio agri university India
266 Dr. Harry Jeyaprakash Ph.D IPM expert contributed to farming communities 35 years in agricultural extension retired as joint director of agriculture India
267 Dr. Dr Dinesh Kacha M.D Obesity management Benmoon Pharma Research India
268 Dr. Sudhir Kaura Ph.D Organic Farming Molecular Genetics Natural Farming Network India
269 Dr. Nelson Kochappavu Ph.D Natural Health Rural health India
270 Prof Rayana Bhavan Kovutarapu M.Sc Agriculture Natural Resources biotech agroecology and management with administration (IAMMA) India
271 Dr. Dr Bellie Krishnan Ph.D Biological Control Sun Agro Biotech Research Center India
272 Prof. em Ranjeet Ku Sah B.Eng no study India
273 Dr. RAJEEW KUMAR Ph.D Crop growth modelling fertilizer recommendation Barssica wheat NFCL Hyderabad India
274 Rajesh Kumar Ph.D student Vegetable Insect Pests of Lepidoptera Indian Agricultural Research Institute India
275 Dr. Joban Modha M.D ayurvedic onco hematologist nisargayurveda India
276 C. Nanjunda Murthy M.Sc. Plant Scientist Karnataka India
277 Dr. Divyesh Nagar Ph.D organic synthetic chemistry alembic ltd India
278 Dr. Dr Sankar Narayanan Ph.D Environmental Microbiologist KSR college of Arts Science India
279 Sathesh P M.Sc Grassroots work on food security and organic agriculture in dryland areas and gender Deccan Development Society India
280 Dr. DR GEEVEE PANDALA M.D virologist India
281 Dr. DR GEE VEE Pandala Ph.D INVENTIONAL SCIENTIST GVSRC India
282 Dr. Parvaiz Qazi Ph.D Recombinant DNA technology regional research laboratory canal road Jammu India
283 Dr. N. Raghauram Plant Molecular Biology Univ. Mumbai India
284 Dr. Atul Sahai Ph.D Remote Sensing GIS Specialist for Natural Resource Disaster Management HOPE Technologies India
285 Dr. Shreekant Sapatnekar M.D Community Medicine Haffkine Institute Mumbai India
286 Prof. em Thangavelu Saravanan M.Sc Scientist in organic Agriculture Agronomist Natural Resources Protection and Development Society India
287 Dr. Sathan Sathan Ph.D Kill Sulthan India
288 Dr. Chaitanya Sathe Ph.D industrial water pollution and waste water treatment Hindustan Dorr Oliver Ltd India
289 Dr. Bala Ravi Sekhara Pillai Ph.D Geneticist and Plant Breeder India
290 Sharad Shah Director of Ace natural foods Vadodara India
291 Devinder Sharma Geneticist Plant Breeder and Writer Forum for Biotechnology and Food Security New Delhi India
292 Dr. Vandana Shiva Research Institute for Science and Ecology India
293 Dr. Dr Shirish Shrivastava M.D Herbal and ethnobotany expert do not favour GM plmts since they disturb the local flora SAPRC India
294 Dr. Dr Shirish Shrivastava M.D Herbal and ethnobotany expert do not favour GM plmts since they disturb the local flora SAPRC India
295 Prof. Arun Shrivastava Management Consultant SEDEM India

296 Priya Srinivas M.Phil Food Science Katra Phytochem Private Ltd India
 297 Dr. Parshotam TANDON Ph.D Entomophagous Insect Behaviour Biological Control of Crop Pests Project Directorate of Biological Control India
 298 Prof. Thomas Tharayil Ph.D tiuruiuiuiriry India
 299 Dr. RAMA KRISHANA THOTA M.Sc I ve done project in aqua related to pro biotics and anti biotic in ecology vesper biotech india ltd India
 300 Dr. R.P. Upadhyay Ph.D Lecturer in Physics India
 301 Prof.em Durga Bhushaiah Vakkapatla M.Sc VIRAL RNA can be expressed in cytosol on HIV infected T cells university of hyderabd India
 302 Dr. Sanjay Vasoya Ph.D organic synthetic chemistry alembic ltd India
 303 Gustav Vaz B.Sc Biotechnology India
 304 Gustavo Vaz B.Sc Biotechnology India
 305 Erwin Adriawan B.Sc Campaigner on Anti GMOs Biotani Foundation Indonesia
 306 Dr. Ernawati Gender and Rural Development Institute of Rural Development Indonesia
 307 TOTO HARA Senior Consultant Coordinator ICRD Indonesia Chamber of Resources Development Indonesia
 308 Wasis Krisnadi forest product forest faculty GMU Indonesia
 309 Dr. Sina Ahmadi Ph.D Bio technologits Iran
 310 Arman Ardalan Ph.D student Molecular Evolution NIGEB Iran
 311 Dr. Kamran Haeri M.Sc research scientist MPT Iran
 312 Dr. Amir Jalali M.D TIM TCM Unani Ayurveda also I have created a new kind of workout called Jalali System Traditional Iranian Medicine TIM Iran
 313 Dr. Saeid Malekzadeh M.Sc yekom Iran
 314 Sajad Noor industrial engineering economic asd Iran
 315 Dr. Saeed Yadrnji Aghdam M.Sc none university of tehran Iran
 316 Prof. Sean McDonagh M.Sc I am a theologian and anthropologist I worked for over 20 years in the Philippines I have written extensively on ethics and genetic engineering catholic priest Ireland
 317 Barry Jude McGuinness Student Of BSc Biomedical Sciences University College Cork Ireland
 318 Iris Atzmon represent the public opinion we are not lab animals Israel
 319 Prof. Rita Alicchio Plant Geneticist Univ. Bologna Italy
 320 Dr. Andrea Amadei Molecular Biophysics Assistant professor Un. of Rome Tor Vergata Italy
 321 Prof. Drago Antonino B.Sc History of Physics Bioethics Scientific Committe of Inter Univ. Center on Bioet Italy
 322 Prof. Livia Armandi Ph.D Agronomist Italy
 323 Dr. Ciro Aurigenma Ph.D psicologist member of csa CEU/IPV Italy
 324 Dr. Giampiero Barbieri Ph.D Chemists GMO analysis laboratory Stazione Sperimentale Industrie Conserve Alimentar Italy
 325 Dr. Giovanni G Bazzocchi Ph.D Entomologist Agroecologist Universita di Bologna Italy
 326 Dr. Stefania Biondi M.Sc Plant Physiologist University of Bologna Dept. of Biology Italy
 327 Dr. Ernesto Burgio pediatrician attac Italy
 328 Dr. Tiziana Camorani psicologa private Italy
 329 Paola Capozzi plant and soil ecology Italy
 330 Dr. Ferdinando Cerbone psicologo Italy
 331 Dr Giorgio Cingolani Agricultural Economist Italy
 332 Dr. Alberto Clarizia M.Sc Physicist University of Naples Italy
 333 Dr. Raffaella Comito B.Sc General Practitioner holistic medicine Italy
 334 Dr. Immacolata Coraggio Ph.D Plant Molecular Biologist Counseil National Research Italy
 335 Dr. Bruno D'Udine Behaviour Ecologist University of Udine Italy
 336 Dr. Simone De Ph.D Mathematics Combinatorics National Council of Research Italy
 337 Prof. Adriano Decarli Cancer Epidemiology INST Univ. Milan Italy
 338 Prof. Stefano Dumontet M.Sc soil microbiologist Universit. Basilicata Italy
 339 Dr. Enzo Ferrara M.Sc Metrology in Chemistry IEN EURACHEM Italy
 340 Dr. Sergio Francardo B.Sc Anthroposofical medical doctor Gruppo Medico Antroposofico Italiano Italy
 341 Dr. Alessandro Giuliani Ph.D Biophysics Multidimensional Statistics Istituto Superiore di Sanita Italy
 342 Elena Del Grosso Geneticist Researcher Deptl Evolutionary & Exptl. Biology Univ. Bologna Bologna Italy
 343 Dr. Nicolas Kropacek M.D Public Health Free Lance Researcher Italy
 344 Dr. Agostino Letardi M.Sc ecotoxicologist E.N.E.A. Italy
 345 Prof. Ignazio Licata Full Professor of Theoretical Physics Ist Cibernetica non lineare Italy
 346 Dr. Marco Mamone Ph.D mathematician University of Perugia Italy
 347 Prof. Marco Mamone Capria Ph.D mathematician historian of science epistemologist University of Perugia Italy
 348 Dr. Paolo Manzelli M.Phil Research in Education on Biochemistry LRE EGO CreaNET University of Florence Italy Italy
 349 Dr. Bussolati Mariella M.Sc science writer Italy
 350 Dr. Carlo Maurizio Modonesi Animal and environmental biology Università di Parma Italy
 351 Dr. Karin Munck B.Sc communication & science Fondazione Medikinale Internazionale Parma Italy
 352 Prof. Valeria NEGRI Ph.D geneticist teaches 'Agricultural Genetic Resources' University of Perugia Italy
 353 Prof. Francesco Palmirotta Ph.D psycho somatic clinicssocial work AOP Italy
 354 Prof. Mariuccia Papa M.Sc biologist high school teacher Italy
 355 Dr. Pietro Perrino Ph.D Plant Genetic Resources expert in collection conservation characterisation evaluation and utilisation From time to time Prof in Botany and Ecology C N R Germplasm Institute Italy
 356 Dr. Francesca Salvemini Ph.D Biologist Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche Italy
 357 Prof. Steven N Shore Ph.D Physicist University of Pisa Italy

358 Prof. Leopoldo Silvestroni Endocrinologist Univ. of Rome Italy
359 Dr. Francesco Spinazzola M.D infectiologist Italy
360 Roberto Stefani Ph.D student Student of Political Science writing final thesis on GMOs Greenpeace Italia Italy
361 Prof. emeritus Shingo Shibata Hiroshima University; Environmental Sociology and Biosafety Tokyo Japan
362 Prof. Atuhiro Sibatani Molecular Biologist Osaka Japan
363 Dr Shiron Sugita Plant Geneticist Nagoya U. Japan
364 Dr Noboru Yagishita Plant Geneticist Jap. Assoc. Agro-Nature Tokyo Japan
365 Dr Machiko Yasukohchi PLAN - International Japan Public Relations Team Japan
366 Prof. Julian BAUER Ph.D Ecologist Forest Scientist working against any GE Tree development and or planting No GEO introductions without PIC of local people GE free zones a must ECOTERRA Intl var East African Universities Kenya
367 Wycliffe Wanzala Ph.D student Naturalist University of Nairobi Kenya
368 Dr. Georges Mailliet B.Sc Pulmonologist Luxembourg
369 Mohd Roshdi Hassan M.Sc Smart Material university Putra Malaysia Malaysia
370 Al Hanisham Mohd Khalid International Law Lawyer University Utara Malaysia Malaysia
371 Dr. Rosli Omar Ph.D Artificial Intelligence Universiti Malaya Malaysia
372 Prof. Elena Alvarez Buylla Ph.D Molecular Genetics of Plant Development and Evolution UNAM Mexico
373 Douglas Hinds Dir Gral Center for Community and Rural Development National Coordinator for Organic Production National Confederation of Rural Property Owners Dir of Sp CeDeCoR CNPR CSNI ISHS Mexico
374 Prof. Andres F Keiman Ph.D student Populations Ecology and Forest Conservation Universidad de la Ciudad de Mexico Mexico
375 Prof. Alberto R. Miranda Biologist Environmental Public Education Cuernavaca Mexico
376 Rodriguez Mitchell Nemesio Anthropologist PNUD INI Mexico
377 Dr. Ronald Nigh Ph.D anthropology specialty in agroecology biodiversity environment; member of SNI CIESAS Mexico
378 Dr. Enrique Vargas Ph.D Molecualr Immunology Universidad Veracruzana Grupo L dico Mexico
379 Dr. Ilya Trombitsky Ph.D BIOTICA Ecological Society Moldova
380 Prof. Si Bennasseur ALAOUI Ph.D Organic farming and alternative crops Institut Agronomique et Vétérinaire Hassan II Morocco
381 Prof. Lahcen Kenny Ph.D Oraganic Agriculture and Horticulture IAV Hassan II Morocco
382 Mukti Ram Chapagain Organic agriculture Nepal Organic Agriculture Ctr NOAC Pvt Ltd Nepal
383 M R Chapagain Organic Suistainable Agriculture and Rural Development Nepal Organic Agriculture Ctr Nepal
384 Maheswar Ghimire Organic Agriculture Promotion and Inspection Ecoscentre Nepal
385 Prof. Jiwan Rai M.Sc biochemist nepal organic association Nepal
386 Prof.em Bechan Raut M.Sc Medicinal Botanist Pokhara University Nepal
387 David Baillie B.Sc Deep Ecologist Naturopath NZ Forest Gardening Research Harmony Farmof Harmony Farm New Zealand
388 Dr. Robert Anderson Physicist Nuclear Medicine Technical Institute Hamilton New Zealand
389 Dr. Troy Baisden Ph.D Ecosystem Science (Soil Science/Ecology) Landcare Research New Zealand
390 Marie Buchler M.Sc Zoology masters editor and journalist and university tutor Bio Dynamic Farming and Gardening Association New Zealand
391 Dr. George Coghill Software Engineering University of Auckland New Zealand
392 Dr. Bernard Conlon B.Sc Rural GP New Zealand
393 Dr. Tim Ewer Physician Mapua Health Centre Nelson New Zealand
394 Dr. Michael Godfrey Environmental Toxicologist General Practitioner Taura New Zealand
395 Brendan Hoare M.Sc Organic systems sustaianble design integrated land managment UNITEC econation2020 Orngaic Federation of NZ New Zealand
396 Sigrid D. Houlette B.Sc. B.Sc. Solid Waste Manager Environmental Engineering Local Government Lower Hutt New Zealand
397 Jessica Hutchings Ph.D student Maori environmentalist Maori science and resource management Lecturer Faculty of Science Victoria University New Zealand
398 Hussila Keshaw M.Sc Moleular Biology The University of Auckland New Zealand
399 Dr. Peter King Ph.D Sociologist Family Centre Social Policy Research Unit New Zealand
400 Dr. Nick Lambrecht Consultant Revegetation Ecologist Wellington New Zealand
401 Dr. Shona L. Lamoureux Plant Ecology Christchurch New Zealand
402 Dr. Ruth Lawson Ph.D Parasite Epidemiologist and GE Campaigner New Zealand
403 Helmut Lubbers M.Sc ecologist ecology discovery foundation new zealand New Zealand
404 Dr Robert Mann Ecologist Auckland New Zealand
405 Dr. Ted Ninnes Ph.D Sociology and Psychology University of Waikato New Zealand
406 Robin W. Ord Molecular Geneticist Law Student Hamilton New Zealand
407 Tara Satyanand M.Sc Molecular genetics University of Auckland New Zealand
408 Dr. Sean Weaver Ph.D Environmental Policy Victoria University of Wellington New Zealand
409 Dr Colin Wells Director of Energy Management Dept of Physics University of Otago New Zealand
410 Katharine White I am an experienced artist and G E Free H B N Z campaigner I am and have been in the position to put my graphic expertise to use in the cause of the planet T L C Wellington and E I T Hawke s Bay New Zealand
411 Dr Peter R Wills Theoretical Biology Univ. Auckland New Zealand
412 Prof. Leong Yap Ph.D Ergonomist Industrial Designer Massey University New Zealand
413 Dr. Emmanuel AFOLABI Ph.D come and be healed physiotherapy and ecology Nigeria
414 Dr. Ralph Nwaokoro Ph.D ECOTOXICOLOGIST UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS Nigeria
415 Dr. Azeez Bolaji Odewunu M.Sc National association of science students Nigeria

416 Dr Ingrid Olesen Senior Research Scientist Institute of Aquaculture Res. Ltd Norway
417 Dr. Lars Rasmussen MD MD General Practitioner Univ. Oslo Mesnali Norway
418 Prof. Terje Traavik Virologist University of Tromso Norway
419 Dr. Hussain Ahmad M.Sc fermentation solid state fermentation koji university of veterinary and animal sciences lahor Pakistan
420 Dr. Obaid Ali M.Phil Bioavailability and Pharmacokinetic studies Govt of Pakistan Pakistan
421 Prof. Muhammad Bilal M.Sc research work on maize mmri yusafwala sahiwal pakistan Pakistan
422 Dr. Shakeel Farooqi Ph.D Genetics University of Karachi Pakistan
423 Muhammad Imran Imran Biochemist damask_786 Pakistan
424 Farhat Jabeen Jabeen B.Sc biotech biotech Pakistan
425 Prof. Omer Khayyam M.Sc food research programe food research Pakistan
426 Dr. Washdev Malhi Ph.D student whole soules and mind control jai ma jee Pakistan
427 Sajjad Naqvi M.Sc University of Karachi Pakistan
428 Dr. Mian Qaseem Ph.D Nuclier Magnetic Resonance Retired Educational Adviser Govt of Pakistan Pakistan
429 Dr. Tasneem Rizvi Ph.D Molecular Biophysics. PCSIR Laboratories Complex Lahore PAKISTAN. Pakistan
430 Madiha Saeed Rizvi B.Sc Deptt of Biotechnology Univerity of Karachi Pakistan
431 Dr. Naveed Yusuf M.Phil veterinarian university of veterinary and animal sciences lahor Pakistan
432 Prof.em Eric Jimenez Ph.D none Aquatic Panama
433 Ethel Japeth B.Sc none police Savings & Loan Papua New Guinea
434 Dr. Sergio Barrio Tarnawiecki Science Policy National Research Council of Lima Peru
435 Prof.em Pedro Angco Jr H2O limpyobaybay founder Philippines
436 GEONATHAN BARRO Doing Anti GMO campaigns coordinates with other NGOs on our Anti GMO GE stand KALITAWHAN WORKING GROUP ON BIODIVERSITY Philippines
437 GEONATHAN BARRO Coordinator Coordinates with NGOs POs and other Organizations on Anti GMO campaigns and other related issues and concerns KALITAWHAN WORKING GROUP ON BIODIVERSITY Philippines
438 Paterno Borlagdan M.Sc Agricultural Engineer Filipino Inventors Society Philippines
439 Javier M Claparols Agriculture Rice Sugar Aquaculture Milkfish Bangus shrimp Businessman Ecologist Ecological Society of the Philippines Philippines
440 Antonio M CLAPAROLS M.Sc Ecologist farmer marine and terrestrial biodiversity economics Ecological Society of the Philippines Philippines
441 Johnny Danganan B.Sc lay out artist in publications Sustainable Agriculture advocate Philippines
442 Dr. Clint EScro Ph.D student Expert in psychology concerning students PICHES and PIDO Philippines
443 Dr. Pamela G. Fernandez Agronomist U. Philippines Los Banos Philippines
444 Delilah Galang B.Sc Natural Therapy Consultant Cancer Council Philippines
445 Dr. Richard Kharpungal Ph.D Agronomist U Philippines Philippines
446 Prof. Mark Erick Magbanua Ph.D student no Philippines
447 Prof. Mark Erick Magbanua M.Sc metro manila Philippines
448 Ben Malayang University of Philippines Los Banos Laguna Philippines
449 FRANCIS MORALES M.Phil Advocacy Officer of MASIPAG Mindanao MASIPAG Philippines
450 Charles T. Olsen D.C. Chiropractic Clinic Davao Clinic PSRAST Philippines
451 Prof. Marlon Pareja Ph.D student Cell and Molecular Biology Wildlife Conservation Society of the Philippines Philippines
452 Nicanor Perlas B.Sc Agricultural Scientist and Ecologist Sustainable Agriculture Specialist Center for Alternative Development Initiatives Philippines
453 Dr. Romeo F. Quijano Pesticide Action Network Pharmacologist/Toxiologist Philippines
454 Dr. Dante Jr Simbulan Ph.D Neurophysiology De La Salle University Health Sciences Campus Philippines
455 Dr. Jaime A Sison Animal Nutrition and Feed Milling Aqua Ace Nutrition Inc Philippines
456 Dr. MARVIN UMALI M.D pediatrician doctors of the philippines Philippines
457 Prof. Oscar B. Zamora Agronomist U. Philippines Los Banos Philippines
458 Prof. Joel Mckevin Zamora Ph.D b s of s and t psu Philippines
459 Dr. Szymczyk Ryszard Ph.D methodology of cultivar testing wildlife conservation Poland
460 Prof. Vicinzeddu Itunculu M.D biochemistry portug univrity Portugal
461 Rui Pereira M.D General Practice Portugal
462 Prof. Clara Queiroz Ph.D Geneticist Retired University of Lisboa Portugal
463 Teresa Silva Ph.D student Coconut Portugal
464 Dr. Margarida Silva Molecular Biologist Portuguese Catholic Univ. Portugal
465 Dr. Francisco J.C.M. Teixeira Researcher Geophysics Geological and Mining Institute Lisbon Portugal
466 Fatima C. Teixeira Researcher Marine Geology Lisbon Portugal
467 Carlos Altieri M.Sc Toxicity and pesticides in water Health Environmental Department Puerto Rico Puerto Rico
468 Nelson Alvarez JD Sociologist and Lawyer Agriculture and development consultant Puerto Rico
469 Dr. Clara Carrasco Ph.D Molecular Biology and Genetics Puerto Rico
470 Dr. Shridhar Devidas Ph.D Basically an Ecologist turned environmental management system specialist advocating sustainable resource use among the industires Bureau Veritas Qatar
471 Dr. Joseph Mezei M.D quantum medicine Medical Center Tongtian Romania
472 Prof. Vladimir Kuznetsov Ph.D Plant Physiology and Biochemistry Institute of Plant Physiology RAS Russia
473 Dr. Ali Mohammed Ph.D Chief executive officer Companies Saudi Arabia
474 Prof. WAIL SALAH B.Sc BIOTECH Saudi Arabia
475 Prof. Vladimir Ajdacic Ph.D nuclear physics carcinogenecity none retired Serbia
476 Peter Sevich Ph.D student Serbia
477 Glenn Ashton Director Ekogaia Foundation and Green Party South Africa
478 Dr. Brigitte N.B. Schwabe-Berg Medical Officer Groote Schuur Hospital Cape Town South Africa

479 Ben Van Der Walt Director in Nutritional Advisory Forum Agree on the concern of Genetically Manipulated Food GNLD South Africa
480 Nicole Venter The Southern Health Ecology Institute SHAE Institute South Africa
481 Dr. SangSoo Hur Ph.D Lecturer Sociology of Science and Technology Sungkonghoe University South Korea
482 Prof. Suk Hwan Kim Ph.D Sociology of Science and Technology Kookmin University South Korea
483 Bingbin LU International Law Transnational Law and Business University TLBU South Korea
484 Dr Gregorio Alvar Biotechnologist. Computense U. Madrid Spain
485 Javier Blasco Aragonese Ctr for Rural European Information Spain
486 Prof. F. Pura Duart-Soler Sociology Univ. Valencia PSRAST Spain
487 Prof. Ernest Garcia Ph. D. Ph. D. Sociology Univ. Valencia Dept. Sociologia I Antropologia Social Valencia Spain
488 ANDRES MAGANA B.Eng electronic instrumentation escorial sostenible Spain
489 Andres Magana Garcia B.Sc world heritage freelance consultant escorial sostenible Spain
490 Dr. Pablo Malo Psychiatrist Consultant Mental Health Center Bilbao Spain
491 Jose Ramon Olarieta Ph.D Soil Science Agriculture Land use Universitat de Lleida Spain
492 Dr. Rosario Sierra De Grado Ph.D Forest geneticist University of Valladolid Spain
493 Dr. Jagath Perera B.Eng electrical engineering uom SriLanka Sri Lanka
494 Adil Hassan Ahmed Abdelmageed Ph.D student Breeding of vegetable crops Vegetable Physiologist and researcher and lecturer University of Khartoum Sudan Sudan
495 Dr. Kamal El Siddig Ph.D Tree eco physiologist Sudan
496 Dr. Isameldeen Khair Ph.D Education and training Sennar University Sudan
497 Dr. Balgis Osman Elasha Ph.D Environmentalist Higher Council for Environment Natural Resources Sudan
498 Dr. Bo Dahlin Education Science Karlsbad University Karlsbad Sweden
499 Folke G Nther Ph.D student Sustainability issues and Ecological Engineering Systems Ecology Sweden
500 Prof. Every N. Gummesson Management Stockholm Univ. PSRAST Sweden
501 Folke Gunther Ph.D student Sustainability issues and Ecological Engineering Systems Ecology Sweden
502 Said O. Holmin Lic. Technology Rector Computer Science College of Creative Computer Science Stockholm Sweden
503 Dr. Katarina Leppanen History of Ideas Gothenburg Uni Sweden
504 Dr. Jaan Suurkula Physician Physicians and Scientists for Responsible Assessment of Science and Technology Stockholm Sweden
505 Dr. Daniel Amman Cell Biologist Tech. Switzerland
506 Dr. Charles Beard M.D General Practitioner CNBPharma Switzerland
507 Dr. Ruth Goseth Dermatologist ISDE Switzerland
508 Florianne Koechlin Biologist World Wildlife Fund Switzerland
509 Dr. Nicole Maestracci Beard Ph.D Microbiologist Virologist Immunologist Serono International Switzerland
510 Yvan Maillard dipl. Sc. Nat. ETH Environmentalist Ecology Fribourg PSRAST Switzerland
511 Yves Schatzle Agronomist and Economist Switzerland
512 Verena Soldati Biotechnologist Basler Appell Switzerland
513 Dr. KuoChi Yeh M.D Geriatric Public Health and Hospital Administration medical legal Taipei City Hospital Zhongxing Branch Taiwan
514 Arend De Haas M.Sc Conservation Ecologist African Conservation Foundation Tanzania
515 Mwanaidi Kafuye M.Sc HOLDER IN BIOCHEMISTRY NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH Tanzania
516 Dr. William Kisinza Ph.D Epidemiology Public Health Specialist National Institute for Medical Research Tanzania Tanzania
517 Danial Minja B.Sc PARASITOLOGY & MICROBIOLOGY NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH. Tanzania
518 Acleus Rutta M.Sc Immunologist National Institute For Medical Research Tanzania
519 Dr. Peter Burt Ph.D Water Quality Management Prince of Songkla university Thailand
520 Dr. Jidbhong Jayavasu Ph.D Medical Virologist Arogya Smasai Thailand
521 Prof. Omboom Luanratana Pharmacologist Univ. of Mahedol Bangkok Thailand
522 Piengporn Panutampon biology/medical biology Biothai (Thai Network on Community & Biodiversity) Thailand
523 Prof. Reungchai Tansakul Ph.D Biologist Prince of Songkla University Thailand
524 Lianchamroon Witoon Sustainable agriculture Biothai Thailand
525 Jaroen Compeerapap Environmental Law and Development Center The Netherlands
526 Jaap Hamers M.Sc Ecologist The Netherlands
527 Tedje Van Asseldonk M.Sc biology phytotherapy inst f ethnobotany zoopharmacognosy The Netherlands
528 Dr. Siirsel Tas Dizdar Ph.D Radiation Oncology Turkey
529 Prof. KANYANDAGO Peter Ph.D Expert and researcher in endogenous knowledge and African cultures Uganda Martyrs University Uganda
530 Dr. Michael L. Abrahams (retired) Aeronautics Bristol PSRAST UK
531 Maryam Al Alami Ph.D student Science in Society civic and stakeholder participation GM food law Manchester Metropolitan University UK
532 Michael Alexander M.Phil Theoretical Physics UK
533 Chris Anthony B.Sc Qualified amateur UK
534 Janey Antoniou M.Sc Molecular Biologist UK
535 Dr. Michael Antoniou Molecular Geneticist Guy's Hospital UK
536 Paula F. Baillie-Hamilton Academic Researcher on Pesticides Perthshire UK
537 Dr. Susan Bardocz Geneticist Aberdeen UK
538 Dr. Jeremy Bartlett Plant Molecular Geneticist (formerly John Innes Institute) UK
539 Manoel Bascoi Geneticist PhD Candidate JII UK

540 Dr. David Beasley Genetic Algorithm University of Bath UK
541 Dr. David Bellamy Biologist and Broadcaster London UK
542 Lynda Birke Biologist Liverpool Uni. Veterinary School UK
543 Dr. David A.H. Birley General Medical Practitioner Swindon UK
544 Sarah Blenkinsop B.Sc Environmental Consultant/Campaigner/Organic grower Planet Services Environmental Consultancy UK
545 Gerard C. Bodeker Ed. D. Senior Clinical Lecturer in Public Health Univ. Oxford Medical School UK
546 Dr. Jeffrey Boss Cell Biologist Dept. of Physiology Bristol University UK
547 Sophie H. Bown Ph.D. Candidate Zoology Manchester Univ. UK
548 Paul Breslaw Computer Scientist Consultant Financial Research Forest Row UK
549 Dr. Allan Britton Ph.D Environmental Health and Safety UK
550 Prof. Roy Butterfield DSc.DIC CEng. MICE MISTRUCT.E. Civil Engineer Southampton UK
551 Dr. Alessandra Cavalletti Ph.D Research Associate Imperial College STM UK
552 Maureen Childs B.Sc Internet Developer British Computer Society UK
553 Emma Churchman B.Sc Social Scientist UK
554 Dr. Janet Cotter-Howells Environmental Geochemist Lecturer in Soil Science Aberdeen University UK
555 Dr. Stephen Cross Molecular Population Geneticist Birmingham University UK
556 Dr. Alan Currier Taxonomist IRBV UK
557 Gordon Daly Ph. D. student Gene Therapist Kennedy Inst. London UK
558 Stuart Daly Ph. D. student Transgenic group Charing Cross Hosp. UK
559 Dr. Yuliya Demydchuk Ph.D Molecular biology of producers of antibiotics Cambridge university UK
560 Dr. Mike Dodd Ecologist Open University UK
561 Prof. Jane Eberlynn M.Sc environmental studies concerning health erzats peace co. UK
562 Tom Fox Amateur neurology biochemistry psychology sociology and philosophy enthusiast UK
563 Joseph A. Gari Marie Curie Research Fellow Political Ecology University of Oxford UK
564 Dr. Mike Gillman Ecologist Open University UK
565 Dr. Alessandro Gimona Research Scientist Ecology MLURI Aberdeen UK
566 Edward Goldsmith Editor The Ecologist London UK
567 Zac Goldsmith Editor The Ecologist London UK
568 Prof. Brian Goodwin Biologist Schumacher College UK
569 Lale Gurel Bec. Manager Nature – Macmillan Publishers London UK
570 Adrian Haffegge B.Eng B.Eng Electronic Engineer UK
571 Julian Haffegge M.phil Biophysicist Institute of Science in Society UK
572 Dr. Keith H. Halfacree Univ. Lecturer Geography Univ. of Wales Swansea UK
573 Dr. John E. Hammond Engineer Highfield UK
574 Dr. David J Heaf Biochemist Wales UK
575 Dr. Marion Hersch Assistive Electronic Technologies Dept. Electronics & Electrical Engineering Univ. Glasgow Glasgow Scotland UK
576 Dr. Mae-Wan Ho Geneticist and Biophysicist Open University UK
577 Dr. Caroline Hoffmann Ph.D Ecotoxicologist Centre for Human Ecology UK
578 Patrick Holden Director Soil Association UK
579 Dr. Vyvyan Howard Toxipathologist U. Liverpool UK
580 G. D. Humphreys M.Sc technologist aerodynamics UK
581 Gerald Humphreys B.Sc Aerodynamics Operational Research Information Technology Hemel Hempstead GM action group UK
582 Dr. Brian Hursey ex FAO Senior Officer for Vector Borne Diseases Neath UK
583 Prof. Tim Ingold Anthropologist University of Aberdeen UK
584 Lorna Jackson M.Sc Ecology soil science HDRA the organic organisation UK
585 Magnus L. Johnson School of Science & Management U.C. Scarborough UK
586 Peter Preston Jones MSc Environmental Campaigner UK
587 Dani Kaye M.Sc. Scientists for Global Responsibility London UK
588 David Kaye M.Sc. Scientists for Global Responsibility London UK
589 Dr J. M. Kerr Bioethics Winchester College: Oxford U. UK
590 Dr. Philip Kilner Cardiac Imaging Specialist Royal Brompton Hospital UK
591 Prof. Richard Lacey Microbiologist Leeds UK
592 Dr. Jonathan R. Latham Molecular Virologist previously JII and Genetics Dept. Wisconsin-Madison Univ. Exeter UK
593 Dr. Colin L.A. Leakey Plant Geneticist Cambridge UK
594 Chris Lucas MIMIS Complexity Scientist CALResCo UK
595 Dr. Paul Marchant Ph.D Chartered Statistician UK
596 Jan Martinez social visionary holistic entrepreneur Just Rural Development Trust S W E N UK
597 Dr. Joan Mason Chemist Cambridge UK
598 Druvananda Mauree B.Sc graphic designer school of design UK
599 Dr. Alan Mayne Statistician Scientists for Global Responsibility London UK
600 Darl N. Middleton Ph. D. student Environ. Science Dept. Civil Engineering Univ. Manchester UK
601 Dr. Erik Millstone Science & Technology Policy Research Sussex Univ. Brighton UK
602 Patrick Mulvany C Biol Food Security Policy Adviser specialising in Agricultural Biodiversity Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG) UK
603 Dr. Harash Narang Pathologist BSE expert UK
604 Dr. Eva Novotny Astrophysicist Univ. Cambridge (retired) UK
605 Prof. Bob Orskov Ph.D Animal nutrition Rural development in developing countries macaulay research

Institute UK

- 606 Dr. David Packham Material Scientist U. Bath UK
607 Nicholas Papadimitriou M.Sc conservation and eco philosophy Institute of science in society UK
608 Dr. Barnaby Peacocke Ph.D Agricultural Science International Development ITDG UK
609 Fatima Pelica Biochemist PhD Candidate JII UK
610 Marcus Petz B.Sc Biology/Geology Environmental Politics UK
611 George Pilkington M.Sc Countryside management UK
612 Dr. Michel Pimbert Agricultural Ecologist International Institute for Environment and Development London UK
613 Dr. Robert C. Poller Organic Chemist U. London UK
614 Michael Pooler A Level Biology Student human relations People Of The Earth UK
615 Dr. Malcolm Povey Ph.D Food Scientist Reader in Food Physics University of Leeds UK
616 Dr. Ronald Press Ph.D Chemical engineer UK
617 Bala Puspa UK
618 Prof. Arpad Pusztai Biochemist Formerly from Rowett Institute UK
619 Dr. Jerry Ravetz Philosopher of Science London UK
620 Dr. Irene Ridge Biologist Open University UK
621 Dr. Barry T. Rubin Physical/Electro Chemist Director Davis-Rubin Associates Ltd Northhants UK
622 Dr. Barry T Rubin Ph.D Physical Electro Chemistry Business Consultant CD DVD Replication for Business Davis Rubin Associates Ltd UK
623 Angela Ryan Molecular biologist Open Univ. UK
624 Dr. Jean A.D. Saunders BDS BDS LDS RCS Dental Surgeon (retired) Faringdon UK
625 Prof. Peter Saunders Biomathematician U. London UK
626 Dr. Wendy Seel Ph.D Plant Sciences University of Aberdeen UK
627 Martin Shaw Geneticist UK
628 Dr. Ellis Snitcher M.D Teaching and research in integrative medicine Middlesex University UK
629 Dr. Peter Sollich Theoretical Physics Dept. Mathematics King's College London UK
630 Vanessa Spedding M.Phil science and science policy journalism None UK
631 Dr. Gesa Staats.de.Yanes Veterinarian Toxicologists U. Liverpool UK
632 Prof. Ian Stewart Biomathematics U. Warwick UK
633 Dr. Gene S. Thomas Agriculturist UK
634 Simone Turchetti Ph.D student History of Science Technology and Medicine CHSTM UK
635 Dr. Margaret J. Tyson Glossop PSRAST UK
636 Dr. Rob Verkerk Ph.D Sustainable agriculture and health UK
637 Dr Tom Wakeford Biologist U. of East London UK
638 Barry Weir B.Sc Physics Engineering OGL HMAF UK
639 Martyn Wells Astronomer UK Astronomy Technology Centre Edinburg UK
640 Barbara Wood-Kaczmar M.Sc. Science writer UK
641 Julian Wootton Conservationist London UK
642 Dr. Karen Wren University teacher Geography St. Andrews Univ. St. Andrews Fife UK
643 Linda Yeodal B.Sc MNIMH Medical Herbalist UK
644 Dr. JOHN ZARB Ph.D Small scale farming systems Senior Research Fellow Newcastle University NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY UK
645 Dr. Grygoriy Petjuch Ph.D Ecology genetics Institute of Agroecology and Biotechnology Ukraine
646 Dr. Maulud Betaieb Ph.D environmental microbiology management United Arab Emirates
647 Nelson Alvarez JD Sociologist and Lawyer Agriculture and development consultant Uruguay
648 Dr. Rayane Abusabha Senior Research Associate Department of Nutrition College of Health and Human Development Penn State University USA
649 Prof. Miguel A. Altieri Environment Science Policy and Management Univ. Calif. Berkeley USA
650 Ruth Alviola Posadas M.Sc Aquaculturist State Food Safety Officer MS DMR USA
651 Biff Appia autism USA
652 Dr. Catherine Badley Biologist University of Michigan USA
653 Dr. Britt Bailey Senior Researcher CETOS Ca USA
654 Prof. Phil Bereano Council for Responsible Genetics U. Washington USA
655 Prof. Stephen Bialkowski Ph.D Analytical Environmental Chemistry Department of Chemistry Utah State University USA
656 Andrew Bigler Infrared Systems USA
657 Dr. Walter Bortz Physician Palo Alto USA
658 Dr. Douglas H Boucher Ecologist Hood College USA
659 Nancy Brokaw M.Sc Identifying and treating disease through organic whole food Nutrition Foundation for Nutritional Therapy and Application USA
660 Nancy Brokaw Gerchak M.Sc Dedicated to finding Causes rather than treating SYMPTOMS of disease researcher CRA Practitioner Holistic Healthcare Consultant Foundation for Nutritional Therapy and Application USA
661 Claire Cabeza M.Sc Environmental Scientist W.A.T.E.R.S. for Salmon People USA
662 Dr. Neil J. Carman Clean Air Program Director Sierra Club Austin Texas USA
663 Ricardo Carvajal Ph.D student agricultural ecology University of Michigan USA
664 Liane Casten M.Phil M.Phil journalist and author on food pesticides public policy public health etc. Chair Chicago Media Watch USA
665 Prof. Liebe F. Cavalieri Mathematical Ecology Evolution and Behaviour Univ. Minnesota St. Paul USA
666 Claire Caveza M.Sc Project leader for Chum Salmon genetic sampling fisheries biologist for Native American tribe in the Pacific NorthWest W.A.T.E.R.S. for Salmon People USA

667 Vijaykumar V.C. Chalasani MS Consultant East Brunswick USA
668 Dr. Ignacio Chapela Microbiologist & Ecologist U.C. Berkeley USA
669 Dr. Frederick Cichocki Ph.D Ecologist Graves Museum of Natural History USA
670 Kristin Cobelius M.Sc. Student M.Sc. Student U. Michigan USA
671 Dr. Alan Connor Ph.D Ph D in Communtiy Planning Development Univ Of Mich Practiced in Zambia and the U S
Taught at Univ of Mich and Headed program at Siena Heights College Friends Committee on Unity with Nature
Democratic USA
672 BARBARA CRAWFORD SURVIVAL INDEPENDENT USA
673 Dr. Martha Crouch Biologist Indiana University USA
674 Jill Davies Stream Ecologist Organic Farmer Montana USA
675 Dr. Carolyn F.A. Dean MD MD ND MD ND Consultant Integrative Medicine Homeopathic Pharmakeia NY USA Board
of Women for a Safe Future USA
676 Tricia Deane Certified Organic and nonGMO Food Supplier USA
677 Burgess Dillard Natural Scientist Self USA
678 Earth Duarte Trattner Ph.D student Social and Ecological Impacts of Biotechnology UC Berkeley USA
679 Dr. Chris Fairfield Ph.D Visiting scientist Stanford University USA
680 Dr. David Ehrenfeld Biologist/Ecologist Rutgers University New Jersey USA
681 Mr Irucka Embry Studying civil and environmental engineering and Spanish University of Tennessee student
USA
682 Andrew Epstein B.Sc Environmental Policy/planning sustainable development The Nature Conservancy USA
683 Dr. Samuel Epstein School of Public Health Univ. Illinois Chicago USA
684 Juliet S Erazo Ph. D. student PhD student U. of Michigan USA
685 Sanek Erem USA
686 Sanekus Erem USA
687 Prof. John B. Fagan Maharishi University of Management Fairfield Iowa USA
688 Dr. Don Fitz Research Psychologist and Editor Synthesis/Regeneration: A Magazine of Green Social Thought
USA
689 Dr. Ty Fitzmorris Ecologist Hampshire College USA
690 Dr Michael W Fox Veterinarian & Bioethicist Washington DC USA
691 Dr. Chris Francovich Ph.D Learning Through Participation Practice Lightfiled Inc USA
692 Cynthia A. Frye FS/MS Student Biology Univ. Texas Medical Branch USA
693 Prof. John Garderineer Biologist U. Michigan USA
694 Dr. Barbara K. Given Faculty Researcher George Mason Univ. Fairfax USA
695 Dr. Jay L. Glaser MK Medical Director Maharishi Ayurveda Medical Center Lancaster USA
696 Dr. Parameswaran Gopikrishnan Ph.D Financial Enginner Physicist USA
697 Panatey Great Company inc USA
698 Dr Herve Grenier Atmospheric Sciences and Climate Change Univ. Washington USA
699 Dr. Don Hall Ph.D Intermolecular adiabatic bioag marine Bear Creek Research USA
700 Dr. Gayle Robin Hamilton Assoc. Prof. Centre for the Advancement of Public Health Fairfax VA USA
701 Rev. Dorothy A. Harper Biotethics Washington USA
702 Maria Harrington currently working on my Masters of Science in Nutrition at Bastyr University USA
703 Prof.em Kristi Harris B.Sc plant molecular biology murray state USA
704 Paul C. Helgeson BSME Senior Engineer Middleton WI USA
705 Gosha Hello Company inc USA
706 Prof. Martha Herbert Pediatric Neurologist Mass. Gen. Hosp. USA
707 Patrick Hickey Ph.D Resource renewability and quality of life Sedona Recycles USA
708 Daniel J. Highkin Internist Vancouver Washington USA
709 Dr. Joseph Hilou Clinical Nutrition Chiropractic USA
710 Dale Hoover Organic food eater USA
711 Heidi Horn interested in what i eat sebastian USA
712 Prof. emeritus John Hotchkiss Ph.D Ethnography of Indigenous Botanical Systems USA
713 Dr. Paul Houle Ph.D Theoretical Physics USA
714 Dr. Philip H Howard Ph.D Rural Sociology Rural Coalition Washington DC USA
715 Prof. Ruth Hubbard Biologist Harvard University USA
716 Andrew J. Hund Sociologist Arcata USA
717 Panatey I Like Your Site Company inc USA
718 Alex Jack Planetary Medicine Jushi Institute Becket Mass USA
719 Soraya Jacob student USA
720 Eric Jacobson Ph.D Medical anthropologist Dept. of Social Medicine Harvard Medical School USA
721 Dr. Michael Janson General Practitioner Nutrition Cambridge USA
722 Emile C Joel B.Sc Research Chemist Retired Smithsonian Institution USA
723 Robert W. Johnson Material Scientist DSM Desotech Elgin Illinois USA
724 Christine Johnston Ph.D student oncology USA
725 Dr. Gary P. Kaplan Assoc. Prof. Neurology North Shore Univ. Hosp. NYU School of Medicine Mass USA
726 Dr. Arlene M. Kellman D.O. Physician Tucson USA
727 Prof. Jonathan King Molecular Biology MIT Cambridge Council for Responsible Genetics USA
728 Rev Thomas Klein Orthodox Priest USA
729 Dr Jack Kloppenburg Un. Wisconsin Rural Sociologist USA
730 Heidei A. Kratsch R.D./Graduate Student Plant Physiology Univ. Wisconsin USA
731 Dr. Louis H. Krut MK CHB.:MD St. Louis Univ. Medical School Missouri USA
732 U.V. Kutzli Ph. D. student U of Michigan USA

733 Dr. Marc Lappe Geneticist and Director CETOS Ca USA
734 Dr. Chris Lawrence Ph.D Extensive work in science education outside the box USA
735 Prof. Mark X M Lei Plant genomics and breeder in rice and kenaf University of California Chinese Alumni Associatio USA
736 Prof. Xiaomao Lei Research and Education in agricultural sciences University of California Chinese Alumni Associatio USA
737 Dr. Herman Lerner M.D Nutritionally oriented physician USA
738 Dr. Barry Lia Ph.D sustainable agriculture USA
739 David Lindley USA
740 Sean Lyman Student Gettysbury College USA
741 A J Maimbourg Keen desire to see GM foods banned due to potential health problems USA
742 Dr. Timothy Mann Geographer Hampshire College USA
743 Hugh Mann non pharmaceutical health education organicMD org USA
744 Anne-Marie Mayer Ph. D. student Nutrition Cornell Univ. USA
745 Christine McCullum Ph. D. student Nutritional Sciences Cornell University USA
746 Lynn V. McIndoo Student Environmental Resources Engineering Humboldt State Univ. Arcata USA
747 Dr. Dwight McKee M.D Am Board of Int Med certified in Internal Medicine Medical Oncology and Hematology Strong background in clinical nutrition immunology and holistic med USA
748 Vuejuin McKersen M.Sc Natural Resource Manager U. Michigan USA
749 Dr. Joan P Mencher Ph.D Culturao Anthropologist work on issues of agriculture including sustainable agriculture primarily in India Involved in fights against GMOs and issuesof the co Lehman College of CUNY and CUNY graduate Center USA
750 Dr. Stephen L. Mikesell Anthropology and Political Ecology Univ. Wisconsin Madison USA
751 Dr. Bill Misner Ph.D Nutrition E CAPS Inc USA
752 Leuren Moret Ph.D student Independent Scientist expert in radiation and public health Past President Association for Women Geoscientist USA
753 Dr. Usha Mukhtyar M.D. Consultant Gynecology Obstetrics Bronx New York USA
754 Najeeba Naja Ph.D THE QURAN IS TRUE MANKIND ARE U DEAF DUMB BIND WERE U OR WERE U NOT A DROP OF SPERN ISNT THE ONE WHO GIV E LIFE able to GIVE LIFE TO THE dead THE HUMAN RACE I ISLAM IS TRUE USA
755 Elaine Needham illustrator researcher writer speaker none USA
756 Prof.em JB Neilands Ph.D Professor of Biochemistry Univ Calif Berkeley USA
757 Prof. Stuart A. Newman Developmental Biology New York Medical College Valhalla New York USA
758 Panatey Nice To See Your Site Is Being Updated Company inc USA
759 Lena S Nicolai Ph. D. student University of Michigan USA
760 Dr. Ingrid C. Northwood Biochemist Simon Fraser University USA
761 Dr. Ronald E. Openshaw Adjunct Faculty Geology Physics Maharishi University of Management Fairfield USA
762 Trina Paulus food issues sculpture writing Hope For the Flowers USA
763 Marial Peelle Biol./Anthropologist Undergrad. Swarthmors College USA
764 Dr. Ivette Perfecto Associate Professor, School of Natural Resources and Environment University of Michigan USA
765 Dr. Ilya Sandra Perlingieri Ph.D author The Uterine Crisis 2003 independent scholar USA
766 Chris Picone M.Sc. Soil Microbiologist U. Michigan USA
767 John Pierre B.Sc Concerned Citizen USA
768 William Pizer Many years as an organic farmer Schoharie Certified Organic Hydroponic Greenhouses USA
769 Dr. Vasiliki Plerou Ph.D Physics USA
770 Dr. Gregory Pratt Ph.D Air pollution Minnesota Poll Contr Agncy Univ of Minnesota USA
771 Dr. James W Prescott Ph D Ph.D Developmental Neuropsychologist Cross Cultural Psychologist See www violence de Institute of Humanistic Science USA
772 Linda Prout M.Sc nutrition writer speaker consultant Lifehift USA
773 Dr. Caros R Ramirez Biologist St Lawrance University USA
774 Prof. Philip J. Regal Dept. Ecology Evolution and Behavior Univ. Minnesota St. Paul USA
775 Corinna Richards Ph.D student sociologist (health and biotechnology) AmbiguousMedia USA
776 Prof. R.H. Richardson Professor of Integrative Biology University of Texas Austin USA
777 Claudia Riumallo Mother concerned about her children future health Mother USA
778 John Robb permaculture USA
779 Dr. Susan L. Roberts MSRDLD Health and Nutrition Sue Roberts Health Concepts USA
780 Annika Rockwell Certified Nutritionist Consultant RockwellNutrition com USA
781 James Rose Ceptual Institute USA
782 Dr. Peter M. Rosset Ins. for Food and Development Policy USA
783 Prof. Philip B. Rudnick Emeritus Chemistry West Chester Univ. Pennsylvania PSRAST USA
784 Dr. Arthur Rybeck D.D.S. Dentistry and Organic Farmer Wheeling USA
785 Dr. Elizbet Sahtouris Biologist & Author USA
786 Dr. Elisabet Sahtouris Ph.D evolution biologist futurist Living Systems Design USA
787 Dr. Barnett Salzman M.D 30 yrs of medical research expertise public health board cert psychiatrist USA
788 Thomas J. Saunders Student Environmental Science Humboldt State Univ. Arcata USA
789 Dr. Stephen Scanlan Ph.D Global inequalities international development and food security University of Memphis Department of Sociology USA
790 Dr. Derek Scholes Ph.D Geneticist New York State Dept of Health USA
791 Dr. Nancy A Schult Entomologist U of Wisconsin-Madison USA
792 Dr. Brian Schultz Ecologist Hampshire College USA
793 Dr. Kathy Schwab Health Researcher MPH RD LD Center for Health Research Portland Oregon USA

794 Prof. David Schwartzman Geochemist Howard Uni. Washington DC USA
 795 John Scibetta B.Sc Protein Chromatography Amersham Pharmacia Biotech USA
 796 Dr. Linda Jean Sheperd Biochemist Gaia Blessings USA
 797 Colleen Sheppard Wholistic Energy Therapist USA
 798 Prof. Michael Sheridan Ph.D Environmental Anthropologist Middlebury College USA
 799 Dr. Jacob Silver Ph.D Political Scientist Social Analyst Huron Mountain Research Services USA
 800 Dr. Joseph Simcox Ph.D student Food Plant Diversity and Germplasm The Rare Vegetable Seed Consortium USA
 801 Witold Skiba Ph.D Theoretical Physics MIT USA
 802 Dr. Gerald Smith Zoologist U. Michigan USA
 803 Kim Smith I consume only organic food and desire to see a ban put on GM as soon as possible USA
 804 Kristina Smith Jacoba B.Sc agronomist USA
 805 Dr. John Soluri Historian of Science Carnegie Mellon U USA
 806 Doreen Stabinsky Geneticist International Environmental Politics and Policy California State University at Sacramento USA
 807 Irl Stalcup Corporate Training LA County Dept of Parks and Recreation USA
 808 Emma Steen Dietician (retired) Portland USA
 809 Dr. Jesse Stewart concernment for the application of education and assuring the liberty freedom and unity in life F F H USA
 810 Pamela Stimler B.Sc Board Certified Internist USA
 811 Prof.em Budalur Thyagarajan Ph.D organic chemistry retired USA
 812 Dr. Patricia Patterson Tursi Ph.D My Dissertation concerned Mind Body Interactions I have studied health for 40a years I am a master gardener and former organic farmer SW Missouri Organic Association USA
 813 Prof. John Vandermeer Biologist Univ. Michigan Ann Arbor USA
 814 Rosa Vazquez Student in Biology Ohio State University USA
 815 Susan Vegors Psychologist Consultant Solutech Indianapolis USA
 816 Prof. Robert Vernon Heimer Ph.D The study of brain chemistry during psychotic episodes none USA
 817 Paul Von Hartmann B.Sc Ecologist biodynamic agriculturist Project P E A C E USA
 818 Prof. Kenneth G. Walton Neurochemist Vedic Medicine Maharishi Univ. IA USA
 819 Dr. Bruce West Ph.D DC Editor Health Alert Most renowned expert in the use of phytonutrients for cardiac patients with more patients than any living doctor Health Alert Newsletter USA
 820 Ryan White Student St Lawrence University USA
 821 Paul Whitson M.Sc healthcare administrator USA
 822 Dr. George M. Woodwell Director The Woods Hole Research Center USA
 823 Dr. Suzanne M. Wuerthele Toxicologist Toxicology & Risk Assessment federal regulatory agency Denver USA
 824 Dr. John Zamarrá M.D. Cardiology Fullerton USA
 825 Dr. M Zamir Ph.D Research Scientist University USA
 826 Prof. Miguel Angel Nunez M.Sc 14 years working and researching in Agroecological Sciences in the tropical areas of Latin America IPIAT Venezuela
 827 Julio Eduardo Perez Genetics of Marine Organisms Universidad de Oriente Venezuela
 828 Taurai Mutanda M.Sc Biotechnologist University of Zimbabwe Zimbabwe

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Russia may bench Canadian, U.S. meat over ractopamine



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 09 February 2013 20:32

By the Progressive Group of companies

<http://www.theprogressivegroup.ca/article;story,78;Russia-may-bench-Canadian,-U.S.-meat-over-ractopamineTuesday>

Jan 29 2013

by www.agcanada.com

Canada's pork shippers pledging compliance with Russian policy

A Russian watchdog may impose a temporary ban on some U.S. and Canadian beef and pork products from Feb. 4 because it says some of them contain ractopamine.

Russia's Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance Service, Rosselkhoznadzor, said both countries were still delivering meat to Russia which did not comply with a requirement by Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan, partners in a three-country customs union, that meat be free of residues from the feed additive ractopamine.

"Rosselkhoznadzor is especially concerned about the import of chilled meat products to Russia," the service said in an English-language statement on its website.

The fact that chilled pork and beef arrived in the market before the laboratory test results for ractopamine came back made the situation worse, it added.

"Lack of proper regulation on these issues can result in imposition of temporary restrictions on import of above-mentioned products to Russia from Feb. 4, (of the) current year."

Ractopamine, fed to animals to accelerate growth and make their meat leaner, is approved and sold in Canada as a feed premix for hog and turkey producers under the name Paylean 20, and as a premix for finishing beef cattle under the name Optaflexx 100.

The United Nations' Codex Alimentarius Commission last year established global food safety standards on acceptable daily intake (ADI) and maximum residue levels (MRLs) for the drug. However, countries such as China have banned the drug's use amid concerns that traces of the drug could persist.

Ractopamine's effects may include toxicity and other exposure risks, such as behavioural changes and cardiovascular, musculoskeletal, reproductive and endocrine problems, according to U.S. groups now lobbying that country's Food and Drug Administration for domestic limits on the drug.

The Russian service said U.S. and Canadian regulators had failed to respond to requests for information on measures taken to prevent deliveries to Russia of meat containing ractopamine.

Canadian pork shippers have promised to comply with the Russian policy on ractopamine.

Rosselkhoznadzor said Canadian volumes were expected to be free of ractopamine by Feb. 28, but it had had no assurances from the U.S.

Russia stepped up testing of U.S. and Canadian beef and pork imports in December as traces of ractopamine continued to appear in consignments of meat from those countries after a warning was issued early in 2012.

But the service had said imports continued despite the testing regime.

Last Updated on Saturday, 09 February 2013 20:49

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|Action; letter to stop Genetically Modified salmon



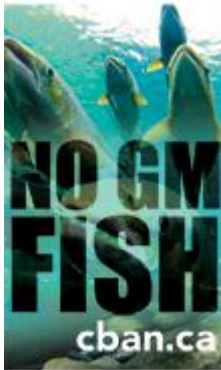
Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 08 February 2013 16:19

By Canadian Biotechnology Network 2013

See petition <http://www.cban.ca/Resources/Topics/GE-Fish/Write-the-Minister-of-the-Environment>



draft letter see petition See petition <http://www.cban.ca/Resources/Topics/GE-Fish/Write-the-Minister-of-the-Environment>

Dear Minister Kent,

I am writing to express my urgent concern about the environmental risks of genetically modified (GM) fish and to ask you to make sure Environment Canada does not approve production of dangerous GM Atlantic salmon eggs or fish in Canada.

The small US company AquaBounty wants to produce all of its GM salmon eggs on Prince Edward Island and then ship the eggs to Panama for growing out and processing, to send the fish into the US consumer market. This plan is extremely risky for Canada and the rest of the world.

I am alarmed that the entire process for assessing environmental risk is secret and that the public has no chance to be involved or be consulted.

AquaBounty plans to ship GM salmon eggs from PEI to Panama, but Canada has not even ratified the United Nations Protocol on Biosafety which regulates the international movement of Living Modified Organisms.

Canada has an international responsibility to stop living pollution. Please instruct Environment Canada to reject any request to approve production of GM salmon or salmon eggs. The risk to Atlantic salmon is too great.

I urge you to take immediate action to stop GM salmon in order to protect endangered wild Atlantic salmon.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent issue. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Write the Minister of the Environment

January 2013: The US company AquaBounty is close to getting US approval for their GM salmon - the company wants to produce all its GM salmon eggs on PEI! But the production of GM salmon or GM salmon eggs is extremely risky - there will always be the danger of escape into the wild.

Write to the Minister of the Environment, Hon. Peter Kent, today and ask him to stop any assessment of GM fish. **Just fill out the form below to send your letter instantly - feel free to customize your letter.**

Your letter will also be automatically sent to:

- Hon. Keith Ashfield, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
- Robert Chisholm, NDP Fisheries Critic
- Hon. Lawrence MacAulay, Liberal Party Fisheries Critic
- Elizabeth May, Leader, Green Party

First Name *

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Last Name *

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Organization/Group name

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Mailing Address *

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Province *

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Postal Code *

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Email Address *

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Website

Message Subject *

Message (please customise) *

Note, we will add your name and address to the end of the letter.

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47 readings

U.S. Missing Goal on Critical Emission Cuts



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 08 February 2013 08:12

By Joe Hitchon

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers tours flooded areas in Burlington, North Dakota in June 2011. Credit: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers photo by Patrick Moes

WASHINGTON, Feb 7 2013 (IPS) - Environmentalists here are warning that the United States is not on track to meet a target of a 17-percent reduction in carbon emissions by 2020, despite President Barack Obama's stated commitment.

Yet, according to a **new report** by the World Resources Institute (WRI), a Washington-based environment think tank, the country can still meet that goal by using existing federal laws and state action, and investing in renewable energy sources.

"Even without Congressional involvement or new technologies, the U.S. can meet its modest goals of a 17-percent reduction," Nicholas Bianco, a senior associate at WRI and lead author on the report, told IPS. "We don't need to wait for new technologies, it can be done now."

Related IPS Articles

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- [New U.S. Biofuel Proposals Could Draw Heavily from Food Sources](#)
- [Expanding Coal Exports Test Obama's Inaugural Climate Pledges](#)

The impact of climate change in the United States is becoming increasingly apparent, in the form of extreme weather events such as record-breaking heat waves, droughts, heavy rainfall, coastal flooding and forest fires. Weather-related damage in the U.S. reportedly totalled 60 billion dollars in 2011, and these amounts are expected to rise in the coming years.

The report offers several key recommendations for both the federal and state policy initiatives aimed at emissions reduction. At the federal level, it particularly encourages the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to pursue emissions reduction at power plants.

At the state level, it focuses on potential greenhouse emissions reductions from policy initiatives in transportation. Yet it also encourages states to venture into areas typically considered the realm of the federal government, focusing on power plants and industry, as well as emissions from refrigerators and air conditioners.

A significant motivation in such approaches is to circumvent the U.S. Congress, which many agree could prove to be one of the biggest obstacles to reaching agreements on reducing climate change.

"Partly due to a small but vocal number of climate-change deniers, and partly because a significant portion of the Congress is beholden to the fossil fuels industry, U.S. companies don't appreciate the long-term benefits of an economy that is more fuel efficient and based more on renewable energy," Michele de Nevers, a senior programme associate at the Center for Global Development (CGD), a Washington think tank, told IPS.

In lieu of legislation

Power plants are the leading cause of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States, followed by the transportation sector, which is responsible for about 30 percent of emissions.

Because state and local regulations play a significant role setting policy for both of these sectors, Bianco and his co-authors are pushing states to achieve reductions in the transportation sector through policies that encourage the use of lower-carbon fuels and lowering vehicle miles travelled. In particular, they are encouraging local governments to prioritise the creation of policies that will improve the efficiency of motor vehicles, and significantly raise standards on all types of vehicles.

If states are able to improve energy efficiency, Bianco suggested, the outcomes will be positive for both governments and the public, as investments in renewable energy will save billions of dollars in long-term costs, including to the environment.

"People save money and it's relatively cheap," he said. "It may require a little investment, but this will be quickly paid off."

The report also recommends the need for increased regulation of the power sector at the state level, as the United States shifts from coal-fired generation toward natural gas-fired and renewable generation. This trend has been driven by dramatic increases in natural gas extraction.

However, scientific research is now showing evidence of significant methane emissions from the use of hydraulic fracturing (or "fracking"), the now widely used approach in the U.S. whereby millions of gallons of water and chemicals are pumped underground to break up rocks and release trapped gasses. This could mean that natural gas could have a greater impact on global warming overall than even coal, due to emissions that escape into the atmosphere during the extraction process.

On Wednesday, the EPA released data that, for the first time, suggests that fracking is the second-highest source of U.S. emissions, behind power plants.

"In fact, there is a very safe and cheap technology to capture them and prevent these emissions from escaping," de Nevers said.

"The (WRI) report encourages states to strengthen their regulations on fracking, and doing so would go a long way toward addressing the issues that local states are most concerned about, like toxic chemicals

getting into the water supply.”

Yet evaluating how much methane is leaking from an increasing number of natural-gas operations, and then limiting such emissions, will be a challenge, Bianco and others are warning.

According to Susan Tierney, a WRI board member, the United States’ goal of a 17-percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions was actually lower than was originally recommended by environmentalists. This level was agreed upon, she says, because 17 percent was considered achievable, albeit modest.

“Even so,” she says, “the U.S. still has not made progress toward achieving the target, and emissions will continue to rise if it continues along its present rate.”

According to CGD’s de Nevers, the best thing that could happen to U.S. policymaking now would be to get agreement on putting a tax on carbon emissions.

“Only economics will motivate a lot of the actions that are referred to in this report,” she warns. “But the only way to get this ‘price tag’ on emissions is through Congressional legislation, and that is just not happening.”

But, she continues, “In the meantime, states and local policies can fill this gap.”

Last Updated on Friday, 08 February 2013 13:36

48 readings

New Era of Food Scarcity Echoes Collapsed Civilisations



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 08 February 2013 08:06

Analysis by Lester R. Brown



Tikal Mayan ruins in Guatemala. The Sumerians and Mayans are just two of the many early civilisations that declined apparently because they moved onto an agricultural path that was environmentally unsustainable. Credit: cc by 3.0

WASHINGTON, Feb 7 2013 (IPS) - The world is in transition from an era of food abundance to one of scarcity. Over the last decade, world grain reserves have fallen by one third. World food prices have more than doubled, triggering a worldwide land rush and ushering in a new geopolitics of food.

Food is the new oil. Land is the new gold.

This new era is one of rising food prices and spreading hunger. On the demand side of the food equation, population growth, rising affluence, and the conversion of food into fuel for cars are combining to raise consumption by record amounts.

On the supply side, extreme soil erosion, growing water shortages, and the earth's rising temperature are making it more difficult to expand production. Unless we can reverse such trends, food prices will continue to rise and hunger will continue to spread, eventually bringing down our social system.

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Can we reverse these trends in time? Or is food the weak link in our early twenty-first-century civilisation, much as it was in so many of the earlier civilisations whose archeological sites we now study?

This tightening of world food supplies contrasts sharply with the last half of the twentieth century, when the dominant issues in agriculture were overproduction, huge grain surpluses, and access to markets by grain exporters. During that time, the world in effect had two reserves: large carryover stocks of grain (the amount in the bin when the new harvest begins) and a large area of cropland idled under U.S. farm programmes to avoid overproduction.

When the world harvest was good, the United States would idle more land. When the harvest was subpar, it would return land to production. The excess production capacity was used to maintain stability in world grain markets. The large stocks of grain cushioned world crop shortfalls.

When India's monsoon failed in 1965, for example, the United States shipped a fifth of its wheat harvest to India to avert a potentially massive famine. And because of abundant stocks, this had little effect on the world grain price.

When this period of food abundance began, the world had 2.5 billion people. Today it has seven billion.

From 1950 to 2000 there were occasional grain price spikes as a result of weather-induced events, such as a severe drought in Russia or an intense heat wave in the U.S. Midwest. But their effects on price were short-lived. Within a year or so things were back to normal. The combination of abundant stocks and idled cropland made this period one of the most food-secure in world history.

But it was not to last. By 1986, steadily rising world demand for grain and unacceptably high budgetary costs led to a phasing out of the U.S. cropland set-aside programme.

Today the United States has some land idled in its Conservation Reserve Program, but it targets land that is highly susceptible to erosion. The days of productive land ready to be quickly brought into production when needed are over.

Ever since agriculture began, carryover stocks of grain have been the most basic indicator of food security. The goal of farmers everywhere is to produce enough grain not just to make it to the next harvest but to do so with a comfortable margin. From 1986, when we lost the idled cropland buffer, through 2001, the annual world carryover stocks of grain averaged a comfortable 107 days of consumption.

This safety cushion was not to last either. After 2001, the carryover stocks of grain dropped sharply as world consumption exceeded production. From 2002 through 2011, they averaged only 74 days of consumption, a drop of one third. An unprecedented period of world food security has come to an end. Within two decades, the world had lost both of its safety cushions.

In recent years, world carryover stocks of grain have been only slightly above the 70 days that was considered a desirable minimum during the late twentieth century. Now stock levels must take into account the effect on harvests of higher temperatures, more extensive drought, and more intense heat waves.

Although there is no easy way to precisely quantify the harvest effects of any of these climate-related threats, it is clear that any of them can shrink harvests, potentially creating chaos in the world grain market. To mitigate this risk, a stock reserve equal to 110 days of consumption would produce a much safer level of food security.

The world is now living from one year to the next, hoping always to produce enough to cover the growth in demand. Farmers everywhere are making an all-out effort to keep pace with the accelerated growth in demand, but they are having difficulty doing so.

Food shortages undermined earlier civilisations. The Sumerians and Mayans are just two of the many early civilisations that declined apparently because they moved onto an agricultural path that was environmentally unsustainable.

For the Sumerians, rising salt levels in the soil as a result of a defect in their otherwise well-engineered irrigation system eventually brought down their food system and thus their civilisation. For the Mayans, soil erosion was one of the keys to their downfall, as it was for so many other early civilisations.

We, too, are on such a path. While the Sumerians suffered from rising salt levels in the soil, our modern-day agriculture is suffering from rising carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere. And like the Mayans, we too are mismanaging our land and generating record losses of soil from erosion.

While the decline of early civilisations can be traced to one or possibly two environmental trends such as deforestation and soil erosion that undermined their food supply, we are now dealing with several. In addition to some of the most severe soil erosion in human history, we are also facing newer trends such as the depletion of aquifers, the plateauing of grain yields in the more agriculturally advanced countries, and rising temperature.

Against this backdrop, it is not surprising that the United Nations reports that food prices are now double what they were in 2002-04. For most U.S. citizens, who spend on average nine percent of their income on food, this is not a big deal. But for consumers who spend 50-70 percent of their income on food, a doubling of food prices is a serious matter. There is little latitude for them to offset the price rise simply by spending more.

Closely associated with the decline in stocks of grain and the rise in food prices is the spread of hunger. During the closing decades of the last century, the number of hungry people in the world was falling, dropping to a low of 792 million in 1997. After that it began to rise, climbing toward one billion. Unfortunately, if we continue with business as usual, the ranks of the hungry will continue to expand.

The bottom line is that it is becoming much more difficult for the world's farmers to keep up with the world's rapidly growing demand for grain. World grain stocks were drawn down a decade ago and we have not been able to rebuild them. If we cannot do so, we can expect that with the next poor harvest, food prices will soar, hunger will intensify, and food unrest will spread.

We are entering a time of chronic food scarcity, one that is leading to intense competition for control of land and water resources – in short, a new geopolitics of food.

*Lester Brown is the president of Earth Policy Institute. For further reading on the global food situation, see *Full Planet, Empty Plates: The New Geopolitics of Food Scarcity*, by Lester R. Brown (W.W. Norton: October 2012). Or read more [here](#).

51 readings

Australian Wind Energy Now Cheaper Than Coal, Gas, BNEF Says



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 07 February 2013 15:03

By James Paton on February 06, 2013

<http://www.businessweek.com/news/2013-02-06/australia-wind-energy-cheaper-than-coal-natural-gas-bnef-says>

Wind is now cheaper than fossil fuels in producing electricity in Australia, the world's biggest coal exporter, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

Electricity can be supplied from a new wind farm in Australia at a cost of A\$80 (\$84) per megawatt hour, compared with A\$143 a megawatt hour from a new coal-fired power plant or A\$116 from a new station powered by natural gas when the cost of carbon emissions is included, according to a Bloomberg New Energy Finance report. Coal-fired power stations built in the 1970s and 1980s can still produce power at a lower cost than that of wind, the research shows.

Relying on fossil fuels to produce electricity is getting more expensive because of the government's price on carbon emissions imposed last year, higher financing costs and rising natural gas prices, BNEF said. The cost of wind generation has fallen by 10 percent since 2011 on lower equipment expenses, while the cost of solar power has dropped by 29 percent.

VIDEO: BNEF Podcast on German Debate on Renewable Costs

"The fact that wind power is now cheaper than coal and gas in a country with some of the world's best fossil fuel resources shows that clean energy is a game changer which promises to turn the economics of power systems on its head," Michael Liebreich, chief executive officer of Bloomberg New Energy Finance, said in a statement today.

Renewables Target

While wind energy has become more competitive, Australia's plan to get at least 20 percent of its power from renewables by the end of the decade is still required to drive investment because of weak energy demand, the report said.

Xinjiang Goldwind Science & Technology Co., China's largest wind-turbine maker, said in December that it's studying new projects in Australia, while Vestas Wind Systems A/S, the world's biggest turbine maker, said in November it expects to keep more than 50 percent of the Australian market.

Australia last year started charging its biggest polluters a price of A\$23 a metric ton for their carbon emissions to discourage the use of fossil fuels and fight climate change. Natural gas prices in Australia may triple by 2030, BNEF said.

"The low and falling costs of renewable energy and high and rising costs of coal- and gas-fired plants suggest that much of Australia's new generating capacity is likely to be renewable," Sydney-based Bloomberg New Energy Finance analyst Kobad Bhavnagri wrote in the report.

AGL Energy Ltd., Australia's largest developer of renewable energy projects, said in November that it expected the A\$1 billion (\$1.03 billion) Macarthur wind farm in Victoria state to begin operating fully this month. AGL in October suspended the development of the first stage of its 1,000-megawatt Dalton gas-fired power station in New South Wales after reviewing the economic viability for several months.

Driven by hydro- and wind-power projects, renewable energy contributed 9.6 percent of Australia's electricity production in 2011, up from 8.7 percent the prior year, according to the Clean Energy Council, an industry group.

To contact the reporter on this story: James Paton in Sydney at jpaton4@bloomberg.net

To contact the editor responsible for this story: Jason Rogers at jrogers73@bloomberg.net



[“Inadequate”](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 07 February 2013 07:37

By[JoeHitchon](#)

Rising temperatures mean the vast Arctic Ocean, which used to be frozen over for much of the year, is now an open shipping line for more than half the year. Credit: public domain

WASHINGTON, Feb 6 2013 (IPS) - Environmentalists are warning that a meeting of environment ministers that took place Monday in Sweden has agreed on a weak and inadequate response plan in case of an oil spill in the Arctic Ocean.

Last Updated on Thursday, 07 February 2013 08:35

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[Living in a Constitution-Free Zone Drones, Surveillance Towers, Malls of the Spy State, and the National Security Police on the Northern Border](#)



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 07 February 2013 07:29

By **Todd Miller** <http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175647/>

Before September 11, 2001, more than half the border crossings between the United States and Canada were left unguarded at night, with only rubber cones separating the two countries. Since then, that 4,000 mile “point of pride,” as Toronto’s Globe and Mail once dubbed it, has increasingly been replaced by a U.S. homeland security lockdown, although it’s possible that, like Egyptian-American Abdallah Matthews, you haven’t noticed.

The first time he experiences this newly hardened U.S.-Canada border, it takes him by surprise. It’s a freezing late December day and Matthews, a lawyer (who asked me to change his name), is on the passenger side of a car as he and three friends cross the Blue Water Bridge from Sarnia,

Ontario, to the old industrial town of Port Huron, Michigan. They are returning from the Reviving the Islamic Spirit conference in Toronto, chatting and happy to be almost home when the car pulls up to the booth, where a blue-uniformed U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agent stands. The 60,000-strong CBP is the border enforcement arm of the Department of Homeland Security and includes both customs and U.S. Border Patrol agents. What is about to happen is the furthest thing from Matthews' s mind. He' s from Port Huron and has crossed this border “ a million times before. ”

After scanning their passports and looking at a computer screen in the booth, the agent says to the driver, as Matthews tells the story:

“Sir, turn off the vehicle, hand me the key, and step out of the car.”

He hears the snap of handcuffs going around his friend' s wrists. Disoriented, he turns around and sees uniformed men kneeling behind their car, firearms drawn.

“To my disbelief, situated behind us are agents, pointing their guns.”

The CBP officer asks Matthews and the remaining passengers to get out of the car and escorts them to a waiting room. Thirty minutes later, he, too, is handcuffed and in a cell. Forty-five minutes after that another homeland security agent brings him into a room with no chairs. The agent tells him that he can sit down, but all he sees is a countertop.

“Can I just stand?” he asks.

And he does so for what seems like an eternity with the door wide open, attempting to smile at the agents who pass by.

“I' m trying to be nice,” is how he put it.

Finally, in a third room, the interrogation begins. Although they question Matthews about his religious beliefs and various Islamic issues, the two agents are “nice.” They ask him: Where' d you go? What kind of law do you practice? He tells them that a former law professor was presenting a paper at the annual conference, whose purpose is to revive “ Islamic traditions of education, tolerance, and introspection. ” They ask if he' s received military

training abroad. This, he tells me, “stood out as one of their more bizarre questions.” When the CBP lets him and his friends go, he still thinks it was a mistake.

However, Lena Masri of the Council of American Islamic Relations-Michigan (CAIR-MI) reports that Matthews’ s experience is becoming “chillingly” commonplace for Michigan’ s Arab and Muslim community at border crossings. In 2012, CAIR-MI was receiving five to seven complaints about similar stops per week. The detainees are all Arab, all male, all questioned at length. They are [asked](#) about religion, if they spend time at the mosque, and who their Imam is.

According to CAIR-MI accounts, CBP agents repeatedly handcuff these border-crossers, often brandish weapons, conduct invasive, often sexually humiliating body searches, and detain people for from two to 12 hours. Because of this, some of the detainees have lost job opportunities or jobs, or given up on educational opportunities in Canada. Many are now afraid to cross the border to see their families who live in Canada. (CAIR-MI has filed a [lawsuit](#) against the CBP and other governmental agencies.)

Months later, thinking there is no way this can happen again, Matthews travels to Canada and crosses the border, this time alone, on the Blue Water Bridge to Port Huron. Matthews still hadn’ t grasped the seismic changes in Washington’ s attitude toward our northern border since 9/11. Port Huron, his small hometown, where a protest group, Students for a Democratic Society, first famously declared themselves against racism and alienation in 1962, is now part of the “frontline” in defense of the “homeland.” As a result, Matthews finds himself a casualty of a new war, one that its architects and proponents see as a permanent bulwark not only against non-citizens generally, but also people like Matthews from “undesirable” ethno-religious groups or communities in the United States.

While a militarized enforcement regime has long existed in the U.S-Mexico borderlands, its far more intense [post-9/11 version](#) is also proving geographically expansive. Now, the entire U.S. perimeter has become part of a Fortress USA mentality and a lockdown reality. Unlike on our southern

border, there is still no wall to our north on what was once dubbed the “longest undefended border in the world.” But don’ t let that fool you. The U.S.-Canadian border is increasingly a national security hotspot watched over by drones, surveillance towers, and agents of the Department of Homeland Security.

The Canadian Threat

Bert Tussing, U.S. Army War College Homeland Defense and Security Director, realizes that when people think of border security, what immediately comes to mind is the U.S.-Mexico border. After all, he is speaking in El Paso, Texas, where in the early 1990s the massive transformation and expansion of the border enforcement apparatus was [born](#). Operation Blockade (later renamed Operation Hold-the-Line) became the Clinton administration’ s blueprint for the walls, double-fencing, cameras, sensors, stadium-lighting, and concentration of Border Patrol agents now seen in urbanized areas -- and some rural ones as well -- from Brownsville, Texas, to San Diego, California. Tussing believes that this sort of intense surveillance, which has literally deformed communities throughout the southwest, should be brought to the northern border as well.

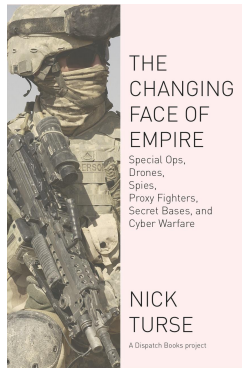
A former Marine with close-cropped brown hair, Tussing has a Napoleonic stature and despises being stuck behind a podium.

“I kind of like moving around,” he quips before starting “The Changing Role of the Military in Border Security Operations,” his talk at last October’ s [Border Management Conference and Technology Expo](#).

Perhaps Tussing realizes that his audience holds a new breed of border-security entrepreneur when his initial Army-Marine joke falls flat. Behind the small audience are booths from 74 companies selling their border-security wares. These nomadic malls of the surveillance state are [popping up](#) in ever more places each year.

Hanging from the high ceiling is a white surveillance aerostat made by an Israeli company. Latched onto the bottom of this billowing balloon are cameras that, even 150 feet away, can zoom in on the comments I’ m scrawling in my notebook. Nearby sits a mannequin in a beige body suit, equipped with a gas mask. It’ s all part of the equipment

and technology that the developing industry has in mind for our southern border, and increasingly the northern one as well.



Buy the book.

Tussing homes in on a 2010 statistic: 59,000 people (“illegals if you will”) tried to enter the United States from countries “other than Mexico, the euphemistic OTMs.” Six hundred and sixty-three of these “OTMs” were from countries Tussing calls “special-interest nations” such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Libya, and Somalia, and also from countries the U.S. has identified as state-sponsors of terrorism like Cuba, Iran, Sudan, and Syria.

Next, he turns to the U.S-Canada divide, mentioning the 1999 case of [Ahmed Ressam](#) who would have become “the millennium bomber,” if not for an astute U.S. Customs agent in Washington state. Here, as Tussing sees it, is the crux of the problem: “We found over time that he was able to do what he was to do because of the comparatively liberal immigration and asylum laws that exist today in Canada, which allowed him a safe haven. Which allowed him a planning area. Which allowed him an opportunity to build bombs. Which allowed him an opportunity to arrange his logistics.” He pauses. “This is not to say that Canada’s laws are wrong, but they are different from ours.”

A Government Accountability Office [report](#), he adds, claims that “the risk of terrorist activity is high along the northern border.” Of that 4,000-mile border between the two countries, he adds, “only 32 of those miles are categorized as what we say are acceptable levels of control.”

As what Tussing calls the “coup de grâce” to his argument for reinforcements of every sort along that border, he [quotes](#) Alan Bersin, former director of Customs and

Border Protection: “In terms of the terrorist threat, it’s more commonly accepted that the most significant threat comes from the north,” not the south.

A Constitution-Free Zone

In 2012, the U.S. government **spent** more on the Homeland Security agencies responsible for border security than all of its other principal federal law enforcement agencies combined. The \$18 billion allocated to Customs and Border Protection and Immigration and Customs Enforcement significantly exceeds the \$14.4 billion that makes up the combined budgets of the FBI, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Secret Service, the U.S. Marshal Service, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives. In the years since 9/11, more than **\$100 billion** has been spent on border security. Much of that went to the southern border, but now an ever larger chunk is heading north.

On that northern border, things have come a long way since North Dakota Senator Byron Dorgan in 2001 **held up** an orange cone and said, “This is America’s security at our border crossing... America can’t effectively combat terrorism if it doesn’t control its borders.”

Now Predator B drones, sometimes in the air for 20 hours at a stretch, are doing **surveillance work** from Grand Forks, North Dakota, to Spokane, Washington. Expensive surveillance towers equipped with night-vision cameras and sophisticated radar have been erected along the St. Clair and Niagara Rivers in Michigan and western New York state. Homeland Security built a \$30 million border security “war room” at Michigan’s Selfridge Air National Guard Base, which, with its “video wall,” is worthy of a Hollywood action flick. This “gold standard” for border protection, as the CBP **dubs it**, is now one of many places where agents continuously observe those rivers of the north. As at Selfridge, so many resources and so much money has been poured into the frontlines of “homeland security,” and just upstream from cash-starved, post-industrial Detroit, the poorest city of its size in the United States.

In addition, the CBP’s Office of Air and Marine -- essentially Homeland Security’s air force and navy --

has **established** eight U.S. bases along the border from Plattsburgh, New York, to Bellingham, Washington. While such bases are commonplace on the southern border, they are new on the Canadian frontier. In addition, new state-of-the-art Border Patrol stations are popping up in places like **Pembina**, North Dakota (at the cost of \$13 million), **International Falls**, Minnesota (\$6.8 million), and other places. This advance of the homeland security state in the north, funded and supported by Congress, seems both **uncontroversial** and unstoppable.

Don't think that the eternal bolstering of "border security" is just a matter of fortifying the boundary line, either. Last November, the CBP **ordered** an additional 14 unmanned aerial vehicles. (They are, however, still waiting for Congress to appropriate the funding for this five-year plan.) With this doubling of its fleet, there will undoubtedly be more surveillance drones flying over major U.S. urban areas like Detroit, Buffalo, Syracuse, Bangor, and Seattle, places the ACLU has classified as in a "**Constitution-free zone.**"

That zone -- up to 100 miles from any external U.S. border -- is the area that the Supreme Court has **deemed** a "reasonable distance" in which to engage in border security operations, including warrantless searches. As in the Southwest, expect more interior checkpoints where federal agents will ask people about their citizenship, as they did to **Vermont Senator Patrick Leahy** in 2008. In the zone, you have the developing blueprint for a country not only in perpetual lockdown, but also under increasing surveillance. According to the ACLU, if you were to **include** the southern border, the northern border, and coastal areas in this zone, it would contain 200 million people, a potential "border" jurisdiction encompassing two-thirds of the U.S. population.

It's October 2007 when I get my first glimpse of this developing Constitution-free zone in action at a Greyhound bus station in Buffalo, New York. I'm with Miguel Angel Vasquez de la Rosa, a Mexican lawyer who is brown-skinned and speaks only Spanish. As we enter the station, we spot two beefy Border Patrol agents in their dark-green uniforms

patrolling the waiting area.

I have to blink to make sure I'm not seeing things, to remember where I am. I'm originally from this area, but have lived for years along the U.S.-Mexican border where I've grown used to seeing the "men in green." I can't remember ever seeing them here.

Before 9/11, Border Patrol agents on the southern border used to joke that they went north to "go fishing." Not anymore. The 2001 USA Patriot Act **mandated** a 300% increase in Border Patrol personnel on the northern border, as well as the emplacement of more surveillance technology there. Further legislation in 2004 **required** that 20% of the agency's new recruits be stationed on the Canadian divide.

The number of U.S. Border Patrol agents on the northern border **went from** 340 in 2001 to 1,008 in 2005 to 2,263 in 2010. Now, the number is approaching 3,000. That's still small compared to the almost 19,000 on the southern border, but significant once you add in the "force multipliers," since Border Patrol works ever more closely with local police and other agencies. For example, according to immigration lawyer Jose Perez, New York State troopers call the Border Patrol from Interstate-90 outside of Syracuse about a suspected undocumented person about 10 times a day on average. "And we aren't even in Arizona."

On that day in Buffalo, the two agents made a beeline for Miguel to check his visa. A moment later, the hulking agents are standing over another brown-skinned man who is rifling through a blue duffle bag, desperately searching for his documents. Not long after, handcuffed, he is walked to the ticket counter with the agents on either side. Somehow, cuffed, the agents expect him to retrieve his ticket from the bag, now on the counter. There are so many people watching that it seems like a ritual of humiliation.

Since 2007, this sort of moment has become ever more usual across the northern border region in bus and train stations, as "homeland security" gains ever more traction and an ever wider definition. The Border Patrol are, for instance, **staking out** Latino community centers in Detroit, and **working closely** with the police on the

Olympic peninsula in Washington state, leading to a much wider enforcement dragnet, which looks an awful lot like round-ups of the usual suspects.

After 9/11, the Border Patrol's number one mission became **stopping** terrorists and weapons of mass destruction from coming into the country between the ports of entry. The Border Patrol, however, is "an agency that doesn't have limitations," says Joanne Macri, director of the Criminal Defense Immigration Project of the New York State Defender Association. "With police officers, people have more due process protection." Since 9/11, she adds, they have become "the national security police."

And from what we know of their **arrest records**, it's possible to grasp their definition of national security. Just in Rochester, New York, between 2005 and 2009, the CBP classified 2,776 arrests during what it terms "transportation raids" by skin complexion. The results: 71.2% of medium complexion and 12.9% black. Only 0.9% of their arrests were of "fair" complexion. And agents have had **incentives** to increase the numbers of people they sweep up, including Home Depot gift certificates, cash bonuses, and vacation time.

Macri tells me that it is now ever more common for armed national security police to pull people "who don't belong" off buses and trains in the name of national security. In 2011, according to Immigration and Customs Enforcement director John Morton, there were more than **47,000 deportations** of undocumented people along the northern border.

Too Close to Home

The next time Abdallah Matthews crosses the international border, a familiar face asks him the normal questions: Where did you go in Canada? What was the purpose of your trip? Matthews is already in the same CBP waiting area, has already been handcuffed, and can't believe it's happening again.

The CBP agent suddenly stops. "Do you remember me?"

Matthews peers at him, and finally says, "Yes, I played soccer with you." They haven't seen each other since high

school. They briefly reminisce, two men who grew up together along the St. Clair River before all those expensive surveillance towers with infrared cameras and radar went up. Although Matthews and the CBP agent were once friendly, although they lived in the same small town, there is now a boundary between them. Matthews struggles against this divide. He pleads: “You know who I am. I grew up here. I’ve been over this border a million times.”

This is, of course, only one of thousands of related stories happening along U.S. borders, north and south, in a universe in which, as anthropologist Josiah Heyman puts it, there are increasingly only two kinds of people: “the watchers and the watched.” And keep in mind that, with only “32 miles” under operational control, this is just the beginning. The U.S. border enforcement apparatus is only starting its migration north.

Matthews’ s former high-school acquaintance guides him to the now-familiar room with the counter where three interrogators are waiting for him. They tell him to spread his legs. Then they order him to take off his shoes. It’s hard to take them off, however, when your hands are cuffed behind your back. The two interrogators in front are already shouting questions at him. (“What were you doing in Canada?”) The one behind him kicks his shoes. Hard. Then, after Matthews finally manages to get them off, the agent searches under his waistband.

When they are done, Matthews asks the agents what they would do if he were to circle around, reenter Canada, and cross the border again. The agents assure him that they would have to do the same exact thing -- handcuff, detain, and interrogate him as if his previous times had never happened.

Todd Miller has researched and written about U.S.-Mexican border issues for more than 10 years. He has worked on both sides of the border for BorderLinks in Tucson, Arizona, and Witness for Peace in Oaxaca, Mexico. He now writes on border and immigration issues for NACLA Report on the Americas and its blog “[Border Wars](#),” among other places. He is at work on his first book, *Border Patrol Nation*, for the Open Media Series of City Lights Books.

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62 readings

World Bank Unmoved on Auditor's Criticism of Forest Policy



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 06 February 2013 05:50

By Carey L. B

The Bank's new approach included the use of industrial logging. Here, lumber from the Amazon's Antimary forest is readied for transport. Credit: Mario Osava/IPS

WASHINGTON, Feb 6 2013 (IPS) - Officials at the World Bank are forcefully rejecting a new internal evaluation that is highly critical of the institution's decade-long forest policy, expressing their "strong disagreement" with some assertions in the report.

The assessment, written by the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG), the World Bank Group's auditor, warns that expectations for poverty reduction as envisioned in the bank's 2002 Forest Strategy "have not yet been met". The report is particularly critical of the bank's use of mass-scale logging concessions as a forest-management strategy and of a lack of projects that promote community involvement in the oversight of forests.

While the full IEG report has not yet been made public, draft copies of both the report and management responses were scheduled to be discussed at the bank's Washington headquarters on Monday. (Leaked copies of both documents can be found [here](#) and [here](#).)

The draft response from the bank's management warns that the audit "contains a number of inaccuracies and misleading assertions that are based on generalizations about the forest sector rather than on an evaluation of the (World Bank Group's) own work in this sector."

In addition to expressing frustration with the IEG's research methodology, the bank's responses are particularly vociferous on the charge that its forest governance reforms – particularly regarding concessions – may not have led to sustainable and inclusive development.

The management warns that bank concession policies should not be looked at outside of their comprehensive context as they constitute "one part of a suite of reforms", and that "an extensive body of literature" already exists on concession reforms, for which further re-appraisals would offer "little added value".

In addition, the bank says that the IEG missed out on some particularly important reforms, such as a new requirement mandating third-party verification of sustainable forest management prior to any bank investment. Nor does the evaluation substantively explore the contributions of a bank initiative called the External Advisory Group on Forests, aimed at offering monitoring and oversight of the bank's forest investments.

Both the frankness of the IEG report and the force with which the World Bank management have responded have surprised some observers.

"The evaluation was surprisingly forthright, but it's important to realise that this issue is particularly touchy as the bank attempts to position itself as a major player in responding to global climate change," Joshua Lichtenstein, forest programme manager with the Bank Information Center, a Washington watchdog, told IPS.

"The corollary here, however, is that the bank's approach of focusing on industrial timber concessions doesn't appear to have worked. While there's been some progress in improving the legal framework, the IEG is saying that those programmes have led neither to sustainable, inclusive economic development nor to decreases in deforestation or sustainable use of forests."

Centrality of concessions

As put in place in 2002, the World Bank's Forest Strategy was aimed at both poverty alleviation and the safeguarding of local environments.

One important component of this new approach is the use of industrial logging, for which the 2002 strategy lifted a previous ban. By focusing instead on reforms such as increased management and certification activities, the policy aims at providing both local employment and national-level revenues.

The IEG evaluation, however, is clear in its view that this approach does not appear to have delivered results.

"We're in no way opposing World Bank involvement in the forest sector – indeed, the bank has lots of small, community-driven development projects that are successful," Lichtenstein says.

"But that's kind of the point: there are other models, good alternatives, available, and the bank now needs to give up on this big industrial logging concession model. That was clearly important and worth trying, but it hasn't panned out."

By inserting itself in the logging sector in tropical forests, the World Bank had hoped it could bring its good offices to bear on an already existing industry and make it better. Thus, while the bank is not directly financing these companies, it is providing the legal and policy framework to make the sector function in its current form.

Yet some argue that the bank's involvement has made certain situations worse, including pushing industrial logging operations into remaining primary rainforests.

"The allocation of large logging concessions, millions of hectares, to mostly foreign companies is still the prevailing model in many countries in the Congo Basin to manage forests," Susanne Breitkopf, a Washington-based senior political adviser on forest and climate with Greenpeace International, told IPS, referring to the vast tropical rainforests that cover six countries in Central Africa.

"That clashes with local use by communities, and economically the local communities are not benefitting from this. As it turns out, these are often low-paid, low-quality jobs without contracts. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, we found that over time local communities are often poorer than when the companies arrive."

There have also been allegations of fraud and illegal activity. In 2010, a European Union-funded [report on logging in the Congo Basin](#) found that nearly all major companies in the sector were involved in illegal activities, including logging outside of legal limits, non-payment of taxes and fraud.

Meanwhile, many have complained that community forestry programmes in these areas have been either an afterthought or entirely absent. On the issue of participatory forest management, the new IEG assessment suggests that the bank is "neglecting" the informal sector.

In response, the bank agrees that "Effective community participation is essential for improving the management of protected areas ... (but questions) the evaluative basis for IEG's conclusions that the Bank is not already doing this."

Reassessment opportunity

"The IEG report is a very good starting point," Breitkopf says, "offering a great opportunity for the bank to seriously reassess its approach and develop new priorities in land rights, livelihoods and protection of ecological systems, especially with regard to the role that forests are playing in protecting us from devastating climate change."

Yet she is pessimistic that the new evaluation will lead to significant change. She also notes that the International Finance Corporation, the World Bank Group's private sector arm, currently in [early talks](#) with a French timber company called Rougier, is currently contemplating re-engagement with industrial logging in the Congo Basin for the first time in three decades.

"Unfortunately, even as the evidence has increasingly mounted over the years, this has not been taken into account," Breitkopf says. "From what we've heard from management, there still seems to be a resistance towards the recommendations from the IEG. And frankly, we don't understand this, given that this is such a good chance to find better solutions."

71 readings

Environmental watchdog worried about rise of fracking



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 05 February 2013 22:06

By Max Paris, Environment Unit, **CBC News** Feb 5, 2013



The Hibernia platform stands tall above the waters of Bull Arm, Trinity Bay, Nfld. The Environment Commissioner is concerned about spill preparedness in the Atlantic coast offshore oil and gas industry. (THE CANADIAN PRESS/Jonathan Hayward)

Chemicals used in the hydraulic fracturing process — commonly called fracking — were of particular concern to Environment Commissioner Scott Vaughan in his last report as auditor of Canadian environmental regulations that was tabled today in the House of Commons.

The federal government told Vaughan that fracking is an emerging issue, and it is only now looking into it. Provinces, for the most part, are responsible for regulating the oil and gas sector, but Ottawa is in the driver's seat when it comes to toxic substances.

"According to the government, until it has a better understanding of hydraulic fracturing, it cannot determine whether risk assessments and control measures are warranted," wrote Vaughan.

Fracking is the process of injecting water and chemicals into underground rock formations.

The idea is to break the rock apart, thus freeing trapped shale gas and oil.

The government doesn't have a good handle on the type of chemicals the industry uses in the process. It has developed a partial list of 800, of which 33 are toxic.

Each shale gas well uses between 55,000 and 200,000 litres of chemical cocktail. In B.C. alone, 7,300 wells have been fractured since 2005, and between 500 and a 1,000 new ones are being permitted each year.

Ottawa will finish a review on fracking in March 2014.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FAILS 'TO KEEP PACE'

The fracking mention in Vaughan's report is in keeping with its theme that "environmental protection may not be keeping pace with resource development."

"We know that there's a boom in natural resources in this country and I think what we need now, given the gaps, given the problems we found, is a boom in environmental protection in this country as well," said Vaughan at a news conference after the release of his report.

Another example of government regulation lagging the pace of resource development was in the area of offshore oil and gas. Vaughan pointed out two striking examples.

He found two offshore petroleum boards in Atlantic Canada were not adequately prepared to take control of a potential spill. In particular, Vaughan pointed to the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board (C-NLOPB).

The board "has yet to complete its review of operators' spill response capabilities and, therefore, does not have adequate assurance that operators are ready to respond effectively to a spill," wrote Vaughan.

The commissioner also found that fines for damages caused by spills or other industrial accidents are woefully outdated and inadequate. He noted they are much lower than in other countries.

The government has hinted this is about to change.

"I can't break cabinet confidence, but I can assure you we are well aware, not only as it pertains to diversifying markets and increased pipeline traffic, but in terms of liability for offshore drilling," Environment Minister Peter Kent said last week.

Still, the opposition parties and environmental critics find Vaughan's comments disturbing.

"There is a profound lack of information here, a lack of co-ordination of that information and a profound lack of follow-through by this government," said NDP environment critic Megan Leslie.

"You hear the government talk a lot about responsible resource development," said Clare Demerse, director of federal policy at the Pembina Institute.

What the environment commissioner is saying today is that it's still "just a slogan, it's not yet a reality," said Demerse.

Green Party leader Elizabeth May said Bill C-38 and Bill C-45 — the two omnibus budget implementation bills — have created "tremendous confusion."

"The failure to have strong environmental protections in place when you're entering a period of rampant resource development at a breakneck pace" is akin to "inviting economic disaster as well as environmental loss," said May.

\$4B IN TAX REBATES TO INDUSTRY

There currently is no liability cap when a company is at fault. But if there is no negligence, the top cap is \$30 million in the Atlantic and \$40 million in the Arctic. The rest of the tab is picked up by taxpayers.

Sources suggested to the CBC that the new caps would be "in the billions."

"If you're an oil and gas company and you don't have to worry about the risks, then the planning for those accidents is going to be a lower priority," said Ted Hsu, the Liberal natural resources critic. "So what we've got to do is eliminate the moral hazard of taxpayers covering the liability for oil and gas drilling companies."

During Tuesday's question period, interim Liberal leader Bob Rae asked the prime minister if he agreed with the report's conclusions.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper said, "the government has already been clear that responsible resource development means that as we see the growth in resource development ... there will have to be enhanced measures of environmental protection."

The government took some measures over the course of the past year and has indicated, in a number of areas, it intends to take additional measures. It will be a useful piece of advice as we move forward with these additional measures," said Harper.

The report had two other chapters on federal support for the fossil fuel sector and marine protected areas.

Vaughan calculated Ottawa gave the oil and gas industry nearly \$4 billion in tax rebates between 2006 and 2011. Nearly half of that amount will be phased out in the next four years.

Vaughan's last day as commissioner of the environment and sustainable development is March 31. He will then take over as president and CEO of the International Institute for Sustainable Development.

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Last Updated on Wednesday, 06 February 2013 22:41

44 readings

Chávez Leaves a Deep Imprint

Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 06 March 2013 10:21

By Humberto Márquez





Hugo Chávez greeting a little girl in a campaign rally. Credit: Carabobo Comando in the 2012 election campaign.

CARACAS, Mar 6 2013 (IPS) - Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez died Tuesday in the Military Hospital of Caracas after a long battle with cancer in his abdominal region, which was diagnosed in June 2011.

Born on Jul. 28, 1954 in Sabaneta, a small town in Venezuela's southwestern plains, Chávez was the second of the six sons born to rural schoolteachers Hugo de los Reyes Chávez and Elena Frías.

Raised mainly by his grandmother, the young Hugo was passionately devoted to baseball. At the age of 17, after graduating from high school, he entered the Military Academy.

As a lieutenant in the army, he founded the Revolutionary Bolivarian Movement-200, a political and social movement, in 1982, influenced by his older brother Adán, an active member of the Venezuelan Revolution Party headed by guerrilla leader Douglas Bravo.

Related IPS Articles

- [Chávez Victory Brings Challenges for "21st Century Socialism"](#)
- [Social Inclusion the Key to Venezuela's Elections](#)

Chávez first made history on Feb. 4, 1992, when he surrendered after leading a failed uprising by several army battalions against then president Carlos Andrés Pérez (1974-1979 and 1989-1993).

Wearing combat fatigues and a red paratrooper's beret and walking calmly among the jittery officers who arrested him, he gave an improvised 70-second speech addressing his fellow troops involved in the uprising, which had an immediate impact on millions of Venezuelans watching the live TV coverage.

"Lamentably, for now, our objectives were not achieved...But the country has to take the road to a better destiny, and I assume responsibility...for this Bolivarian movement," he said, calling for his companions to lay down their arms to avoid further bloodshed.

Instead of blood, ink ran, as analysts discussed how, in a country where millions of people were marginalised from the oil economy and where leaders who acknowledged the shortcomings of the political system were lacking, a young army officer had assumed responsibility for the attempted coup in the name of a movement that invoked independence hero Simón Bolívar (1783-1830).

Chávez's legend was thus born, and his popularity began to grow. After spending two years in prison he was pardoned by then president Rafael Caldera (1969-1974 and 1994-1999) of COPEI, Venezuela's Christian Democratic party, and began to travel the country raising hopes of a new uprising.

But in 1996, on the advice of veteran left-wing politicians like Luis Miquilena, his political mentor, he decided to seek power at the polls.

Chávez founded the Fifth Republic Movement (MVR), which grew and grew while the traditional parties that had ruled since 1959 went into decline. He won the Dec. 6, 1998 presidential elections with 56 percent of the vote.

In 15 other elections held between 1999 and 2012, the proportion of voters who backed Chávez and his supporters remained fairly steady at that level. From the start, his main voting base was made up of the poor.

The hope of the poor

To the economic, social and cultural reasons that explain this support were added "the hope of justice that lives always in the depths of the soul of the poor," as well as Chávez's charisma, former socialist leader Teodoro Petkoff told IPS.

People of "mestizo" or mixed-race heritage identified easily with Chávez, who looked like them. Other aspects of his charismatic personality were a casual, accessible approach, a powerful stage presence and commanding voice, and a speaking style that at times had a trace of the preacher. His speeches were splattered with references to Bolívar and to the independence and land reform struggles of the 19th century.

Since taking power, he made 2,200 nationwide broadcasts and nearly 400 editions of his Sunday show "Aló Presidente", where he discussed political questions, aspects of his military career, or history, largely unscripted and for several hours, in colloquial language.

Chávez supported left-wing causes and governments throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, had a close alliance with Cuba, and described Fidel Castro as his mentor.

He had the constitution rewritten and approved by voters in 1999 and amended in 2009.

In 2001, land laws aimed at redistributing unused rural property unleashed a backlash from the moneyed classes and prompted constant protest marches by Venezuelans calling for him to step down.

On Apr. 11, 2002, the largest opposition march to date ended with gunfire near the house of government that claimed the lives of 19 people and left many more injured – an incident that was never clarified.

The military high command, backed by powerful civilian elites, staged a coup against Chávez, and Pedro Carmona, the head of Fedecámaras – the main business association – was declared president and immediately dissolved most of Venezuela's democratic institutions, including Congress.

Chávez's legacy to Venezuela was putting the issue of poverty at the top of the social and political agenda; taking the left to power after nearly a century of frustrated attempts; a certain desacralisation of power; and strengthening groups and communities that had been on the margins for decades.

In Latin America, Chávez leaves a discourse and a web of relations that vigorously support integration, which in his view had to be political, even more than economic, and support for friendly countries and governments based on oil.

He pulled Venezuela out of the Andean Community bloc (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru) and brought it into the Southern Common Market, or Mercosur (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay); he created Petrocaribe to provide oil aid to Caribbean countries; and he was instrumental in creating the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), the Bank of the South and an incipient regional currency.

But loyal members of the military, along with tens of thousands of supporters who surrounded the government palace and military institutions in Caracas, put Chávez back in power less than 48 hours after he was ousted.

In late 2002 and early 2003, a lockout by top management of the PDVSA oil company and by private firms aimed at toppling Chávez caused extensive damage to the economy. But the two-month business shutdown failed and the country's democratic institutions remained stable.

In August 2004, the opposition organised a recall referendum asking Venezuelans whether Chávez should leave office immediately. But 59 percent of voters said he should continue to govern, in a transparent vote overseen by the Organisation of American States and the Carter Centre, among other observers.

With support from Cuba, the Chávez administration introduced a broad range of social programmes, known as "missions", bringing healthcare, dental care, education, subsidised food, literacy programmes and direct financial aid to the poor, along with employment and housing plans, outside of the traditional bureaucratic channels.

According to the World Bank, between 1999 and 2012, poverty was reduced to 28.5 percent, from at least double that. In addition, per capita GDP increased from 4,105 dollars to 10,810 dollars in 2011, according to World Bank figures.

After his re-election in December 2006, the president stepped up his verbal and diplomatic confrontation

with the United States, forged closer ties with countries outside the region like Russia, China and Iran, broke off relations with Israel, and declared that his aim was "21st century socialism".

Chávez invariably defined himself as Bolivarian, to the point that he officially named the country the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and used the term in the names of his works and proposals. But he also described himself as Christian, humanist, Marxist, socialist, anti-imperialist, pro-indigenous and pro-worker.

The high price of oil, which accounts for 40 percent of Venezuela's budget revenue, made it possible for him to nationalise a number of companies and place the economy under tight controls, starting with exchange controls. But he failed to curb the heavy dependence on the importation of foodstuffs or Venezuelans' rampant consumerism.

After a new constitutional reform was voted down in 2007 by a narrow majority, he had to wait until 2009 to push through the possibility of indefinite re-election for the presidency and other posts.

Long before, in a brief conversation with IPS in 2003, Chávez had said that he did not want to govern forever, "just for two terms, until January 2013, and after that another revolutionary will do so."

But he changed his mind later, arguing that he needed to stay in power in order to usher in the necessary changes, saying the constant shifts in administration in Latin America and the Caribbean had thwarted similar initiatives.

His effort to be elected to a fourth term apparently had an impact on his health. Doctors said it was extremely negative for him to dedicate himself to the government and the election campaign simultaneously in 2011 and 2012, while neglecting his health.

Only in extremis, after his health took a turn for the worse in December 2012, did he decide to name a chosen successor: Nicolás Maduro, his candidate to replace him in the presidency.

The first big question mark is whether his political heirs will inherit the leadership role and popular support he enjoyed for 20 years, 14 of them in the government.

Another question is whether "Chavismo" will give rise to a strong political movement, along the lines of Peronism in Argentina after the death of Juan Domingo Perón (1895-1974), or whether Chávez will become a cult figure for the left like Argentine-Cuban guerrilla Ernesto "Che" Guevara (1928-1967).

Chávez frequently said that when he reached old age he imagined himself retired, under the shade of a tree on the Venezuelan plains where he was born, teaching children, and perhaps cultivating one of his passions: the "copla" music of the plains region.

A born warrior, a "simple soldier" as he liked to say, with combat terms always on hand to explain any situation, who defeated almost all of his rivals, a true winner in politics, Chávez was unable to win the final battle against cancer that brought him down at the age of 58.

Last Updated on Wednesday, 06 March 2013 10:23

175 readings

The NGO, UN Watch, targets specific states like Venezuela and leaders, such as Hugo Chavez and ignores the failings of other states, such as the US, Canada and Israel.



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 06 March 2013 09:55

by Joan Russow – Global Compliance Research Project.

Since Chavez's death, there have been many derogatory comments made , by opponents of Chavez, and by mainstream Canadian media, including the Globe and Mail and CBC; many of the comments undermine what Chavez has achieved. His death is a tragic loss for global social justice.

Today, at the UN Human Rights Council, there is a derogatory comment, about Chavez by the Canadian Director of UN Watch, Hillel Neuer who said: "Sad: UN Human Rights Council holds minute's silence for fellow member Chavez"

The Group UN Watch has ECOSOC status at the UN and in its application it describes itself as an independent international NGO. It does, however, appear that it targets primarily socialist states such as Venezuela and states that are critical of Israel. It lobbied 20 states to oppose Venezuela's bid to be a member of the UN Human Rights Council. Is the name UN Watch legitimate if it watches only some states and some instruments? One is left with the question "whose interests is it serving? If it serves special state interests, would UN Watch not lack credibility and legitimacy?"

I think that the name UN Watch is a misnomer, and misrepresents what the group is doing. It is not watching all states and their compliance with UN instruments. The group is targeting socialist states, and any state that appears to say anything against Israel.

Has the group lobbied against Israel and others for not ratifying the Non Proliferation Treaty?

Has the group lobbied against states that refuse to support a nuclear free Middle East

Has the group lobbied against the US, Israel and others for not respecting the jurisdiction and decisions of the International Court of Justice?

Has the group lobbied against the US and other states for not ratifying the Convention Against All forms of Discrimination against Women?

Has the group lobbied against the US and other states for failing to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child?

Has the group lobbied against the US and other States for failing to ratify the International Covenant on Social Economic and Cultural Rights? And its protocol

Has the group lobbied against the use by some states, such as the US and Israel of the pre-emptive strike in violation of the Charter of the United Nations as being the egregious crime of aggression

Has the group lobbied against the states such as the US and others, misinterpreting Article 51-the right of self-defence of the Charter of the United Nations to justify an illegal act of aggression against another state?

Has the group lobbied against states that have produced weapons that would be prohibited under the Geneva Protocol I – V

Has the group lobbied against states like the US and Canada for not ratifying or for withdrawing from the Kyoto Protocol and for not reducing sufficiently greenhouse gas emissions as required under art. 2 of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

Has it lobbied against states, such as the US, Canada and other NATO states that violate the Convention Against Torture

Has the group lobbied against states like Israel and the United States that have the death penalty in defiance of the Optional Protocol II of the ICCPR

Has the group lobbied to block states like the US and Canada, that have refused to ratify the Convention on the rights of migrant workers and their families

Has the group lobbied against states like the US and Canada that have failed to guarantee the rights of indigenous peoples and has it criticized Canada for claiming that the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is only aspirational

Has the group lobbied against states such as the US and Canada for passing the Homeland security act and the Anti-terrorism act, respectively, which violate certain sections of the International Covenant on Civil and political Rights

Has the group lobbied against states , like Canada, US and others that deprive a people of its subsistence, in violation of article 2 of the International covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Has the group lobbied against Canada and the new refugee proposal to treat refugees from so-called "safe" states differently than those rom so-called "unsafe" states in violation of section 2 of the UN Convention on Refugees.

Has the group lobbied to block states like the united States and Canada for failing to ratify most of the International Labour Organization conventions related to labour rights

Has the group lobbied to block the US for failing to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child

Does the group ever question the provocative nature of the US military bases, including 7 in Colombia near the border of Venezuela?

Does the group note that Israel has not ratified the NPT and that it is the only state in the middle East with nuclear weapons, and that the US, Canada and Israel all oppose the UN Declaration calling for a nuclear free middle East?

I think its ECOSOC status should be revoked.

Last Updated on Wednesday, 06 March 2013 10:00

58 readings

Statement of the Revolutionary Government: Farewell, Commander.



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 06 March 2013 07:59

by Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations

Sitio WEB: www.cubadiplomatica.cu/onu

It was with profound and searing grief that our people and the Revolutionary Government learned about the decease of President Hugo Chávez Frías and are therefore preparing to pay a heartfelt and patriotic tribute to him, for he will go down in history as a Hero of Our America.

We convey our sincere condolences to his parents, brothers, daughters and son as well as all of his relatives, whom we feel are already ours, for Chávez is also a son of Cuba, Latin America, the Caribbean and the whole world.

In this moment of profound sorrow, we share our deepest feelings of solidarity with the brother people of Venezuela, whom we will continue to accompany under any circumstances.

The Bolivarian Revolution will be able to count on our resolute and unrestricted support at these difficult moments.

We reiterate our support, encouragement and confidence in victory to our comrades of the Bolivarian political and military leadership and the Venezuelan Government.

President Chávez has been waging an extraordinary battle throughout his young and fruitful life. We will always remember him as a patriotic military to the service of Venezuela and the Bigger Homeland; as an honest, clear-sighted, audacious and courageous revolutionary fighter; as a leader and supreme commander in whom Bolivar reincarnated in order to conclude what he had left unfinished; as the founder of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America and the Community of Latin America and Caribbean States.

His heroic and indefatigable struggle against death is an insuperable example of firmness. The admirable commitment shown by his doctors and nurses have been a feat of humanism and dedication.

The return of the President to his beloved Venezuelan homeland changed the course of history. "We have a homeland", he exclaimed, filled with emotion, on December 8 last, and he returned to his homeland to confront the biggest risks imposed by his disease. Nothing and no one could ever take away from the Venezuelan people the homeland that they have recovered.

The work of Chávez emerges undefeated before our eyes. The achievements attained by the revolutionary people who saved him from the coup orchestrated on April of 2002, who have followed him without hesitations, are already irreversible.

The Cuban people considers him to be one of its most outstanding sons and has admired, followed and loved him as if he were its own. Chávez is also Cuban! He also suffered our difficulties and problems and did everything he could, with extraordinary generosity, especially during the harshest years of the Special Period. He accompanied Fidel as a true son and forged a very close friendship with Raúl.

He excelled in all the international battles against imperialism, always in defense of the poor, the workers and our peoples. Filled with passion, persuasively, eloquently, ingeniously and excitedly he spoke from the roots of the peoples; he sang our joys and recited our passionate verses with ever-lasting heroism.

The tens of thousands of Cubans who work in Venezuela will pay tribute to him through the fervent accomplishment of the international duty and will continue to accompany, with honor and altruism, the heroic deeds of the Bolivarian people.

Cuba will remain forever loyal to the memory and the legacy of Commander President Chávez and will continue to pursue his ideals in favor of the unity of the revolutionary, integration and independence forces of Our America.

His example will guide us in our future battles.

Ever Onwards to Victory!

March 5, 2013

62 readings

The Venezuela Constitution is an important part of Chavez' Legacy



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 05 March 2013 22:28

By-Joan Russow- - Global compliance research Project

Since Chavez's death, there have been many comments, by opponents of Chavez, and by mainstream Canadian media, including the Globe and Mail and CBC, undermining what Chavez has achieved. His death is a tragic loss for global social justice.

On April 15, 2012 on the 30th Anniversary of the Charter, John Ibbitson wrote, in the Globe and Mail, that the Canadian Charter proves to be Canada's gift to world. This arrogant Nationalistic statement by John Ibbitson, motivated me to read the 1999 Constitution of Venezuela to see what provisions were in the Venezuelan Constitution. I was amazed at the complexity and interdependence of issues addressed in its over 300 provisions. Perhaps John Ibbitson should have read the Venezuelan Constitution before proclaiming Canada's Charter as being a gift to the world. One may ask, could a Charter, without social justice provisions, be a gift to the world?

The United States, Canada, and Venezuela all signed the International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural rights (ICSECR). The US refused to ratify it; Canada ratified it but did not include the provisions in the Charter. Venezuela, however, ratified it, and included provisions in its 1999 Constitution

I originally wrote about the venezuelannConstitution in May when I was living in Caracas. And then reposted it in September *because in the lead up to the Venezuelan election the Canadian media have been unduly relying on a questionable international NGO called UN Watch. This NGO targets socialist states, and any state that has criticized Israel while ignoring the egregious failing of many other member states of the UN. Its title as UN Watch is a misrepresentation of what it is actually doing. See comment at the end.*

Here are some of the provisions in the Venezuelan Constitution

RIGHT TO HEALTH

Article 83: Health is a fundamental social right and the responsibility of the State, which shall guarantee it as part of the right to life. The State shall promote and develop policies oriented toward improving the quality of life, common welfare and access to services. All persons have the right to protection of health, as well as the duty to participate actively in the furtherance and protection of the same, and to comply with such health and hygiene measures as may be established by law, and in accordance with international conventions and treaties signed and ratified by the Republic.

Article 84: In order to guarantee the right to health, the State creates, exercises guidance over and administers a national public health system that crosses sector boundaries, and is decentralized and participatory in nature, integrated with the social security system and governed by the principles of gratuity, universality, completeness, fairness, social integration and solidarity. The public health system gives priority to promoting health and preventing disease, guaranteeing prompt treatment and quality rehabilitation. Public health assets and services are the property of the State and shall not be privatized. The organized community has the right and duty to participate in the making of decisions

concerning policy planning, implementation and control at public health institutions.

Article 85: Financing of the public health system is the responsibility of the State, which shall integrate the revenue resources, mandatory Social Security contributions and any other sources of financing provided for by law. The State guarantees a health budget such as to make possible the attainment of health policy objectives. In coordination with universities and research centers, a national professional and technical training policy and a national industry to produce health care supplies shall be promoted and developed. The State shall regulate both public and private health care institutions. Article 86: All persons are entitled to Social Security as a non-profit public service to guarantee health and protection in contingencies of maternity, fatherhood, illness, invalidity, catastrophic illness, disability, special needs, occupational risks, loss of employment, unemployment, old age, widowhood, loss of parents, housing, burdens deriving from family life, and any other social welfare circumstances. The State has the obligation and responsibility of ensuring the efficacy of this right, creating a universal and complete Social Security system, with joint, unitary, efficient and participatory financing from direct and indirect contributions. The lack of ability to contribute shall not be ground for excluding persons from protection by the system. Social Security financial resources shall not be used for other purposes. The mandatory assessments paid by employees to cover medical and health care services and other Social Security benefits shall be administered only for social purposes, under the guidance of the State. Any net remaining balances of capital allocated to health, education and Social Security shall be accumulated for distribution and contribution to those services. The Social Security system shall be ruled by a special organic law.

LABOUR RIGHTS

- (2) Labor rights are unrenounceable; any action, agreement or convention involving a waiver of or encroachment upon these rights is null and void. Concessions and settlements are possible only at the end of the employment relationship, in accordance with the requirements established by law.
- (3) When there are doubts concerning application or conflicts among several rules, or in the interpretation of a particular rule, that most favorable to the worker shall be applied. The rule applied must be applied in its entirety.
- (4) Any measure or act on the part of an employer in violation of this Constitution is null and void, and of no effect.
- (5) All types of discrimination because of political reasons, age, race, creed, sex or any other characteristic is prohibited.

Article 91: Every worker* has the right to a salary sufficient to enable him or her to live with dignity and cover basic material, social and intellectual needs for himself or herself and his or her family. The payment of equal salary for equal work is guaranteed, and the share of the profits of a business enterprise to which workers are entitled shall be determined. Salary is not subject to garnishment, and shall be paid periodically and promptly in legal tender, with the exception of the food allowance, in accordance with law. The State guarantees workers* in both the public and the private sector a vital minimum salary which shall be adjusted each year, taking as one of the references the cost of a basic market basket. The form and procedure to be followed, shall be established by law.

Article 92: All workers* have the right to benefits to compensate them for length of service and protect them in the event of dismissal. Salary and benefits are labor obligations due and payable immediately upon accrual. Any delay in payment of the same shall bear interest, which constitutes a debt certain and shall enjoy the same privileges and guarantees as the principal debt.

Article 93: Stable employment shall be guaranteed by law, with provisions as appropriate to restrict any form of unjustified dismissal. Dismissals contrary to this Constitution is null and void.

Article 96: All employees* in both public and the private sector have the right to voluntary collective bargaining and to enter into collective bargaining agreements, subject only to such restrictions as may be established by law.

Article 97: All workers in the public and private sector have the right to strike, subject to such conditions as may be established by law.[note some members of the harper government claimed that there was no right to strike in Canada

RIGHT TO EDUCATION

Article 102: Education is a human right and a fundamental social duty; it is democratic, free of charge and obligatory. The State assumes responsibility for it as an irrevocable function of the greatest interest, at all levels and in all modes, as an instrument of scientific, humanistic and technical knowledge at the service of society. Education, is a public service, and is grounded on the respect for all currents of thought, to the end of developing the creative potential of every human being and the full exercise of his or her personality in a democratic society based on the work ethic value and on active, conscious and joint participation in the processes of social transformation embodied in the values which are part of the national identity, and with a Latin American and universal vision. The State, with the participation of families and society, promotes the process of civic education in accordance with the principles contained in this Constitution

and in the laws.

Article 103: Every person has the right to a full, high-quality, ongoing education under conditions and circumstances of equality, subject only to such limitations as derive from such persons own aptitudes, vocation and aspirations. Education is obligatory at all levels from maternal to the diversified secondary level. Education offered at State institutions is free of charge up to the undergraduate university level. To this end, the State shall make a priority investment in accordance with United Nations recommendations. The State shall create and sustain institutions and services sufficiently equipped to ensure the admission process, ongoing education and program completion in the education system. The law shall guarantee equal attention to persons with special needs or disabilities, and to those who have been deprived of liberty or do not meet the basic conditions for admission to and continuing enrollment in the education system. The contributions of private individuals to public education programs at the secondary and university levels shall be tax deductible in accordance with the pertinent law.

Article 112: All persons may devote themselves freely to the economic activity of their choice, subject only to the limitations provided for in this Constitution and those established by law for reasons of human development, security, health, environmental protection or other reasons in the social interest

ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS

Article 127: It is the right and duty of each generation to protect and maintain the environment for its own benefit and that of the world of the future. Everyone has the right, individually and collectively, to enjoy a safe, healthful and ecologically balanced life and environment. The State shall protect the environment, biological and genetic diversity, ecological processes, national parks and natural monuments, and other areas of particular ecological importance. The genome of a living being shall not be patentable, and the field shall be regulated by the law relating to the principles of bioethics. It is a fundamental duty of the State, with the active participation of society, to ensure that the populace develops in a pollution-free environment in which air, water, soil, coasts, climate, the ozone layer and living species receive special protection, in accordance with law.

Article 128: The State shall develop a zoning policy taking into account ecological, geographic, demographic, social, cultural, economic and political realities, in accordance with the premises of sustainable development, including information, consultation and male/female participation by citizens. An organic law shall develop the principles and criteria for this zoning.

Article 129: Any activities capable of generating damage to ecosystems must be preceded by environmental and socio-cultural impact studies. The State shall prevent

toxic and hazardous waste from entering the country, as well as preventing the manufacture and use of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. A special law shall regulate the use, handling, transportation and storage of toxic and hazardous substances. In contracts into which the ecological balance, to permit access to, and the transfer of technology on mutually agreed terms and to restore the environment to its natural state if the latter is altered, shall be deemed included even if not expressed, on such terms as may be established by law. Republic enters with natural or juridical persons of Venezuelan or foreign nationality, or in any permits granted which involve natural resources, the obligation to preserve the environment

Article 153: The Republic shall promote, and encourage Latin American and Caribbean integration, in the interest of advancing toward the creation of a community of nations, defending the region's economic, social, cultural, political and environmental interests. The Republic shall have the power to sign international treaties that implement and coordinate efforts to promote the common development of our nations, and to ensure the welfare of their peoples and the collective security of their inhabitants. To these ends, the Republic may transfer to supranational organizations, through treaties, the exercise of the necessary authorities to carry out these integration processes. In its policies of integration and union with Latin America and the Caribbean, the Republic shall give privileged status to relations with Bier American countries, striving to make this a common policy throughout our Latin America. Provisions adopted within the framework of integration agreements shall be regarded as an integral part of the legal order in force, and shall be applicable directly and with priority over internal legislation.

RIGHT TO FOOD

Article 305: The State shall promote sustainable agriculture as the strategic basis for overall rural development, and consequently shall guarantee the population a secure food supply, defined as the sufficient and stable availability of food within the national sphere and timely and uninterrupted access to the same for consumers. A secure food supply must be achieved by developing and prioritizing internal agricultural and livestock production, understood as production deriving from the activities of agriculture, livestock, fishing and aquiculture. Food production is in the national interest and is fundamental to the economic and social development of the Nation. To this end, the State shall promulgate such financial, commercial, technological transfer, land tenancy, infrastructure, manpower training and other measures as may be necessary to achieve strategic levels of self-sufficiency. In addition, it shall promote actions in the national and international economic context to compensate for the disadvantages inherent to agricultural activity. The State shall protect the settlement and communities of non-industrialized fishermen*, as well as their fishing banks in continental waters and those close to the coastline, as defined by law.

The NGO UN Watch targets specific states and ignores the failings of other states.

Joan Russow – Global Compliance Research Project.

Caracas published May 18 2012 republished September 9, 2012

The Group UN Watch describes itself as an independent international NGOs. It does, however, appear that it targets primarily socialist states such as Venezuela and states that are critical of Israel. Currently it has lobbied 20 states to oppose Venezuela' bid to be a member of the UN Human Rights Council. Is the name UN Watch legitimate if it watches only some states and some instruments?. One is left with the question "whose interests is it serving? If it serves special state interests, would UN Watch not lack credibility and legitimacy?.

I think that the name UN Watch misrepresents what the group is doing. It is not watching all states and their compliance with UN instruments. The group is targeting socialist states, and any state that appears to say anything against against Israel.

Has the group lobbied against Israel and others for not ratifying the Non Proliferation Treaty?

Has the group lobbied against states that refuse to support a nuclear free Middle East

Has the group lobbied against the US, Israel and others for not respecting the jurisdiction and decisions of the International Court of Justice?

Has the group lobbied against the US and other states for not ratifying the Convention Against All forms of Discrimination against Women?

Has the group lobbied against the US and other states for failing to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child?

Has the group lobbied against the US and other States for failing to ratify the International Covenant on Social Economic and Cultural Rights? And its protocol

Has the group lobbied against the use by some states, such as the US and Israel of the pre-emptive strike in violation of the Charter of the United Nations as being the egregious crime of aggression

Has the group lobbied against the states such as the US and others, misinterpreting Article 51-the right of self-defence of the Charter of

the United Nations to justify an illegal act of aggression against another state?

Has the group lobbied against states that have produced weapons that would be prohibited under the Geneva Protocol I – V

Has the group lobbied against states like the US and Canada for not ratifying or for withdrawing from the Kyoto Protocol and for not reducing sufficiently greenhouse gas emissions as required under art. 2 of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

Has it lobbied against states, such as the US, Canada and other NATO states that violate the Convention Against Torture

Has the group lobbied against states like Israel and the United States that have the death penalty in defiance of the Optional Protocol II of the ICCPR

Has the group lobbied to block states like the US and Canada, that have refused to ratify the Convention on the rights of migrant workers and their families

Has the group lobbied against states like the US and Canada that have failed to guarantee the rights of indigenous peoples

Has the group lobbied against states such as the US and Canada for passing the Homeland security act and the Anti-terrorism act, respectively, which violate certain sections of the International Covenant of Civil and political Rights

Has the group lobbied against states, like Canada, US and others that deprive a people of its subsistence, in violation of article 2 of the International covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Has the group lobbied against Canada and the new refugee proposal to treat refugees from so-called “safe” states differently than those from so-called “unsafe” states in violation of section 2 of the UN Convention on Refugees.

Has the group lobbied to block states like the United States and Canada for failing to ratify most of the International Labour Organization conventions related to labour rights

Has the group lobbied to block the US for failing to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child

Does the group ever question the provocative nature of the US military bases, including 7 in Colombia near the border of Venezuela.

Does the group note that Israel has not ratified the NPT and that it is the only state in the middle East with nuclear weapons, and that the US, Canada and Israel all oppose the UN Declaration calling for a nuclear free middle East

Last Updated on Wednesday, 06 March 2013 10:17

25 readings

“Homeland Security” The Trillion-Dollar Concept That No One Can Define



Peace News

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 28 February 2013 06:12

By [Mattea Kramer](#) and [Chris Hellman](#)

<http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175655/Imagine> a labyrinthine government department so bloated that few have any clear idea of just what its countless pieces do. Imagine that tens of billions of tax dollars are disappearing into it annually, black hole-style, since it can't pass a congressionally mandated audit.

Now, imagine that there are two such departments, both gigantic, and you're beginning to grasp the new, twenty-first century American security paradigm.

For decades, the Department of Defense has met this definition to a T. Since 2003, however, it hasn't been alone. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which celebrates its 10th birthday this March, has grown into a miniature Pentagon. It's supposed to be the actual “defense” department -- since the Pentagon is essentially a Department of Offense -- and it's rife with all the same issues and defects that critics of the military-industrial complex have decried for decades. In other words, “homeland security” has become another obese boondoggle.

But here's the strange thing: unlike the Pentagon, this monstrosity draws no attention whatsoever -- even though, by our calculations, this country has spent a jaw-dropping \$791 billion on "homeland security" since 9/11. To give you a sense of just how big that is, Washington spent an inflation-adjusted \$500 billion on the entire [New Deal](#).

Despite sucking up a sum of money that could have rebuilt crumbling infrastructure from coast to coast, this new agency and the very concept of "homeland security" have largely flown beneath the media radar -- with disastrous results.

And that's really no surprise, given how the DHS came into existence.

A few months before 9/11, Congress issued a national security [report](#) acknowledging that U.S. defense policy had not evolved to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. The report recommended a "national homeland security agency" with a single leader to oversee homeland security-style initiatives across the full range of the federal government. Although the report warned that a terrorist attack could take place on American soil, it collected dust.

Then the attack came, and lawmakers of both political parties and the American public wanted swift, decisive action. President George W. Bush's top officials and advisers saw in 9/11 their main chance to [knock off](#) Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein and establish a Pax Americana in the Greater Middle East. Others, who generally called themselves champions of small government, saw an opportunity to expand big government at home by increasing security spending.

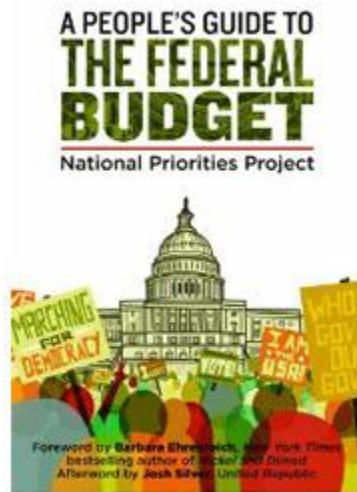
Their decision to combine domestic security under one agency turned out to be like sending the Titanic into the nearest field of icebergs.

President Bush first created an Office of Homeland Security in the White House and then, with the [Homeland Security Act of 2002](#), laid plans for a new executive department. The DHS was funded with billions of dollars and staffed with 180,000 federal employees when it opened for business on March 1, 2003. It qualified as the largest reorganization of

the federal government since 1947 when, fittingly, the Department of Defense was established.

Announcing plans for this new branch of government, President Bush made a little-known declaration of “mission accomplished ” that long preceded that **infamous banner** strung up on an aircraft carrier to celebrate his “victory ” in Iraq. In November 2002, **he said**, “ The continuing threat of terrorism, the threat of mass murder on our own soil, will be met with a unified, effective response. ”

Mission unaccomplished (big time).



Buy the book

A decade later, a close look at the hodge-podge of homeland security programs that now spans the U.S. government reveals that there ’ s nothing “unified ” about it. Not all homeland security programs are managed through the Department of Homeland Security, nor are all programs at the Department of Homeland Security related to securing the homeland.

Federal officials **created the DHS** by pulling together 22 existing government departments, including stand-alone agencies like the Federal Emergency Management Agency, better known by its acronym FEMA, and the Coast Guard, which came with programs both related and unrelated to counterterrorism. They also brought into the DHS a host of programs that had previously existed as parts of other

agencies like the Nuclear Incident Response Team from the Department of Energy and the Transportation Security Administration at the Department of Transportation. To knit these disparate parts together, officials built a mammoth bureaucracy over an already existing set of bureaucracies. At the same time, they left a host of counterterrorism programs scattered across the rest of the federal government, which means, a decade later, many activities at the DHS are duplicated by similar programs elsewhere.

A trail of breadcrumbs in federal [budget documents](#) shows how much is spent on homeland security and by which agencies, though details about what that money is buying are scarce. The DHS budget was \$60 billion last year. However, only \$35 billion was designated for counterterrorism programs of various sorts. In the meantime, total federal funding for (small-h, small-s) homeland security was \$68 billion -- a number that, in addition to the DHS money, includes \$17 billion for the Department of Defense, plus around \$4 billion each for the Departments of Justice and Health and Human Services, with the last few billion scattered across virtually every other federal agency in existence.

From the time this new security bureaucracy rumbled into operation, the Government Accountability Office (GAO), Washington's internal watchdog, called the DHS a "[high risk](#)" proposition. And it's never changed its tune. Regular GAO reports scrutinize the department and identify major problems. In March of last year, for instance, one GAO report [noted](#) that the office had recommended a total of 1,600 changes. At that time, the department had only "addressed about half of them" -- and addressed doesn't necessarily mean solved.

So rest assured, in the best of all possible homeland security worlds, there are only 800-odd issues outstanding, according to the government's own watchdog, after we as a nation poured \$791 billion down the homeland security rabbit hole. Indeed, there remain gaping problems in the very areas that the DHS is supposedly securing on our behalf:

* Consider port security: you wouldn't have much trouble overnighting a weapon of mass destruction into the United

States. Cargo terminals are the entry point for containers from all over the world, and a series of reports have found myriad vulnerabilities -- including **gaps** in screening for nuclear and radiological materials. After spending \$200 million on new screening technology, the DHS determined it wouldn't deliver sufficient improvements and cancelled the program (but not the cost to you, the taxpayer).

* Then there are the problems of screening people crossing into this country. The lion's share of responsibility for border security lies with part of the DHS, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), which had an \$11.7 billion budget in fiscal 2012. But in the land of utter duplication that is Washington's version of counterterrorism, there is also something called the Border Security Program at the State Department, with a separate pot of funding to the tune of \$2.2 billion last year. The **jury's out** on whether these programs are faintly doing their jobs, even as they themselves define them. As with so many other DHS programs, the one thing they are doing successfully is closing and **locking down** what was once considered an "open" society.

* For around \$14 billion each year, the Department of Homeland Security handles disaster response and recovery through FEMA, something that's meant to encompass preparedness for man-made as well as natural disasters. But a 2012 investigation by the GAO **found** that FEMA employs an outdated method of assessing a disaster-struck region's ability to respond and recover without federal intervention -- helpfully, that report came out just a month before **Hurricane Sandy**.

* Recently, **it came to light** that the DHS had spent \$431 million on a radio system for communication within the department -- but only one of more than 400 employees questioned about the system claimed to have the slightest idea how to use it. It's never surprising to hear that officials at separate agencies have trouble coordinating, but this was an indication that, even within the DHS, employees struggle with the basics of communication.

* In a survey that covered all federal departments, DHS employees reported rock-bottom levels of **engagement** with

their work. Its own workers called the DHS the **worst** federal agency to work for.

Those are just a few of a multitude of glaring problems inside the now decade-old department. Because homeland security is not confined to one agency, however, rest assured that neither is its bungling:

* There is, for instance, that \$17 billion in homeland security funding at the Department of Defense -- a mountain of cash for defending against terrorist attacks, protecting U.S. airspace, and providing security at military bases. But perhaps defense officials feel that \$17 billion is insufficient, since an October 2012 **report** by the GAO found the Pentagon had outdated and incomplete plans for responding to a domestic attack, including confusion about the chain of command should such an event take place. That should be no surprise, though: the Pentagon is so replete with **oversight problems** and obsolete, astronomically expensive programs that it makes the DHS look like a trim, well-oiled machine.

* Or consider the domestic counterterrorism unit at the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), which enjoyed \$461 million in homeland security funding last year and is housed not at the DHS or the Pentagon but at the Department of Justice. ATF **made headlines** for giving marked firearms to Mexican smugglers and losing track of them -- and then finding that the weapons were used in heinous crimes. More recently, in the wake of the Newtown massacre, ATF has drawn attention because it fails one of the most obvious tests of oversight and responsibility: it lacks a confirmed director at the helm of its operations. (According to The Hill newspaper, Sen. Charles Grassley (R-IA) is currently **holding up** President Obama's appointment to head the agency.)

Washington has poured staggering billions into securing the so-called homeland, but in so many of the areas meant to be secured there remain glaring holes the size of that gaping wound in the Titanic's side. And yet over the past decade -- even with these problems -- terrorist attacks on the homeland have scarcely hurt a soul. That may offer a clue into just how misplaced the very notion of the Department of

Homeland Security was in the first place. In the wake of 9/11, pouring tiny percentages of that DHS money into less flashy safety issues, from [death by food](#) to [death by gun](#) to [death by car](#), to mention just three, might have made Americans genuinely safer at, by comparison, minimal cost.

Perhaps the strangest part of homeland security operations may be this: there is [no agreed-upon definition](#) for just what homeland security is. The funds Washington has poured into the concept will soon enough approach a trillion dollars and yet it's a concept with no clear boundaries that no one can agree on. Worse yet, few are asking the hard questions about what security we actually need or how best to achieve it. Instead, Washington has built a sprawling bureaucracy riddled with problems and set it on autopilot.

And that brings us to today. Budget cuts are in the pipeline for most federal programs, but many lawmakers vocally oppose any reductions in security funding. What's painfully clear is this: the mere fact that a program is given the label of national or homeland security does not mean that its downsizing would compromise American safety. Overwhelming evidence of [waste](#), [duplication](#), and poor management suggests that Washington could spend far less on security, target it better, and be so much safer.

Meanwhile, the same [report](#) that warned in early 2001 of a terrorist attack on U.S. soil also recommended redoubling funding for education in science and technology.

In the current budget-cutting fever, the urge to protect boundless funding for national security programs by [dismantling investment](#) essential to this country's greatness -- including world-class education and infrastructure systems -- is bound to be powerful. So whenever you hear the phrase "homeland security," watch out: your long-term safety may be at risk.

Mattea Kramer is research director at [National Priorities Project](#), where Chris Hellman is senior research analyst. Both are [TomDispatch](#) regulars. They co-authored the book [A People's Guide to the Federal Budget](#).

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Changing Face of Empire: Special Ops, Drones, Proxy Fighters, Secret Bases, and Cyberwarfare.

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22 readings

Turkey's Difficult Choice in Palestine, Israel



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 27 February 2013 15:46

By Ramzy Baroud

An Israeli-Turkish rapprochement is unmistakably underway, but unlike the heyday of their political alignment of the 1990's, the revamped relationship is likely to be more guarded and will pose a greater challenge to Turkey rather than to Israel.

Israeli media referenced a report by Turkish newspaper Radikal with much interest, regarding secret talks between Turkey and Israel that could yield an Israeli apology for its army's raid against the Turkish aid flotilla, the Mavi Marmara, which was on its way to Gaza in May 2010. The assault resulted in the death of 9 Turkish activists, including a US citizen.

The attack wrought a crisis unseen since the rise of the Turkish-Israeli alliance starting in 1984, followed by a full blown strategic partnership in 1996. But that crisis didn't necessarily start at the Mavi Marmara deadly attack, or previous Israeli insults of Turkey. Nor did it begin with the Israeli so-called Operation Cast Lead against besieged Gaza in Dec 2008, which resulted in the death and wounding of thousands of Palestinians, mostly civilians.

According to the Radikal report (published in Feb 20 and cited by Israeli Haaretz two days later), Israel is willing to meet two of Turkey's conditions for the resumption of full ties: an apology, and compensation to the families of the victims. "Turkey has also demanded Israel lift the siege," on Gaza, Haaretz reported, citing Radikal, "but is prepared to drop that demand."

The reports of secret talks are not new. Similar reports had surfaced of talks in Geneva and Cairo. Turkish-Israeli reconciliation has, at least for a while, been an important item on the US foreign policy agenda in the Middle East, until few months ago when the US elections pushed everything else to the backseat. But despite fiery rhetoric, the signs of a thawing conflict are obvious. Writing in Al-Ahram Weekly on Jan. 16, Galal Nassar attributed that Tel Aviv is working "its idiosyncratic ways to patch up what it regarded as a passing storm cloud in its relations with its friend, and perhaps strategic ally." Turkey, responded in kind, in its decision "to lift its veto against Israeli participation in non-military activities in NATO."

Leaked news of a political settlement are not the only headlines related to this topic. There

is also the matter of military and economic cooperation, which are even more common. According to FlightGlobal.com, reporting on Feb. 21, the Israeli government has agreed to the delivery of electronic support measures (ESM) equipment "to be installed on the Turkish air force's new Boeing 737 airborne early warning and control (AEW&C;) system aircraft."

Meanwhile, a large Turkish conglomerate Zorlu Group "has been working in recent months to convince the Israeli government and the Leviathan gas field partners to approve energy exports to Turkey," TheMarker has learned, as reported in Haaretz on Feb 14.

This is only the tip of the iceberg. If these reports are even partially credible, Turkish-Israeli relations are being carefully, but decidedly repaired. This stands in contrast with declared Turkish foreign policy and the many passionate statements by Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and other leading Turkish politicians.

Following a Nov 16 Friday prayer, The New York Times reported from Istanbul that Erdogan denied any talks between his country and Israel regarding resolving a crisis instigated by another Israeli assault on Gaza. He went even further, "We do not have any connections in terms of dialogue with Israel," he reportedly said. At a parliamentary meeting few days later, he described Israel's conduct in Gaza as "ethnic cleansing."

On Nov 20, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu was in Gaza on a solidarity visit, along with an Arab League delegation in an unprecedented show of solidarity. In a strange contrast with the spirit of his mission, however, "Davutoglu suggested to reporters that back-channel discussions had been opened with Israeli authorities," according to the Times.

But why the contradictions, the apparent Turkish turnabout and if full rapprochement is in fact achieved, will the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) be able to sustain its still successful brand in the Middle East that was largely achieved as a result of its pro-Palestinian policies?

Here, we must get something straight; the strong and growing pro-Palestinian sentiment in Turkey is not the outcome of self-serving political agenda, neither of the AKP nor of any other. The support for Palestinians was most apparent in the June 2011 elections, which was convincingly won by the Erdogan party. "Turks voted on two 'p's' -- their pocketbooks and Palestine," Steven A. Cook wrote in the Atlantic on Jan 28. "Erdogan, who plans to be Turkey's president one day and who believes that the AKP will be dominant for at least another decade, is unlikely to be receptive to a substantial improvement in Ankara's ties with Jerusalem." If the centrality of Palestine is so essential to Turkish political awareness, then no ambitious politician – for example, Erdogan, Davutoglu or President Abdullah Gül - are likely to gamble with a major departure from their current policies.

That might be entirely true if one discounts the Syria factor, which along with the so-called Arab Spring has complicated Turkey's regional standing that until two years ago was predicated on reaching out to Iran, Syria, Libya and other Middle Eastern partners. For years prior to the current turmoil, Turkey had cautiously yet cogently adopted a new foreign policy that aimed at balancing out its near total reliance on NATO and the West in general. It

mended its ties with its immediate neighbors in the East, including Iran, but polarization created by the Syria civil war has ended Turkey's balancing act, at least for the time being.

Turkey's request for the deployment of Patriot missile batteries along its border with Syria, its role in supporting the Syria National Council and its attempt at coaxing various Kurdish groups in northern Iraq and Syria are all proving consistent with old Turkish policies. Indeed, Davutoglu's zero-problems with neighbors doctrine is but a historical footnote.

The Syrian war has placed Turkey back within a Western camp, although not with the same decisiveness of the past, when Turkey's generals discounted all other alliances in favor of NATO's. This is representing an opening for Israel, which with the support of US President Barack Obama's new administration is likely to translate to some measures of normalization. The degree of that normalization will depend largely on which direction the Syrian civil war is heading and the degree of receptiveness on Turkish streets in seeing Israel once more paraded as Turkey's strategic partner.

Some commentators suggest that Egypt's own foreign policy towards Israel – Egypt currently being the main country in the Middle East with the 'leverage' of talking to both Israel and the Palestinians – is depriving Turkey from a strong bargaining position within NATO. By having no open contacts with Israel, some suggest Turkey is losing favor with the US and other western partners. Interestingly, Israel's planned apology, according to Radikal, is supposedly timed with Obama's visit to Israel in March.

Neither Turkey and Israel, nor the US and NATO are able to sustain the status quo – the rift between Israel and Turkey – for much longer. But returning to an old paradigm, where Turkey is no longer an advocate of Palestinian rights and a champion of Arab and Muslim causes, could prove even more costly. There can be no easy answers, especially as the region seems to be changing partly through unpredictable dynamics.

Erdogan and his party may eventually concoct an answer. This could include Israel and a new set of balances that would allow them access to both East and West. But that answer would no longer be the upright, high-minding politics Erdogan constantly advocates, but instead good old self-serving policies and nothing else.

- Ramzy Baroud (www.ramzybaroud.net) is an internationally-syndicated columnist and the editor of PalestineChronicle.com. His latest book is: My Father was A Freedom Fighter: Gaza's Untold Story (Pluto Press).

Last Updated on Wednesday, 27 February 2013 15:48

24 readings

Haitian Senate Calls for Halt to Mining



Activities

Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 27 February 2013 07:01

By Jane Regan



Map showing location of Morne Bossa property (VCS / Société Minière Delta). Credit: VCS website

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Feb 24 2013 (IPS) - Outraged that they have not been consulted, this week Haitian senators called for a moratorium on all activities connected with recently granted gold and copper mining permits.

In a resolution approved by 15 of 16 senators present, the lawmakers also demanded the establishment of a commission to review all of the current mining contracts and "a national debate on the country's mineral resources".

For a country with a weak state, the royalty is the safest place to get your money. Anything under five percent is just really ludicrous.

The resolution – voted Wednesday in reaction to three new gold and copper mining permits issued late last year by the government – decried "the genocide that accompanied the pillage of our mineral resources in the 15th century", "the waste of resources... since the January 12, 2010 earthquake", the foreign mining experiences of the 20th century which caused "trauma", and "the incapacity of our country to calmly undertake negotiations related to its mineral resources in a context of political disequilibrium".

News of the permits first caused an uproar in January. Journalists, experts and politicians speculated on what Haiti had lost or would gain, and accused the state mining agency (the Bureau des Mines et d'Énergie

– BME) of granting “illegal” contracts.

Parliamentary protest

The senators say that the three new permits violate the Haitian Constitution because they are based on 1997 conventions that were never approved by the parliament.

Related IPS Articles

- [Haiti’s “Gold Rush” Promises El Dorado – But for Whom?](#)
- [PERU: Weak Environmental Impact Studies for Mines](#)

The Constitution says that the parliament must “approve or reject international treaties and conventions” (Art. 98-3). According to attorney Mario Joseph, director of the Office of International Lawyers, “The conventions are illegal, because the parliament did not ratify them.”

At a special hearing on Jan. 22, senators accused BME director Ludner Remarais of subverting the law.

“In 20 years the parliament has never ratified any mining conventions,” Senator Steven Benoit (West) thundered, while Senator Andris Riché (Grande Anse) shouted: “We must not accept wacky contracts that seek to bury the people.”*

“I am sorry the Senate was never contacted,” Remarais responded, tears in his eyes.

However, the conventions are not “international” because they concern the government and companies that – at least on paper – are Haitian. The BME’s former director, Dieuseul Anglade, maintains that the conventions are not “illegal” because the government decided to sign and publish them as decrees, i.e., without ratification.

“Decrees have the same authority as laws. If someone wants to be a demagogue or make political hay, he can call the conventions ‘illegal,’ but they are legal,” Anglade told IPS in a telephone interview on Feb. 6, 2013.

Morne Bossa Neighbours Nervous

Cadouche, HAITI, 21 February 2013 – The population of Cadouche, a small village about 12 kilometres south of Cap-Haitien in Haiti’s North department, is nervous about three new mining exploitation permits granted last December in an opaque and secretive process.

Located near the Morne Bossa deposit, the Cadouche economy is based mostly on agriculture. Families work day and night to take care of their needs. And they ask themselves if they are invisible to the authorities in Haiti’s capital.

Recently, over a hundred people living in Cardouche met to learn more about the mining industry. One after another, they asked questions and expressed their frustrations.

“Until today, not one single member of the government or of the company has consulted the population to hear our complaints or ask for our agreement to the mining of the Morne Bossa deposits,” said Mezadiou Toussaint, a teacher and farmer in his fifties. “If the mine benefits the population, that would be wonderful. But we are worried that it will poison our environment.”

Steno Chute, a member of the Democratic Movement for the Development of Quartier-Morin (Federation du mouvement démocratique pour le développement de Quartier-Morin - Femodeq) who grows corn, beans and sorghum, said he is afraid of mining.

“Mining can have disastrous consequences,” he told the crowd. “We are really anxious and nervous. The water and environment will be polluted.”

“The [Jean-Bertrand] Aristide, Préval and [Michel] Martelly governments are opening up the country to pillagers in the name of the untouchable neoliberal plan, without thinking of the devastating consequences,” noted farmer Francisco Almonord, bitterly.

Teacher and farmer Toussaint said he did not know where to turn: "Against whom should we fight? The Haitian government or VCS?"

New permits not really "new"

The three "new" permits – for mining deposits in Morne Bossa, Douvray and "Faille B" in Haiti's North and Northeast departments – are not new. They are the conversion of permits for "exploration" into permits for "exploitation".

They were originally granted in 1997 by the René Prével government via two mining conventions with two Haitian companies – St. Genevieve S.A. and Société Minière Citadelle S.A. Because they were sold or they changed their names, today the conventions are held by two small firms, also ostensibly Haitian: Société Minière Delta and Société Minière du Nord-Est SA (SOMINE S.A.).

But in both cases, the power rests overseas, in the hands of foreign companies and shareholders.

The Société Minière Delta is the property of VCS Mining, a small U.S. private company registered in the state of Delaware, infamous for its laws which permit firms to hide their profits, keep their operations secret and pay minimal taxes.

SOMINE S.A. is a subsidiary of the Canadian mining company Majescor which says it specialises in "emerging" regions. Last month, Majescor offered for sale over two million dollars worth of shares for "the SOMINE project." Majescor says it controls SOMINE because it controls a company called SIMACT Alliance Copper-Gold Inc., which in turn controls the majority of SOMINE shares.

The three mining permits are the most advanced of the dozens of permits for one-third of Haiti's north (about 2,500 square kilometers) handed out in recent years and will convert into concessions once the companies start mining.

VCS Mining, the company working in Morne Bossa, maintains that it has followed Haitian law from the beginning. Last year, VCS submitted the required "feasibility study" for the site, which maps out the steps they will take in order to prepare for mining, and it was finally accepted by the BME in November, a representative told IPS in a telephone interview.

The spokesman – who asked not to be identified by name because his company has decided to keep a low profile until the resolution of the BME-Senate conflict – insisted, "We have done the work as required by law. The permits are legal."

The VCS representative also said that his company has invested over four million dollars in the Morne Bossa site so far, and that since gold was first discovered by U.N. geologists in the late 1970s, "over 38 million (dollars) has been spent."

Now what?

Seeking verification and clarification, IPS requested an interview with BME director Ludner Remarais. The interview was three times promised, and then denied. IPS wanted to confirm what VCS said, to ask for a copy of the feasibility studies and also to ask about the illegality of the original conventions.

IPS also wanted to ask Remarais about the very low royalties in the two mining conventions. Both award the Haitian state only 2.5 percent of the value of the minerals extracted – a number that is "really low," according to mining royalties expert Claire Kumar.

"Anything under five percent is just really ludicrous for a country like Haiti. You shouldn't even consider it. For a country with a weak state, the royalty is the safest place to get your money," Kumar told IPS in 2012.

According to Haitian mining law, the financial agreements in a convention can be "revised", but so far, no government official has mentioned the possibility.

The other major concerns are lack of transparency, and the lack of participation from and benefits to local communities. **See Sidebar: Morne Bossa Neighbours Nervous**

The Feb. 20 Senate resolution cannot legally block mining activities, but it will undoubtedly cause the BME and the government to pause, according to Eddy Laguerre, a lawyer and also a member of the editorial staff at the Haitian weekly Le Matin.

"When the Senate votes a resolution, the executive needs to be careful," Laguerre told IPS in a telephone interview. "If the resolution is not respected, the Senate can find ways to punish the executive, and can even punish it politically by calling for a change in government."

*This story was produced in collaboration with [Haiti Grassroots Watch](#). For more information, see Haiti

Grassroots Watch series "**Gold Rush in Haiti!**"

Haiti Grassroots Watch is a partnership of **AlterPresse**, the **Society of the Animation of Social Communication** (SAKS), the Network of Women Community Radio Broadcasters (REFRAKA), community radio stations from the Association of Haitian Community Media and students from the Journalism Laboratory at the State University of Haiti.

- See more at: <http://www.ipsnews.net/2013/02/haitian-senate-calls-for-halt-to-mining-activities/#sthash.muJEwxPN.dpuf>

Last Updated on Wednesday, 27 February 2013 07:03

24 readings

WikiLeaks reveals imperialist plots against Venezuela



Peace News

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 26 February 2013 21:53

Sunday, February 24, 2013

By **Paul Dobson** <http://www.greenleft.org.au/node/53422>



WikiLeaks has published **over 40,000 secret documents regarding Venezuela**, which show the clear hand of US imperialism in efforts to topple popular and democratically elected leader Hugo Chavez.

The documents, which date from July 2004 to December 2011 and which were published through WikiLeaks twitter account @wikileaks and which are now available on **WikiLeaks Global Intelligence Files online**, are based on emails taken from the private US-based intelligence company, Stratfor.

This company claims to provide analysis for multinational corporations looking to invest in Venezuela, and uses a number of local sources to develop their reports. However, their emails prove that their motives and objectives are far from independent, and they are working as an intelligence and strategy agency for those looking to develop suitable political conditions for economic imperialism, exploitation, and intervention in the country.

WikiLeaks describes Stratfor as "a company that fronts as an intelligence publisher, but provides confidential intelligence services to large corporations, such as Bhopal's Dow Chemical Co., Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, Raytheon and government agencies, including the US Department of Homeland Security, the US Marines and the US Defense Intelligence Agency".

"The emails", WikiLeaks goes on to explain, "show Stratfor's web of informers, pay-off structure, payment laundering techniques and psychological methods".

The leaked emails cover a range of issues, but concentrate on the energy sector, especially petrochemicals and oil; political change and the state of the counter-revolutionary forces; and the state of the military and armed forces. They also touch on Venezuela's relations with Cuba, China, Russia, and Iran, as well as providing bleak projections of the economy and future of the financial sector.

The firm's emails are listed with the addresses of the sender and receiver, as well as mentioning, amongst other things, the reliability of the source from which they take the information. One email, which exposes the political requisites for reliability, according to Stratfor, uses a source described as a "Venezuelan economist in Caracas" who is described as having "source reliability: B (solidly anti-Chavez)".

The emails mention meetings with, and biographies of, various prominent Venezuelan opposition leaders, such as Antonio Ledezma (Mayor of Caracas), Henrique Capriles, Leopoldo Lopez, as well as right wing media tycoon Rafael Poleo: "I spoke to Rafael Poleo [a very prominent Venezuelan political analyst] a couple of days ago" reports one source. Such naming's complete the link between anti-Chavez activities in Venezuela and imperialist ambitions in the country.

The emails to and from the Stratfor staff mention various political events during the period, but focus on the student protests of 2009-2010 when student based opposition sectors manipulated for political ends the power cuts brought about by the worst drought in 100 years which left the hydro-based energy system completely dried up. They also address the RCTV protests following the rejection of the application to renew the license of the right wing TV channel after they backed the 2002 coup d'état and publically called for the assignment of elected President Chavez.

The emails make frequent reference to a Serbia-based right wing policy group called CANVAS (Center for Applied Non Violent Action and Strategies). This group was integral in the NATO based actions that that overthrew the government in Yugoslavia, and makes frequent comparisons between Venezuela and Yugoslavia.

CANVAS, providing the analysis for the economic and political forces of imperialism, state in an email to Stratfor that "the RCTV protests were a taster. More is to come, but Venezuela does not offer as good of networks as those countries behind the (iron) curtain". They also make clear their objective and political tendencies based on past work by CANVAS: "Chavez is nothing compared to going against the old Soviet regimes".

There are numerous Word documents sent amongst the emails, many of which are classed as "not for publication" and which detail the steps recommended to enact a "revolution" which would see Hugo Chavez thrown out of power. One is indeed referred to as "a how-to guide for revolution". They go on to class Venezuelan people as "retarded" and who "talk out of their ass". The country is, according to CANVAS, "absolutely a joke".

CANVAS explains clearly their recommended strategy for toppling governments: "when somebody asks us for help, as in Vene case, we usually ask them the question 'and how would you do it'. That means that the first thing is to create a situational analysis (the word doc I sent you) and after that comes "Mission Statement" (still left to be done) and then "Operational Concept", which is the plan for campaign" explain CANVAS to Stratfor. "For this case we have three campaigns: unification of opposition, campaign for September elections and parallel with that a "get out and vote" campaign".

"In NORMAL circumstances" they go on to explain, "activists come to us and work in a workshop on exactly this sort of a format. We only guide them. This is why plans end up being so efficient later on, because the activist themselves created them and are absolutely theirs, i.e. authentic".

Referring to such destabilizing plans, such as the RCTV protests, CANVAS go on to state that "we only give them the tools to use".

Making reference to the opposition alliance of parties, they further state that "in Venezuela's case, because of the complete disaster that the place is, because of suspicion between opposition groups and disorganization, we have to do the initial analysis. Whether they go on to next steps really depends on them, in other words depends on whether they will become aware that because of a lack of UNITY they can lose the race before it has started".

"This year we are definitely ramping up activity in Venezuela" they write. Referring to the 2010 Parliamentary elections, they explain that "they have elections in September and we are in close connection with activists from there and people trying to help them (please keep this to yourself for now, no publication). The first phase of our preparation is under way".

The emails also leave the reader in no doubt about whom these people are helping the Venezuelan opposition activists: "to answer your question, the US networks are definitely involved. I cannot confirm for you if that specific gentleman is involved, but the usual establishments are".

Other documents address the security and crime issue, which Stratfor itself places amongst a list of issues which the opposition should use to maximize their electoral campaign in 2010. They claim that the "ONA (National drugs Office) is heavily involved in the kidnapping/extortion trade" and that murder rates "are

much higher than expected”.

Other emails contains various attached files which provide rundowns of the exact status of the Venezuelan army, air force and navy, including numbers, equipment, and expertise.

“(We) will be sending along more info soon on the whole rundown of how Chavez has revamped the military/security apparatus over the past several years” states the sender. “It's all scribbled on paper right now from my notes, but gotta say, I’m quite impressed with 'ol Hugo”.

The fully detailed documents explain that “the army’s reform has stretched beyond the procurement of new assault and sniper rifles and now comprises of a modernized doctrine too. New concepts include asymmetric warfare and reliance on the country’s communication and supply infrastructure as well as popular support to resist a large scale

- See more at: <http://www.greenleft.org.au/node/53422#sthash.eCrv8woV.dpuf>

Last Updated on Tuesday, 26 February 2013 22:02

317 readings

The HARPER GOVERNMENT HAS VIOLATED THE DOCTRINE OF LEGITIMATE EXPECTATION



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 26 February 2013 16:12

By Joan Russow- Global Compliance Research Project



Through multiple new legislation which dcontavenes international legal obligations, and which undermines statutory laws, the Harper government has violated the fundamental Doctrine of Common law: the Doctrine of Legitimate Expectation

This doctrine could be enunciated as follows, and contains the followin: elements:

- **Not breaking and undertaking as one pleases**
- **Compatibility with public duty**
- **Public interest may be better served by honouring**

their undertaking than by breaking it But that principle does not mean that a corporation can give an undertaking and break it as they please. So long as the performance of the undertaking is compatible with their public duty, they must honour it. And I should have thought that this undertaking was so compatible....The public interest may be better served;by honouring their undertaking than by breaking it.(Lord Denning, Central London Property Trust Ltd. v High

Trees House Ltd. [1947] KB 130, 594

- **Fulfilling the expectation must assist in performing rather than inhibit the performance of its statutory duties**

If I thought that the effect of granting to the applicants the relief sought was to prevent the council validly using those powers which Parliament has conferred on it, I would refuse relief. But that is not the present case. It seems to me the relief claimed will in the end, as counsel for the corporation ultimately conceded assist the council to perform rather than inhibit the performance of its statutory duties"

Lord Roskill Central London Property Trust Ltd. v High Trees House Ltd. [1947] KB 130, 596)

- **Expectation must be based upon statements or undertaking on behalf of the public authority which has the duty of making the decision**

The expectation may be based upon statement or undertaking by or on behalf of the public authority which has the duty of making the decision, if the authority has through its officers, acted in a way that would make it unfair or inconsistent with good administration for him to be denied such an inquiry (Lord Fraser, [1983] 2 All. ER 350)

- **Expectation is based on an assurance given by a Minister of the Crown as to the way in which discretionary power.. would be exercised.**

- **Assurance was given so as to induce this very expectation**

....it is upon an express assurance that the expectation is based: an assurance given by a Minister of the Crown as to the way in which the discretionary power conferred upon him by statute would be exercised. any fair reading... leads to the inference that assurance was given so as to induce this very expectation in the minds of...such as the Plaintiff, so that they might come forward and reveal to the authorities.. (Stephen j. [1977])14 A.I.R., 1, p 34), cited in Young, R. (1986). 'Legitimate Expectations'. The Advocate. 44 (6): 803-815)

- **Unfettered discretion is wholly inappropriate to a public authority which possess powers solely in order that it may use them for the public good**

The powers of public authorities are...essentially different from those of private persons.... But a public authority may do neither [examples of 'unfettered discretion'] unless it acts reasonably and in good faith and upon lawful and relevant grounds of public interest. Unfettered discretion is wholly inappropriate to a public authority which possess powers solely in order that it may use them for the public good ((H.W. R. Wade's Administrative Law, referred to by Mr. Justice Cook in (1983) 1 NZL R 646 cited in Young, R. (1986). 'Legitimate Expectations'. The Advocate. 44 (6): 803-815)

- **Expectation arising from Government holding itself out to do something**

- **Legitimate expectation that Government will discharge this obligation**

If a government holds itself out to do something even if not legally required to do so, the government will be expected to act

carefully and without negligence, and the citizens have a legitimate expectation that the government will discharge this obligation

- **Expectation that when public authorities establish procedures and publish policies they are bound to follow them**

Where public authorities establish procedures and publish policies, they are bound to follow them. The concept of legitimate expectations has extended the requirements of natural justice to situations where citizens may legitimately be expected to be treated fairly (Ombudsman office, personal communication)

There does not have to be a specific legal right or interest affected for the concept to apply. "Legitimate expectation" means 'reasonable expectation' and it can be invoked where fairness and good administration justify a right to be heard or some other substantial procedural right (ombudsman office, personal communication)

- **When an expectation is created there must be the ability to fulfill the promise it implies**

To create an expectation is an empty gesture without a promise to fulfill it. Before creating an expectation, an organization must assure itself of its ability to fulfill the promise it implies" (Introduction, Ombudsman Annual Report, British Columbia, Canada, 1991)

Under this doctrine, it could be argued that the statements enunciated in international instruments — legally binding documents (conventions, Treaties, Covenants); globally adopted Convention Platforms of Action, and Action plans, and majority-passed General Assembly Resolutions and Declarations — could all reflect "promises" that create an "expectation" that citizens can demand to be fulfilled (see further section and diagram on international customary law in Chapter 4).

Last Updated on Tuesday, 26 February 2013 17:32

20 readings

Every Step Counts Celebrates Fourth Anniversary 460 People Helped



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 26 February 2013 13:05

MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release – February 25, 2012

Date: Tuesday, Feb. 26 @ 3 pm Walk, @ 4 pm Stretch and reception

Where: Downtown Community Centre, 755 Pandora Avenue

Note: This event is not open to the public

Victoria's inclusive walking and running program, Every Step Counts, is celebrating four years of helping people improve their lives. The Anniversary run will be held at the Downtown Community Centre, 755 Pandora Avenue, on Tuesday, February 26, starting at 3 pm. At 4 pm, stretching exercises and treats will follow the run. Media are welcome to join this event which is not open to the general public.

Inclusive and powerful, Every Step Counts is a community initiative of the Victoria Foundation, housed and run through the Victoria Cool Aid Society. It has played a vital part in the health, happiness and success of many men and women who experience challenges with mental health, addictions, poverty, social isolation and other barriers. Since February 2009, Every Step Counts has helped 460 people through the running and walking program.

Every Step Counts is one of the official charities of the TC10K and is putting together a running team. Members of the public are welcome to run with the group and to raise pledges to support the program.

-30-

Information: www.CoolAid.org/esc www.victoriafoundation.bc.ca

Gillie Easdon Robert Janus, Director of Communications
Every Step Counts Coordinator The Victoria Foundation
250-882-5261 250-381-5532
geasdon@CoolAid.org rjanus@victoriafoundation.bc.ca

Summary of Every Step Counts

Born from an idea and a Vital Grant made by the Victoria Foundation, Every Step Counts is a therapeutic walking and running program for people experiencing barriers and challenges with housing, mental health, addiction and other related issues. It is positive and innovative, drawing on the wide-reaching and long-lasting benefits of walking, running and teamwork in order to foster self-esteem, confidence, energy and positive growth.

An inclusive support network, Every Step Counts is mentored by the Victoria Foundation in partnership with Victoria Cool Aid Society and Frontrunners Victoria. By bringing together key community organizations, the focus is to improve health and self-reliance through a mentored running program. Participants receive peer and mentorship support to positively enhance their lives through physical activity over an extended period of time.

After kicking off on February 17, 2009, Every Step Counts has drawn a diverse group of enthusiastic individuals who come out regularly to build their fitness, fun and friendships. While some are new to running and exercise, others are established athletes.

All are welcome and new runners join weekly. Participants have cited better sleep patterns, reduced anxiety, weight loss, increased energy, improved moods and new friends to list a few of the benefits they are experiencing.

Gently-used runners are supplied for all new recruits, and after participating in 10 sessions, runners are

awarded a certificate and a t-shirt. After 15 sessions, they are given custom-fit runners. Ongoing donations of running wear and other incentives are always gratefully appreciated.

Last Updated on Tuesday, 26 February 2013 13:06

40 readings

Tomgram: Chase Madar, Handcuffing Seven-Year-Olds Won't Make Schools Safer



PEJ Events

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 26 February 2013 12:42

by Chase Madar at 8:23am, February 26, 2013.

<http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175654/>

Outrage over the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre may or may not spur any meaningful gun control laws, but you can bet your Crayolas that it will lead to more seven-year-olds getting handcuffed and hauled away to local police precincts.

You read that right. Americans may disagree deeply about how easy it should be for a mentally ill convicted felon to purchase an AR-15, but when it comes to putting more law enforcement officers inside our schools, the National Rifle Association (NRA) and liberal Democrats like Senator Barbara Boxer are as one. And when police (or “school resource officers” as these sheriff’s deputies are often known) spend time in a school, they often deal with disorder like proper cops -- by slapping cuffs on the little perps and dragging them to the precinct.

Just ask the three nine-year-old girls and an eight-year-old boy who got into a fight at their Baltimore elementary school -- then got **arrested** by real police. Or Salecia Johnson, age six, **cuffed** and arrested for throwing a tantrum at her elementary school in Milledgeville, Georgia. Or Wilson Reyes, a

seven-year-old at a Bronx, New York, elementary school who last December 4th was cuffed, hauled away, and **interrogated** under suspicion of taking \$5 from a classmate. (Another kid later confessed.)

The last of these incidents made the cover of the New York Post, but the New York City Police Department still doesn't understand what they did wrong -- sure, the first-grader spent about 4 hours handcuffed in a detention room, but that's "standard for juvenile arrest."

Which is precisely the problem: standard juvenile misbehavior (a five-year-old pitching a fit, a 12-year-old **doodling** on a desk, a 13-year-old **farting** in class, a class clown **running around** the football field at halftime in a banana suit) is increasingly being treated like serious crime, resulting in handcuffs and arrest. If you can't understand why such "consistency" is crazy, please desist from reading the rest of this article.

It seems grotesque that the horrific slaughter of those 20 children in Newtown, Connecticut, will result in more children getting traumatized, but that's exactly where we're headed -- with firm bipartisan support.

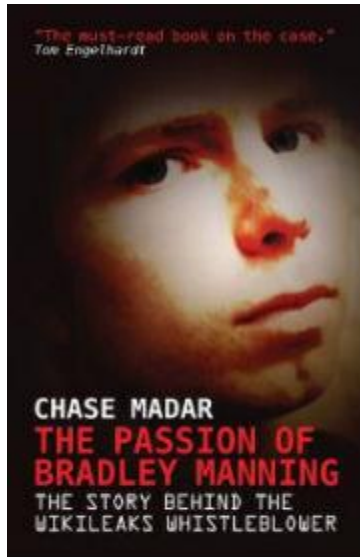
In his amazing post-Newtown speech last December, Wayne LaPierre, the CEO and executive vice president of the NRA, **called** for armed guards in all schools -- a demand widely hailed as jaw-droppingly nutty. A few weeks later, Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) proposed \$50 million in federal grants to **install** more metal detectors, surveillance cameras, and National Guard troops in schools, but made her pitch in the caring cadences of a Marin County Democrat. And when President Obama ordered more police in schools (point 18 in his 23-point Executive Order responding to the Sandy Hook tragedy), it was all over.

So here's an American reality of 2013: we will soon have more police in our schools, and more seven-year-olds like Joseph Andersons of PS 153 in Maspeth, New York, **getting arrested**. (He got handcuffed after a meltdown when his Easter egg dye-job didn't come out right.)

The School-to-Prison Pipeline

In fairness to the feds, similar kinds of local responses were already underway before the LaPierre-Boxer Axis of Tiny Handcuffs even arose. Across the country, from **Florida** and **Connecticut** to **Tennessee**, **Indiana**, and **Arizona**, despite tough budgetary times, municipal governments are now eagerly scrounging up the extra money for more metal detectors, surveillance cameras, and armed guards in schools. (The same thing happened after the Columbine shooting 14 years ago.) No one keeps national statistics, but **arrests** of the 10-and-under set do seem to be on the rise since Sandy Hook. A typical recent case: in January, a seven-year-old at a Connecticut school was **arrested** by the police for "threatening" a teacher. Jitters are understandable after the trauma of Sandy Hook -- but arresting a seven-year-old?

Truth be told, we were already well on our way to turning schools into carceral fortresses before the Sandy Hook slaughter even happened. In fact, the great national infrastructure project of the past 20 years may be the "school-to-prison pipeline." After all, we are the nation that **arrested** Isamar Gonzalez for being in her high school early to meet with a teacher, then arrested her principal, Mark Federman, when he tried to intervene.



Buy the book

The stats speak as loudly as the anecdotes: of the Chicago School District's [4,600 arrests](#) in 2011, 86% were for misdemeanors. That school system [spends](#) \$51.4 million on security guards, but only \$3.5 million for college and career coaches. And for every incident that makes the news, there are scores that don't. Despite a growing body of damning research by civil libertarians of the left and the [right](#), including Annette Fuentes' excellent book [Lockdown High](#), political opposition to the school-to-prison pipeline has proven feeble or nonexistent. Brooklyn State Senator Eric Adams, who represents one of the most liberal districts in the country, has staked out the civil libertarian outer limit by helpfully [suggesting](#) that Velcro handcuffs might be more suitable than metal ones for arresting young children.

The metal detector at the schoolhouse door is threatening to become as iconic an American symbol as baseball or type 2 diabetes. Not that metal detectors in place were capable of preventing the [massacre](#) at Red Lake High School in Minnesota in 2005: young Jeffrey Weise

just barged right in and shot six people dead; nor could the metal detectors at [George Washington High School](#) in Manhattan or [Paul Robeson High School](#) in Brooklyn prevent teens from getting stabbed. Yet metal detectors and school police proliferate across the country.

One state, however, truly leads the way. Self-satisfied Yankees have traditionally slandered the state of Mississippi as a jerkwater remnant of the past. As for me, I say Mississippi represents the American future. A new report by advocacy groups [shows](#) how the Hospitality State is leading the nation in cruel and draconian school over-policing. Felony assault charges for throwing peanuts on the school bus! Dress codes enforced by [handcuffing](#) a child to a railing for hours for the crime of not wearing a belt! Cops [escorting](#) a five-year-old home for wearing the wrong color shoes! And constant arrests of kids for “disorderly conduct.”

Yes, the “Mississippi model” of non-union teachers plus “zero tolerance” discipline is the kind of schooling that some of the best and brightest among our education “reformers” have been touting -- and what they are increasingly getting. In fairness, Governor Rick Perry’s Texas is [struggling](#) with Mississippi for vanguard status, with cutting-edge [surveillance](#) of students and 300,000 misdemeanor arrests in 2010 for “crimes” like tossing a paper airplane. And Massachusetts is a [strong contender](#) for third place.

Safe Schools Without Police or Metal Detectors

The over-policing of our schools is particularly grotesque because it’s so unnecessary. All schools need order and all students need self-discipline (as do adults), but putting police and metal detectors in a school often just adds another layer of violent chaos to an already

tough situation. In my own policy research on school security overkill in New York City, I've **found** plenty of high schools, and not in the fancy parts of town, that do just fine without police or scanners.

In fact, they do better than fine: one report I **coauthored** with advocates from the New York Civil Liberties Union and the Annenberg Institute for School Reform found that schools without police or metal detectors actually get significantly better educational results (higher graduation rates, lower truancy) than their heavily policed counterparts.

So why aren't these low-impact schools being held up as models? Why don't City Hall and the New York City Department of Education seem to want to know about these more effective -- not to mention cheaper -- models? Alas, despite a steady 15-year nationwide drop in crime, politicians continue to score points with voters by showing that they aren't afraid to crack down on children, especially the working-class Black and Latino youth who bear most of the brunt of these policies. The psycho-racial-political dynamics are pretty much the same throughout the country.

But there are proven, demonstrably better, ways to do school discipline. Ask Judge Steve Teske whose visionary common sense has **brought down** referrals to juvenile court by 70% in Clayton County, Georgia, by forcing schools to handle minor disciplinary infractions without handcuffs or police arrests. (In the same period in that county, serious weapons charges, like bringing guns and knives to school, have fallen by 80% -- further evidence that restraining a police presence actually makes schools safer.)

For another example of the right way to respond to school violence, look no further than Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado,

site of the 1999 massacre of 12 students and a teacher by two heavily armed students. In response, the school made the choice **not to add** a phalanx of armed guards. (Columbine actually had an armed school resource officer on duty the day of the killings, and he was unable to slow, let alone stop, the carnage.)

In fact, Columbine today remains an open campus with no metal detector at the front door. Instead, its administration has worked hard to improve communications with the student body, trying to build an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Columbine parents have supported this approach for a simple reason: they don't want their children treated like criminals. Because Littleton, Colorado, is a largely affluent community with political muscle, they've been able to resist the avalanche of punitive measures that have been generated by every school massacre since the one that took place at theirs.

Other schools -- particularly urban ones with working-class African-American and Latino students -- are not so lucky. When President Obama **announced** his pledge of more "resource officers" in schools, he was quick to qualify it with an "if they want them." A laudable sentiment that doesn't really reflect how things usually work on the ground.

One Brooklyn high school principal I interviewed **told me** of the constant pressure he experienced from higher up in the New York City Department of Education to put in a metal detector and more police personnel. Another school security success story I **profiled** back in 2008 has since had a metal detector **rammed down** its educational throat despite its immaculate disciplinary record. Now, its students are made to feel like potential criminals from the moment they arrive every

morning. The logic is, in its way, all-American: crazy white kids go on shooting sprees, and then the screws tighten on Black and Latino kids.

Resisting the Axis of Tiny Handcuffs

Is there any hope of preventing the rush to put more first graders in handcuffs? Yes, but don't expect any help from the NRA, which is actively promoting a heavily armed vision of heaven on Earth in which armed guards will be everywhere, with all public space turned into an airport security line. As for Barbara Boxer, evidently she wasn't as struck as I was by the **t-shirts** that Sacramento's school security police made with the slogan "U Raise 'Em, We Cage 'Em" emblazoned on the image of a child behind bars. Or maybe she should talk to constituents like five-year-old **arrestee** Michael Davis or the seven-year-old in San Mateo whom a cop **blasted** in the face with pepper spray for climbing a bookshelf. It remains to be seen if the NRA and Boxer, united, can ever be defeated.

This response to the Newtown massacre is of a piece with a developing post-9/11 American national-security-lockdown mentality -- the belief that an armed response will solve most of our problems, domestic and foreign. It's a habit of thought that leads not figuratively but quite literally to a police state. The over-policing of schools is just a part of the increasing **militarization** of the police nationwide, which in turn fuels the smoldering paranoia that drives civilians to stock up on AR-15s and the like.

Ending this cycle of armed fear and violence will require getting police out of the schools along with the whole battery of security state accessories. The only way to get there will be via the broadest possible civil libertarian coalition: Black community groups and Ron Paul

types, immigrants' rights activists and teachers and principals unions that see the big picture, liberals and conservatives united against the nanny/thug state.

There could be no finer spokesperson for such an ecumenical gathering than the newly crowned Miss America, Alabama-raised Brooklyn-residing Mallory Hytes Hagan. After wowing the pageant judges with her terpsichorean prowess, she demonstrated the soundest policy judgment. Asked if she thought it was a good idea to bring armed guards into schools, Ms. Hagan's response was clear. "No, I don't think the proper way to fight violence is with violence." [According to](#) the New York Daily News, she said it "firmly." Let people of goodwill rally behind this model citizen to end all the grotesque violence in our schools.

Chase Madar ([@ChMadar](#)) is a civil rights attorney in New York City who has written about the proven alternatives to [school security overkill](#). His latest book is [The Passion of Bradley Manning: The Story Behind the Wikileaks Whistleblower](#) (Verso).

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Last Updated on Tuesday, 26 February 2013 12:49

171 readings

["I Begged for Them to Stop" Waterboarding Americans and the Redefinition of Torture](#)



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 24 February 2013 17:44

By [Nick Turse](#)

<http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175653/>

Try to remain calm -- even as you begin to feel your chest tighten and your heart race. Try not to panic as water starts flowing into your nose and mouth, while you attempt to constrict your throat and slow your breathing and keep some air in your lungs and fight that growing feeling of suffocation. Try not to think about dying, because there's nothing you can do about it, because you're tied down, because someone is pouring that water over your face, forcing it into you, drowning you slowly and deliberately. You're helpless. You're in [agony](#).

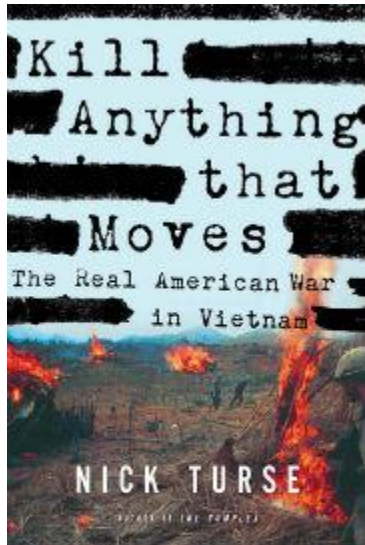
In short, you're a victim of "water torture." Or the "water cure." Or the "water rag." Or the "water treatment." Or "tormenta de toca." Or [any](#) of the other [nicknames](#) given to the particular form of [brutality](#) that today goes by the relatively innocuous term "waterboarding."

The practice only became [widely known](#) in the United States after it was disclosed that the CIA had been subjecting suspected terrorists to it in the wake of 9/11. More recently, cinematic [depictions](#) of waterboarding in the award-winning film *Zero Dark Thirty* and [questions](#) about it at the Senate confirmation hearing for incoming CIA chief John Brennan have sparked debate. Water torture, however, has a surprisingly long history, dating back to at least the [fourteenth century](#). It has been a U.S. military staple since the beginning of the twentieth century, when it was employed by Americans fighting an independence movement in

the [Philippines](#). American troops would continue to use the brutal tactic in the decades to come -- and during the country's repeated wars in Asia, they would be victims of it, too.

Water Torture in Vietnam

For more than a decade, I've investigated atrocities committed during the Vietnam War. In that time, I've come to know people who employed water torture and people who were brutalized by it. Americans and their South Vietnamese allies regularly used it on enemy prisoners and civilian detainees in an effort to gain intelligence or simply punish them. A picture of the practice even landed on the [front page](#) of the Washington Post on January 21, 1968, but mostly it went on in secret.



[Buy the book](#)

Long-hidden military documents help to fill in the picture. "I held the suspect down, placed a cloth over his face, and then poured water over the cloth, thus forcing water into his

mouth,” Staff Sergeant David Carmon [explained](#) in testimony to Army criminal investigators in December 1970. According to their synopsis, he admitted to using both electrical torture and water torture in interrogating a detainee who died not long after.

According to summaries of eyewitness statements by members of Carmon’s unit, the prisoner, identified as Nguyen Cong, had been “beat and kicked,” lost consciousness, and suffered convulsions. A doctor who examined Nguyen, however, claimed there was nothing wrong with him. Carmon and another member of his military intelligence team then “slapped the Vietnamese and poured water on his face from a five-gallon can,” according to a summary of his testimony. An official report from May 1971 states that Nguyen Cong passed out “and was carried to the confinement cage where he was later found dead.”

Years later, Carmon told me by email that the abuse of prisoners in Vietnam was extensive and encouraged by superiors. “Nothing was sanctioned,” he wrote, “but nothing was off-limits short of seriously injuring a prisoner.”

It turns out that Vietnamese prisoners weren’t the only ones subjected to water torture in Vietnam. U.S. military personnel serving there were victims, too. Documents I came across in the U.S. National Archives offer a glimpse of a horrifying history that few Americans know anything about.

“I had a ‘water job’ done on me,” one former American prisoner told a military investigator, according to a 1969 Army report. “I was handcuffed and taken to the shower… They held my head under the shower for about two minutes and when I’d pull

back to breath, they beat me on the chest and stomach. This lasted for about 10 minutes, during which I was knocked to the floor twice. When I begged for them to stop, they did.”

Another said that his cellmate had rolled their cigarette butts together to fashion a full cigarette. When the guards discovered the “contraband,” they grabbed him and hauled him to the showers. “Three of the guards held me and the other one held my face under the shower,” he testified. “This lasted quite a while and I thought I was going to drown.” Afterward, he said, the same thing was done to his cellmate who, upon returning, admitted that “he confessed” as a result of the torture.

Still another captive testified that handcuffed prisoners were taken to the showers. “The guards would hold the prisoner’s head back and make him swallow water,” he explained. “This treatment would cause the prisoner to resist which would give the guards an excuse to punch the prisoner.” He also testified that it was no isolated incident. “I have witnessed such treatments about nine times.”

“Cruel or Unusual”

This wasn’t, in fact, the first time Americans had been subjected to water torture while at war in Asia. During World War II, members of the Japanese military used water torture on American prisoners.

“I was given what they call the water cure,” Lieutenant Chase Nielsen testified after the war. When asked about the experience, he answered: “I felt more or less like I was drowning, just gasping between life and death.”

The same tortures were also meted out to American pilots captured during the Korean War. One **described** his treatment this way: “ They would bend my head back, put a towel over my face, and pour water over the towel. I could not breathe... When I would pass out, they would shake me and begin again.”

For their **crimes** against prisoners, including water torture, some Japanese officers were **convicted** and **sentenced** to lengthy prison terms, while **others** were **executed**.

The legal response to torturers in Vietnam was very different. While investigating allegations against Staff Sergeant Carmon, for instance, Army agents discovered within his unit a pattern of “cruelty and maltreatment” of prisoners that went on from March 1968 to October 1969. According to an **official report**, Army agents determined that the evidence warranted formal charges against 22 interrogators, many of them implicated in the use of water torture, electrical torture, beatings, and other forms of mistreatment. But neither Carmon nor any of the others was ever charged, court martialed, or punished in any way, according to the records.

There was similar impunity for -- in one of the more bizarre uses of water torture -- Americans who tortured Americans in Vietnam. Although a 1969 Army Inspector General ' s report into “ alleged brutality and maltreatment” noted that “the water treatment was administered as a form of punishment and constitutes a form of maltreatment of prisoners, ” those who water-tortured American personnel were never tried, let alone sentenced to long prison terms or executed for their crimes. In

fact, those implicated -- Army guards working at the American detention facility informally known as Long Binh Jail -- apparently escaped any punishment whatsoever.

This record of impunity has continued in more recent years. While the CIA has [acknowledged](#) its use of waterboarding after 9/11 and President Obama has unambiguously stated that the practice is a [method of torture](#), his administration declared that [no one would be prosecuted](#) for utilizing it or any other “[enhanced interrogation technique](#).” As a CIA spokesperson [pointed](#) out to ProPublica last year, after reviewing the Agency’s treatment of more than 100 detainees, the Department of Justice “declined prosecution in every case.”

The 1969 Inspector General’s report on American torture of American prisoners unequivocally defined the “water treatment” meted out to jailed American military personnel as “cruel or unusual.” Bush administration lawyers in the post-9/11 years, however, attempted to [redefine](#) the drowning of defenseless prisoners as something less than torture, basically turning the clock back to the ethical standards of the Spanish Inquisition.

At least that 1969 report noted that water torture “was administered without authority” to those American prisoners. The current situation has been radically different. In recent years, it wasn’t merely low-level brutalizers and their immediate superiors who sanctioned and approved torture techniques, but senior White House officials, [including](#) National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice and Vice President Dick Cheney. From George W. Bush’s own memoir, we know that the previous president gave an enthusiastic order

(“[Damn right!](#)”) to subject other human beings to water torture, just as we [know](#) that President Obama has [made certain](#) no one in the government involved in ordering or facilitating such acts would ever answer for any of them.

In 1901, an American officer was [sentenced](#) to 10 years at hard labor for waterboarding a Filipino prisoner. By the late 1940s, the centuries-old practice was so reviled that significant prison time or even death lay in store for those using it. In the late 1960s, it was still viewed as a cruel and unusual punishment, even if U.S. troops who tortured Vietnamese and American captives weren’t subject to prosecution for it. In the twenty-first century, as water torture moved from Southeast Asian prison showers to the White House, it also morphed into an “enhanced interrogation technique.” Today, the president’s pick to head the CIA [refuses](#) even to label waterboarding as “torture.”

What does it say about a society when its morals and ethics on the treatment of captives go into reverse? What are we to make of leaders who authorize, promote, or shield such brutal practices or about citizens who stand by and allow them to happen? What does it mean when torture, already [the definition](#) of “cruel,” becomes usual?

Nick Turse is the managing editor of TomDispatch.com and a fellow at the Nation Institute. An award-winning journalist, his work has appeared in the [Los Angeles Times](#), [the Nation](#), and [regularly](#) at TomDispatch. He is the author most recently of the New York Times bestseller [Kill Anything that Moves: The](#)

[Real American War in Vietnam](#) (The American Empire Project, Metropolitan Books). You can watch his recent conversation with Bill Moyers about that book by [clicking here](#). His website is [NickTurse.com](#). You can follow him on Tumblr and on [Facebook](#).

[Note: I'm not the first to write about the American use of water torture on U.S. prisoners in Vietnam. See Cecil B. Currey's 1999 volume, [Long Binh Jail: An Oral History of Vietnam's Notorious U.S. Military Prison](#). For an account, both gripping and harrowing, by a victim of water torture, see [The Question](#), journalist Henri Alleg's bite-sized account of his torture by French forces in Algeria during the 1950s.]

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Last Updated on Sunday, 24 February 2013 17:47

45 readings

"260 Dead Dolphins Scattered on Shoreline of Peru, Just Days After Mysterious U.S. Incident"



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 23 February 2013 19:06

By [tutunui-wananga](#) blog spot

<http://tutunui-wananga.blogspot.co.nz/2012/02/peru-dolphin-strandings-exact-repeat-of.html>

Saturday, February 23, 2013

MASSIVE MARINE LIFE DIE-OFF OFF NW COAST OF PERU IN MAJOR HYDRO-CARBON REGION: EXACT REPEAT OF SIMILAR EVENT LAST YEAR



The pattern in Peru is EXACTLY the same as what has been happening in New Zealand: *anomalous earth-quake activity and unusual strandings of cetaceans in the presence of 'seismic exploration' vessels as well as 'radio frequency installations' or technologies that could easily be integrated into a 'HAARP-based' technetronic weapons network.*

That part of Peru has had at least **five earthquakes in the past two weeks**, including a 4.8 on 11 February, two days after the dolphins began to strand at Chiclayo. This is EXACTLY like what happened in the Christchurch area only two days before the February 22 2011 quake, when a large pod of dolphins became disoriented near Thames and were successfully guided back to sea by thoughtful people.

In addition, an extremely large 'ionospheric research facility' exists a few hundred kms inland from Chiclayo at *Jicamarca*. This facility, operated by Cornell University, is VERY MUCH like an older version of HAARP. They call it a 'radio-telescope' and indeed, even HAARP can be used for 'listening'. But ANY radio receiver/antenna array can function equally as a transmitter; moreover, it's well known that most if not all of the world's radio-telescope installations function at least in part as ionospheric research instruments, beaming radio/micro-waves in exactly the same way that HAARP does.

"260 Dead Dolphins Scattered on Shoreline of Peru, Just Days After Mysterious U.S. Incident"

[HTTP://WWW.ACTIVISTPOST.COM/2012/02/260-DEAD-DOLPHINS-SCATTERED-ON.HTML](http://www.activistpost.com/2012/02/260-dead-dolphins-scattered-on.html)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=endscreen&v=gEHwRR8fy6Q&NR;=1>

HAARP AND OTHER 'TTA's' or 'Tesla Technology Arrays' form an integrated global weapons system permeating domains of atmosphere, ocean, and lithosphere with massive amounts of microwave radiation

<http://strandednomore.wordpress.com/2013/02/23/another-marine-life-die-off-in-peru-could-you-believe-it/>

We could not shake off this feeling of deja vu when we've heard about this brand new die off in Peru happening nearly exactly the year after the one in 2012. Not only it happens roughly at the same time it is happening in the same area!! We hate to say it once again but we found hazardous operations areas plus BPZ Oil Company was again possibly doing 3D seismic surveys (and maybe other companies too, see below). Last year die off was linked to seismic surveys (see our blog) but later we also found hazardous operations that could also be a culprit. Here is what we found out so far re this year:

1. The Die Off 2013

The area includes **San José**, in Lambayeque (see map). 90 animals were found dead including: **18 turtles, 22 sea lions, 8 dolphins, 16 porpoises, 22 pelicans and others.** IMARPE again investigates which is a guarantee that it will be another "unsolved mystery" ([link](#) and [link](#))

2. Anthropogenic Noise Activities: Possible Military Operations AND Seismic surveys.

Here is what we found so far:

1. Two areas of "hazardous operations":

- a) Area 1: January 29-30, 2013, operations daily
- b) Area 2: January 29-30, 2013, operations daily
- c) Area 3: February 7, 2013

Now, we do not know what these hazardous operations included exactly, but they were likely involving some military testing.

2. Some evidence that BPZ was active in its famous Z-1 block. We could not find the exact dates so far, but indirect reports indicate that they might have been doing 3D seismic surveys:

a) Article from **February 5, 2013**: "Currently, the company is focused on optimizing oil production in the Corvina field in Block Z-1, which includes setting a new drilling and production platform (the CX-15) in the field and implementing an offshore drilling campaign for this platform. **The company has also embarked on completing a three dimensional seismic survey in Block Z-1 to assess whether it is viable to conduct additional exploration and development activity within the block. This also includes the acquisition of offshore seismic data so as to better understand the characteristic and potential of its fields within Block Z-1.**" ([link](#))

b) Article from **January 24 2013**: "There is an increase in exploration activity in the region of Block Z-34. In Block Z-38 (north from Block Z-34) operator Karoon, an Australian company, has recently announced a program to drill two wells with an option of one more by late 2013 early 2014. The Directors believe that Karoon's drilling campaign, if successful, should add value to Block Z-34 as the block is in a similar geological environment as our block. In addition, companies with assets east of Block Z-34 (Savia), north east (BPZ /Pacific Rubiales) and further south (Savia and SK Energy) have announced aggressive exploration and development plans." ([link](#))

c) Article from **January 22, 2013**: "Phase II of the original 1,600 square kilometer seismic acquisition project on Block Z-1 is now complete." ([link](#))

So what does this all means? It means two things:

- 1. The die off is again most likely caused by anthropogenic activities (military, Big Oil or both)
- 2 This die off is similar to 2012 die off
- 3 It will be hushed down and not investigated like the 2012 one
- 4 USA should pay attention, this is what will be happening on the US shores very soon.

3. Few Words About Currents

Check out the map that could explain how carcasses could end up in Lambayeque:

4. Few Words About Earthquakes

Peru is located in seismically active area, but see for yourself , there have not been any significant or notable offshore quakes in last 30 days, except for a few small ones, including 4.7 one happening **86km SSW of Acari, Peru**. Now what is interesting is that hazardous operations also took place on Jan 30 not that far from this place.

Source: <http://earthquake.usgs.gov/earthquakes/map/>

5. Map from Last Year Die Off (blog posts link and link)

Approximate locations of seismic surveys area that could have been happening prior and during Peru's marine life die off. The locations are approximate and for reference only as we do not have actual data, tracks and coordinates.

6. Comparison Between 2012 Hazardous Operations and 2013 Hazardous Operations

Note that in 2012 there were more operations, larger area and the die off was bigger.

The Bottom Line:

This needs to be **INVESTIGATED**. Had it been investigated last year, this year die off could have been prevented. This cannot go on like it does, it is like a bad dream repeating itself over and over again.

Posted by [Jeff Wefferson](#) at 11:39 AM 

Last Updated on Sunday, 24 February 2013 17:47

33 readings

BC Action Alert: Stop the GM Apple - Deadline: February 28, 2013



Earth News

Posted by *Joan Russow*

Saturday, 23 February 2013 17:07

BC Action Alert: Stop the GM Apple - Deadline: February 28, 2013

In BC, please contact your Member of the Legislative Assembly before February 28! Before the Legislature breaks for the election, ask your MLA to take a stand against the genetically modified (GM) apple. You can search for your MLA's contacts using your postal code here: <http://www.leg.bc.ca/mla/3-1-1.htm> Thank you for taking this important action!

This year, the small BC company called Okanagan Specialty Fruits could get approval in the US and Canada for its GM "non-browning" apple, engineered to keep from going brown after being cut. Contamination from GM apples threatens the future of BC apples, and the farmers who grow them. BC apple growers have already rejected the GM apple and polls show 69% of Canadians oppose it! For more information on the GM apple please see <http://www.cban.ca/apple> Sign up to get action alerts in the BC campaign here <https://groups.google.com/d/topic/gm-apple-action-bc/B0QIQkN7Nz4/discussion>

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND TAKES ON THE GM SALMON

PEI residents have started a facebook site against the GM salmon! Calling all Islanders! <https://www.facebook.com/IslandersSayNoToFrankenfish>

GM SALMON DECISION STALLED IN THE US

The US Food and Drug Administration has extended its public comment period on the genetically engineered Atlantic salmon by another 60 days, as requested by 7 US Senators.

FARMER MANAGEMENT TRUMPS GM SEEDS: RICE

New management practice of small farmers increases rice yields in India, could begin a "new green grassroots revolution" that rejects the scientific focus on GM seeds and fertilizers. GM rice is not currently on the market anywhere in the world. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/2013/feb/16/india-rice-farmers-revolution>

SOYBEAN FARMER CHALLENGES MONSANTO AT US SUPREME COURT

Monsanto to be challenged in US Supreme court - farmer sued by Monsanto for "soybean laundering" for planting feed grain. Earlier court ruled that "farmers cannot 'replicate' Monsanto's patented technology by planting it in the ground to create newly infringing genetic material, seeds, and plants"

"Farmer's use of genetically modified soybeans grows into Supreme Court case" AJ Mast, Washington Post, Feb. 6, 2013. http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/farmers-use-of-genetically-modified-soybeans-grows-into-supreme-court-case/2013/02/09/8729f05a-717c-11e2-ac36-3d8d9dcaa2e2_story.html?hpid=z2

"Supreme Court Appears to Defend Patent on Soybean", Adam Liptak, New York Times, Feb 19, 2013 http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/20/business/justices-signal-a-monsanto-edge-in-patent-case.html?_r=3&

NEW REPORT: SEED GIANTS vs U.S FARMERS

http://www.centerforfoodsafety.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Seed-Giants_final.pdf

The new report "Seed Giants vs U.S. Farmers" investigates how the current seed patent regime has led to a radical shift to consolidation and control of global seed supply and how these patents have abetted corporations, such as Monsanto, to sue U.S. farmers for alleged seed patent infringement. It also examines broader consequences of the patent system including links to loss of seed innovation, rising seed prices, reduction of independent scientific inquiry, and environmental issues.

- As of January 2013, Monsanto, alleging seed patent infringement, had filed 144 lawsuits involving 410 farmers and 56 small farm businesses in at least 27 different states.
- Today, three corporations control 53 percent of the global commercial seed market.
- Seed consolidation has led to market control resulting in dramatic increases in the price of seeds. From 1995-2011, the average cost to plant one acre of soybeans has risen 325 percent; for cotton prices spiked 516 percent and corn seed prices are up by 259 percent.
- The report notes: 86% of corn, 88% of cotton, and 93% of soybeans farmed in the U.S. are now genetically-engineered (GE) varieties, making the option of farming non-GE crops increasingly difficult.
- While agrichemical corporations also claim that their patented seeds are leading to environmental improvements, the report notes that upward of 26 percent more chemicals per acre were used on GE crops than on non-GE crops, according to USDA data.

NEW RESEARCH EXPOSES GLYPHOSATE HERBICIDE TOXICITY

Monsanto is promoting its new "killing machine" pesticide formula - watch their ad here: <http://youtu.be/8abJj1s5Tj8> "It truly is the ultimate killing machine" says Monsanto. "Nothing will escape this highly efficient destructive force."

Glyphosate-based herbicides (like Roundup) more toxic than declared, new research shows (1) - CRIIGEN Press Release:

Caen, Feb. 21st, 2013 - In a new research published in the high ranked scientific journal Toxicology, Robin Mesnage, Benoît Bernay and Professor Gilles-Eric Séralini, from the University of Caen, France, have proven (from a study of nine Roundup-like herbicides) that the most toxic compound is not glyphosate, which is the substance the most assessed by regulatory authorities, but a compound that is not always listed on the label, called POE-15. Modern methods were applied at the cellular level (on three human cell lines), and mass spectrometry (studies on the nature of molecules). This allowed the researchers to identify and analyse the effects of these compounds.

Context: Glyphosate is supposed to be the "active ingredient" of Roundup, the most widely used herbicide in the world, and it is present in a large group of Roundup-like herbicides. It has been safety tested on mammals for the purposes of regulatory risk assessment. But the commercial formulations of these pesticides as they are sold and used contain added ingredients (adjuvants). These are often classified confidential and described as "inerts". However, they help to stabilize the chemical compound glyphosate and help it to penetrate plants, in the manner of corrosive detergents. The formulated herbicides (including Roundup) can affect all living cells, especially human cells. This danger is overlooked because glyphosate and Roundup are treated as the same by industry and regulators on long-term studies. The supposed non-toxicity of glyphosate serves as a basis for the commercial release of Roundup. The health and environmental agencies and pesticide companies assess the long-term effects on mammals of glyphosate alone, and not the full formulation. The details of this regulatory assessment are jealously kept confidential by companies like Monsanto and health and environmental agencies.

Conclusion and consequences: This study demonstrates that all the glyphosate-based herbicides tested are more toxic than glyphosate alone, and explains why. Thus their regulatory assessments and the maximum residue levels authorized in the environment, food, and feed, are erroneous. A drink (such as tap water contaminated by Roundup residues) or a food made with a Roundup tolerant GMO (like a transgenic soya or corn) were already demonstrated as toxic in the recent rat feeding study (2) from Prof. Séralini team. The researchers have also published responses to critics of the study (3). This new research explains and confirms the scientific results of the rat feeding study.

Overall, it is a great matter of concern for public health. First, all authorizations of Roundup-type herbicides have to be questioned urgently. Second, the regulatory assessment rules have to be fully revised. They should be analyzed in a transparent and contradictory manner by the scientific community. Agencies that give opinions to government authorities, in common with the pesticide companies generally conclude safety. The agencies' opinions are wrong because they are made on the basis of lax assessments and much of the industry data is kept confidential, meaning that a full and transparent assessment cannot be carried out. These assessments are therefore neither neutral nor independent. They should as a first step make public on the Internet all the data that underpin the commercial release and positive opinions on the use of Roundup and similar products. The industry toxicological data must be legally made public.

Adjuvants of the POE-15 family (polyethoxylated tallowamine) have now been revealed as actively toxic to human cells, and must be regulated as such. The complete formulations must be tested in long-term toxicity studies and the results taken into account in regulatory assessments. The regulatory authorisation process for pesticides released into the environment and sold in stores must urgently be revised. Moreover, since the toxic confidential adjuvants are in general use in pesticide formulations, we fear according to these discoveries that the toxicity of all pesticides has been very significantly underestimated.

This study was conducted in the University of Caen with the structural support of CRIIGEN in the European Network of Scientists for Social and Environmental Responsibility (ENSSER www.ensser.org).

Contact: criigen@unicaen.fr ; phone **+33 (0)231565684** (France). www.criigen.org

Notes :

(1) Mesnage R., Bernay B., Séralini G-E. (2013, in press). Ethoxylated adjuvants of glyphosate-based herbicides are active principles of human cell toxicity. Toxicology <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tox.2012.09.006>

(2) Séralini G. E., et al. (2012). Long term toxicity of a Roundup herbicide and a Roundup-tolerant genetically modified maize. Food and Chemical Toxicology 50 (11): 4221-4231.

(3) Séralini G. E., et al. (2013). Answers to critics: Why there is a long term toxicity due to NK603 Roundup-tolerant genetically modified maize and to a Roundup herbicide. Food and Chemical Toxicology

Lucy Sharratt, Coordinator
Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN)
Collaborative Campaigning for Food Sovereignty and Environmental Justice
Suite 206, 180 Metcalfe Street
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, K2P 1P5
Phone: 613 241 2267 ext. 25
Fax: 613 241 2506
coordinator@cban.ca
www.cban.ca

43 readings

The Keystone XL pipeline will only add to Canada's environmental downfall



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 22 February 2013 10:41

President Obama should deny the Keystone XL pipeline to send a message to Canada to get its environmental house in order

by **Heather McRobie** guardian.co.uk, Thursday 21 February 2013 1

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/feb/21/keystone-xl-pipeline-bad-for-canada>



Syncrude Canada Ltd's tar sand production facility in Alberta Photograph: Veronique

Syncrude Canada Ltd's tar sand production facility in Alberta Photograph: Veronique de Viguerie/Getty Images

The choice President Obama has faced in recent weeks – whether to approve the **Keystone XL pipeline** –

has been **framed as a choice** between losing the support of environmentalists or alienating America's key ally, **Canada**. Here's a better approach: President Obama should use the Keystone XL pipeline issue to send a message to Canada that its environmental policies are damaging to both Canada and the world.

The Keystone pipeline feels like a reward for Canada's worst practices. Last year was perhaps **the nadir of Canada's dwindling track record** on environmental issues. Not only has **Stephen Harper's** government amended the Coastal Trade Act to explicitly **encourage oil companies to drill for oil in the Gulf of St Lawrence** – the world's largest estuary and home to a unique ecosystem that would likely be damaged by the process – but the \$160m cuts to environmental spending in last year's budget decimated the projects set up to monitor and mitigate against the damage caused by tar sand refining and drilling. For example, one victim of the federal cuts is **oil spill response units**, which means that drilling and pipeline projects will become even riskier. For the Keystone XL project to go ahead under these circumstances looks to be courting disaster.

Canadian oil industry advocates argue that the Keystone XL pipeline, the proposed \$7bn pipeline that would run nearly 2,000 miles from Canada's oil sands to the Gulf of Mexico, **is crucial for Canada**, where oil **is a key factor in Canada's economic growth**. But criticism has come not just from environmental activists, but those concerned about the safety of the pipeline, especially in light of government cuts to the bodies that would regulate it.

In his resignation this month, outgoing Commissioner of the Environment Scott Vaughan pointed to, amongst other "gaps" in Canada's environmental policies, a **concerning lack of preparedness in the face of an offshore oil spill**. Yet it is unlikely that Harper will pay attention, which is why it's important that President Obama does.

Harper is the man who **derailed the Kyoto Protocol**, dismissing it as a "socialist scheme". In his years of minority-government rule through the 2000s, Harper pushed both Albertan tar sand projects and Arctic drilling, landing Canada **last in a World Wildlife Fund ranking** for G8 countries in tackling climate change. Since gaining a majority government in 2011, his increased power has given him a stronger hand in **a relatively strong Canadian economy** to push oil interests and cut support for climate research.

Earlier this month, Obama, through America's ambassador to Canada, **encouraged the country to do more** to tackle climate change. America "lecturing" Canada on the environment is hard to stomach, given the profligate environmental damage enacted in the US, particularly under the Bush administration. But Obama, at least, had the high ground of **being largely on track** to meet his 2020 climate goals. The Keystone XL pipeline would only set both countries back and put them further at risk.

Canadians are concerned about the environment and **support action on climate change**, but the narrative generated by the government sets environmental concerns against economic ones, sidelining the necessity of addressing the issue and ignoring the fact that **the economic costs of climate change** will be high for Canada.

It **has been argued that**, if America does not go ahead with the Keystone XL pipeline, the pipeline will instead be a deal between Canada and China, as Harper went to Beijing to expound the benefits of Canadian oil the last time Obama rejected the pipeline deal. However, rightly or wrongly, America remains a strong influence on Canada, and in this case a high-profile and public rejection of the scheme, combined with a criticism of Canada's environmental policies, may be the wake-up call Harper needs.

It's worth bearing in mind that oil companies still operate with little check for the damage they cause. On Wednesday, the American Justice Department **reduced the maximum fine** BP may face for the 2010 Gulf of Mexico disaster by \$3.4bn a week before the trial is due to begin on what may well be one of the **worst environmental disasters in history**. Protesters against the Keystone XL pipeline have urged Obama to **"keep his promise" to tackle climate change**. Stephen Harper has also reiterated his commitment to tackling climate change – he has an opportunity now to turn over a new leaf.

Last Updated on Friday, 22 February 2013 10:47

29 readings

Arms Bazaars Proliferate as U.N. Tries to Regulate Trade

Peace News



Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 22 February 2013 10:36

By Thalif Deen

A Belgian F-16 Fighting Falcon during a training flight before the Air Show 2009 in Radom, Poland. Credit: Konfliktky.pl/ cc by 2.0

UNITED NATIONS, Feb 21 2013 (IPS) - When a 20-year-old went on a deadly shooting spree killing 26 students and teachers in an elementary school in Connecticut last December, there was the inevitable outcry either for a ban or a tight control on gun shows, where firearms can be purchased over the counter with no background checks on the buyer.

But there are no such controls on weapons buyers at international trade fairs, resulting in arms sales to some of the world's most repressive regimes and human rights violators.

As military exhibitions and air shows continue to proliferate – from Paris and London to Moscow and Abu Dhabi – the United Nations will meet next month for its last stand on an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) aimed at laying down guidelines for the international trade in weapons.

If their proposed human rights rules and brokering controls in the treaty remain weak, companies will continue to garner hundreds of millions of dollars worth of weapons deals for unscrupulous buyers.

Focusing specifically on the International Defence Exhibition (IDEX), currently taking place in Abu Dhabi, capital of the United Arab Emirates, the London-based Amnesty International (AI), says China, the United States, the European Union (EU) states and other arms-exporting countries must ensure that any deals brokered at IDEX do not result in weapons reaching countries where they could contribute to serious human rights abuses.

IDEX is described as one of the world's biggest arms bazaars where most of the major arms exporters actively participate.

Helen Hughes, AI's researcher on arms control, security trade and human rights, told IPS that arms fairs and exhibitions are used to identify and promote the demand and sources of supply for customers of particular military and security products and services, and for announcing major arms deals and contracts.

"Opportunities for brokering deals at such international fairs are numerous, yet there are usually no procedures to monitor or licence the brokering of specific arms deals as opposed to general sale promotions," she added.

Related IPS Articles

- [**Advocates Lay Groundwork for New Arms Trade Talks**](#)
- [**U.N.'s Last Stand on Arms Trade Treaty**](#)
- [**Purveyors of Death Flourish in Spain During Crisis**](#)

The upcoming international arms trade fairs include the Paris Air Show in June; the Defence and Security Event in London in September; MAKS 2013, billed as an international aviation and space salon, in Russia, also in September; the Singapore Air Show in February 2014; Eurosatory in Paris in June 2014; and the International Aviation and Aerospace Exhibition in China in November 2014, described as the "only trade show endorsed by the Chinese central government".

In a statement released Wednesday, AI said IDEX is taking place less than a month before states convene at the United Nations "to finalize a historic Arms Trade Treaty where the United States, China and some other states are hoping to get weaker treaty controls".

AI says it has repeatedly flagged how the poorly regulated global arms trade contributes to war crimes and other serious human rights violations around the world, and since the 1990s has highlighted the problem of unregulated arms brokering.

"The wide array of conventional weapons being displayed at IDEX stands in sharp contrast to the narrow

scope of items proposed by the USA, China and other states for the draft Arms Trade Treaty," says Brian Wood, AI's head of Arms Control and Human Rights.

"And if their proposed human rights rules and brokering controls in the treaty remain weak, companies will continue to garner hundreds of millions of dollars worth of weapons deals for unscrupulous buyers," he warns.

Among the more than 1,100 companies from almost 60 countries participating at IDEX, AI says it has been able to identify a number of manufacturers from key arms-exporting countries whose products have previously been used in areas where serious human rights abuses have taken place.

Asked about the "non disclosure" clauses in military contracts, Hughes told IPS, "Yes, most contracts will have non-disclosure clauses but often information about arms deals, arms sales or arms supplies will come out into the public domain, for example reported in the press."

Interestingly, she pointed out, governments will cite "commercial confidentiality" when asked for more information about an arms export they have licensed, such as questions about the exact type of weapon, quantity, end-user and end-use even though some states do publish such information – albeit inconsistently, and not with enough detail to allow for adequate public scrutiny.

As part of the forthcoming final negotiations on an ATT, Hughes said, governments should agree that states' annual reports cover data on all transfers and activities and be open to public scrutiny.

Meanwhile, AI points out that state-owned arms manufacturers from China, exhibiting at IDEX, have heavy weaponry, such as artillery systems, on display.

Pakistani companies are advertising a range of munitions including small arms ammunition, mortars, artillery shells, and bombs.

Among the manufacturers exhibiting such less-lethal weapons are two companies from the United States and France whose tear gas has been used in Bahrain.

AI also says that another U.S. firm has supplied such weapons to Egypt.

In both Bahrain and Egypt, protesters have died or been severely injured during 2011 and 2012 as a result of the security forces allegedly misusing tear gas.

And one exhibitor from South Korea is also promoting cluster munitions, an inherently inhumane weapon. So far 111 states have signed, ratified or acceded to a separate international treaty banning these weapons.

Last Updated on Friday, 22 February 2013 10:38

30 readings

Could muzzling federal scientists be illegal?



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 21 February 2013 09:14

CANADA'S INFORMATION COMMISSIONER BEING ASKED IF POLICIES BREAK LAW

[CBC News](#)

Posted: Feb 20, 2013 4:26 PM ET

Last Updated: Feb 20, 2013 7:02 PM ET



"Federal civil servants in Canada, and in particular scientists, are being muzzled by the federal government," alleges a report by Democracy Watch and the University of Victoria's Environmental Law Clinic. iStock

The Information Commissioner of Canada is being asked to investigate whether "federal government policy forcing scientists to jump through hoops before speaking with the media" breaches the Access to Information Act.

The request was made as part of a complaint filed Wednesday by Democracy Watch, a non-profit organization that advocates for government accountability, and the University of Victoria's Environmental Law Clinic.

"In sharp contrast to past Canadian practice and current U.S. Government practice, the federal government has recently made efforts to prevent the media and the general public from speaking to government scientists," said Tyler Sommers, coordinator of Democracy Watch, in a statement.

He noted that the scientists conduct research that is paid for by taxpayers who therefore have a right to learn the results.

Calvin Sandborn, legal director of the University of Victoria's Environmental Law Clinic, said in a statement that "Canadians cannot make smart choices about critical issues such as climate change, oil sands development, and environmental protection if the public does not have full, timely access to the government's best scientific knowledge on those issues.

"This is why we've filed this complaint and why we are asking for a full investigation."

Sommers said the groups believe that parts of the act being violated include those that:

- State government information should be available to the public and necessary exceptions to the right of access should be limited and specific.
- Specify that the government should provide "timely access" to records without regard to the identity of a person making the request.

"We don't know how far-reaching the situation is," he added in an interview.

'We are asking for a full investigation into whether federal government policy forcing scientists to jump through hoops before speaking with the media violates access to information law.'—Calvin Sandborn, UVic Environmental Law Clinic

While he thinks certain sections of the act are being violated, based on a limited investigation by Democracy Watch and the Environmental Law Clinic, he suggested that the information commissioner, "may be able to uncover much more" in a more thorough investigation and issue a clear interpretation on how the act should be applied.

He added that the commissioner is currently reviewing Canada's access to information system in comparison

to other countries worldwide, providing a good opportunity for such an investigation.

REPORT OUTLINES TECHNIQUES

The groups allege in a newly-released 26-page report that "federal civil servants in Canada, and in particular, scientists, are being muzzled by the federal government:"

- Directly, by not being allowed to speak to the media.
- Indirectly, through bureaucratic procedures that delay approval to speak to the media – delays that are incompatible with journalists' deadlines.

The report also alleges that the government is "manipulating the release of government information" by:

- Selecting which media inquiries to respond to.
- Having communications employees craft "approved lines" or provide scripted answers for civil servants to deliver.
- Using "subtle means of intimidation" when civil servants speak directly to the media, such as requiring an interview to be recorded or requiring a communications employee to sit in on the interview.

The report examines communications policy changes and their consequences at Environment Canada, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Natural Resources Canada and the National Research Council and concludes that "there is a clear and significant trend showing that the federal government is closing off access to government information by tightly controlling and monitoring the release of government information to the public."

The report adds that it is "even more alarming" that the government has ignored international criticism "and seems intent on continuing down this path."

The report was based on internal government documents previously released through freedom of information requests, along with conversations with current and former federal public servants, journalists, members of non-profit organizations, and professors at Canadian universities.

31 readings

You've Come a Long Way, Baby (Or Have You?) The Women's Movement, the Next Half-Century



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 21 February 2013 08:04

By [Ruth Rosen](http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175651/) <http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175651/>

In 1968, the Phillip Morris Company launched a memorable campaign to sell [Virginia Slims](#), a new brand of cigarettes targeting women, itself a new phenomenon. It had a brand-new slogan: "You've come a long way, baby." The company plastered it on billboards nationwide and put it in TV ads that featured women of the early twentieth century being punished for smoking. In all their advertising, smoking was equated with a set of traits meant to capture the essence of women in a new era of equality -- independence, slimness, glamour, and liberation.

As it happened, the only equality this campaign ended up supporting involved lung cancer. Today, women and men **die** at similar rates from that disease.

Still, women have come a long way since the mid-twentieth century, and it's worth considering just how far -- and just how far we have to go.

Once Upon a Time

These days it may be hard for some to believe, but before the women's movement burst on the scene in the late 1960s, newspapers published ads for jobs on different pages, segregated by gender. Employers legally paid women less than men for the same work. Some bars refused to serve women and all banks denied married women credit or loans, a practice which didn't change until 1974. Some states even excluded women from jury duty.

Radio producers considered women's voices too abrasive to be on the air and television executives believed that women didn't have sufficient credibility to anchor the news. Few women ran big corporations or universities, or worked as firefighters and police officers. None sat on the Supreme Court, installed electrical equipment, climbed telephone poles, or owned construction companies. All hurricanes had female names, due to the widely held view that women brought chaos and destruction to society.

As late as 1970, **Dr. Edgar Berman**, a consultant to presidents and to Medicare, proclaimed on television that women were too tortured by hormonal disturbances to assume the presidency. Few people ran into women professors, doctors, or lawyers. Everyone addressed a woman as either Miss or Mrs, depending on her marital status, and if a woman needed an abortion, legal nowhere in America, she risked her life searching among quacks in back alleys for a competent and compassionate doctor.

The public generally believed that rape victims had probably "asked for it," most women felt too ashamed to report rape, and no language existed to make sense of what we now call domestic violence, sexual harassment, marital rape, or date rape. One simple phrase seemed to sum up the hidden injuries women suffered in silence: "That's life."

On August 27, 1970, in response to such injustice, 50,000

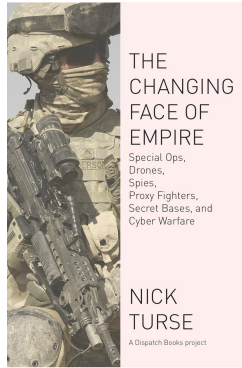
women marched down New York's Fifth Avenue, announcing the birth of a new movement. They demanded three rights: legal abortion, universal childcare, and equal pay. These were preconditions for women's equality with men at home and in the workplace. Astonishingly, they didn't include the ending of violence against women among their demands -- though the experience and fear of male violence was widespread -- because women still suffered these crimes in silence.

Those three demands, and the fourth one that couldn't yet be articulated, have yet to be met.

The Hidden Injuries of Sex

As the women's movement grew, women activists did, however, begin to "name" their grievances. Once named, they could be identified, debated, and -- with a growing feminist political voice -- turned into policy or used to change the law.

It turned out that there were plenty of hidden injuries, which women activists discovered and publicized through consciousness-raising groups, pamphlets, and books. Rape, once a subject of great shame, became **redefined** as a physical assault that had little to do with lust. **Date rape**, for which there was plenty of experience but no name, opened up a **national conversation** about what constituted consensual sex. Few people had ever heard the words "marital rape." ("If you can't rape your wife," California Senator Bob Wilson allegedly **said**, "then who can you rape?") In this way, a new conversation began about the right of wives to have consensual sex and the nature of power relations within marriage.



Buy the book.

From the very beginning, the mainstream media and the public labeled women activists as “lesbians.” Why else would they complain about male behavior? Provoked by constant efforts to “tarnish” all feminists as lesbians, activists chose to embrace the label, rather than exclude lesbians from the movement. In the process, they also began to write about and then discuss **compulsory heterosexuality**. Together with a burgeoning men’s gay movement, feminist lesbians and gay men formed the **Gay Liberation Front** in the 1969. Soon, lesbian feminists created an all-women’s group called the **Lavender Menace**.

The **birth control pill** and the **sexual liberation** movement of the mid-1960s gave women new freedoms. Grasping the limitations of such changes without abortion being legalized, feminists soon joined the medical abortion rights campaign of that era. Determined to **repeal laws** against abortion, in New York they testified before the state legislature and passed out copies of a “model abortion bill”: a blank piece of paper. Through “**public speak-outs**,” they openly discussed their own illegal abortions and explained why they had made such choices. In Chicago and San Francisco, activists created **clandestine** organizations to help women seek qualified doctors. Some feminists even learned how to perform abortions for those who could not find a competent doctor.

Then, in 1973, the Supreme Court handed down its famous *Roe v. Wade* decision, which legalized abortion and ignited the abortion wars that still rage today. You could even say that this is where the culture wars of the coming decades really began, and you wouldn’t be wrong.

What had feminists started? In essence, they had begun to redefine one “ custom ” after another as crimes. For instance, one of the greatest hidden injuries suffered by women in those years was the predatory sexually behavior of male bosses. In 1975, a group of women at Cornell University **coined** the term **sexual harassment**. Previously, some women had called it “sexual blackmail,” but when legal scholar Catherine Mackinnon used the new phrase in the title of her 1979 book, **Sexual Harassment of Working Women**, both feminists and judges began using it in litigation against predatory bosses. After Anita Hill ’ s **accusations** against Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas in 1991, the phrase became a household term. In that same year, Congress added amendments to Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, accepting the feminist argument that sexual harassment violated a woman ’ s right to earn a living and work in a non-hostile atmosphere.

If the naming of sexual harassment changed the workplace, the reframing of wife-beating as domestic violence turned a custom into a felonious crime. At the same time, feminists spread a network of battered women ’ s shelters across the nation, offering havens from marital violence and possible death.

A Half-Century to Go

If the women ’ s movement often surprised and sometimes blindsided men, it also radically expanded America ’ s democratic promise of equality. Women are now everywhere. No one is shocked in 2013 when a woman enters an operating room or a lecture hall. More than half the undergraduates at most universities are women.

Now, if your boss drives you crazy with sexual advances, you can report him for sexual harassment and sue him in court. If your husband beats you, he can be charged with a felony and, in most urban areas, you can escape to a battered women ’ s shelter. Women like **Marissa Mayer**, the CEO of Yahoo!, and **Ruchi Sanghvi**, head of operations at Dropbox, are some of the most powerful players in the **new technology universe**. Three women have served as secretary of state and one as national security advisor. Three women sit on the Supreme Court. Hillary Clinton almost became the

first woman president and may still achieve that goal. Major magazines and newspapers have women executive editors and managing editors -- even the New York Times, which waited until 1986 before reluctantly putting "Ms" in front of women's names on its pages. Hurricanes now bear male and female names. Women in the U.S. military **fight** alongside men. They work as firefighters and police detectives, and when a female plumber shows up to fix an overflowing toilet, most people don't panic.

Because so much has changed, many people, including young women, believe that the longest revolution is over, that we should stop complaining, be proud of our successes, and go home. Consider for a moment, though, the three demands made in 1970, and the fourth one that couldn't even be articulated.

As anyone who's been awake for the last decade knows, despite Roe v. Wade, women can't access abortion providers in many parts of the country. **States** have passed laws requiring pregnant women to watch ultrasound "pictures" of their "babies," and forced them to endure 24- or 48-hour waiting periods so that they can "rethink" their abortion decisions. In May 2012, Utah established the longest waiting period in the nation: 72 hours. In that year, in fact, anti-abortion legislatures managed to **pass 43 new laws** that, in one way or another, restricted abortion.

In big cities, finding an abortion provider is often not difficult -- unless of course you are poor (because the government won't pay for abortions). Women in rural areas have, however, been hit particularly hard. They have to travel long distances, pay to stay in hotels while they "rethink," and then, and only then, can they make the choice that was promised in 1973. So yes, women still have the right to legal abortion, but less and less access to abortion providers.

And what about child care? In 1971, Congress passed the **Comprehensive Childcare Act (CCA)**, providing national day care to women who needed it. (Such a law wouldn't have a chance today.) President Richard Nixon **vetoed** it that December. Using Cold War rhetoric, he argued that the legislation would harm the family and turn American women

into their Soviet counterparts -- that is, working drudges. His veto was also payback to his religious supporters in the South who opposed women working outside the home, and so using child care. It set childcare legislation back until, well, this very moment.

Ask any young working mother about the nightmare of finding day care for her infant or a space in a preschool for her child. Childcare, as feminists recognized, was a major precondition for women entering the labor force on an equal footing with men. Instead of comprehensive childcare, however, this country chose the more acceptable American way of dealing with problems, namely, that everyone find an individual solution. If you're wealthy, you pay for a live-in nanny. If you're middle class, you hire someone to arrive every day, ready to take care of your young children. Or you luck out and find a place in a good preschool -- or a not-so-good one.

If you're poor, you rely on a series of exhausted and generous grandparents, unemployed husbands, over-worked sisters, and goodhearted neighbors. Unlike every nation in Europe, we have no guaranteed preschool or after-school childcare, despite our endless political platitudes about how much we cherish our children. And sadly, childcare has remained off the national political agenda since 1971. It was never even mentioned during the 2012 presidential debates.

And let's not forget women's wages. In 1970, women earned, on average, **59%** of men's wages. More than four decades later, the figure is **77%**. When a university recently invited me to give a keynote address at a conference, they asked what fee I expected. I wasn't quite sure how to respond. The best advice I got -- from my husband -- was: "Just tell them to give you 77% of whatever they're paying the male keynote speaker." That response resulted in a generous honorarium.

But what about all the women -- widowed, divorced, or single -- who can't draw on a second income from a man? How can we claim we've reached the 1970 equal pay demand when 70% of the **nation's poor** are women and children? This isn't about glass ceilings. What concerns me are all the women

glued to the sticky floor of dead-end jobs that provide no benefits and no health insurance, women who, at the end of each month, have to decide whether to pay the electricity bill or feed their children.

As an activist and historian, I'm still shocked that women activists (myself included) didn't add violence against women to those three demands back in 1970. Fear of male violence was such a normal part of our lives that it didn't occur to us to highlight it -- not until feminists began, during the 1970s, to publicize the wife-beating that took place behind closed doors and to reveal how many women were raped by strangers, the men they dated, or even their husbands.

Nor did we see how any laws could end it. As Rebecca Solnit [wrote](#) in a powerful essay recently, one in five women will be raped during her lifetime and gang rape is pandemic around the world. There are now laws against rape and violence toward women. There is even a U.N. international resolution on the subject. In 1993, the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna [declared](#) that violence against girls and women violated their human rights. After much debate, member nations ratified the resolution and dared to begin calling supposedly time-honored "customs" -- wife beating, honor killings, dowry deaths, genital mutilation -- what they really are: brutal and gruesome crimes. Now, the nations of the world had a new moral compass for judging one another's cultures. In this instance, the demands made by global feminists trumped cultural relativism, at least when it involved violence against women.

Still, little enough has changed. Such violence continues to keep women from walking in public spaces. Rape, as feminists have always argued, is a form of social control, meant to make women invisible and shut them in their homes, out of public sight. That's why activists created "[take back the night](#)" protests in the late 1970s. They sought to reclaim the right to public space without fear of rape.

The daytime [brutal rape](#) and killing of a 23-year-old in India in early January 2013 prompted the [first international protest](#) around violence against women. Maybe

that will raise the consciousness of some men. But it's hard to feel optimistic when you realize how many rapes are still regularly being committed globally.

So, yes, we've come a long way, but without achieving full access to legal abortion, comprehensive childcare, or equal pay -- those three demands from so many decades ago. Nor have we won the right to enjoy public space without fearing violence, rape, or worse.

I always knew this was the longest revolution, one that would take a century or more to unfold. It's upended most of our lives, and significantly improved so many of them. Nothing will ever be the same. Yet there's still such a long way to go. I doubt I'll see full gender equality in my lifetime.

Ruth Rosen, a former columnist for the Los Angeles Times and the San Francisco Chronicle, is Professor Emerita of History at the University of California at Davis and a Scholar in Residence at U.C. Berkeley. She is the author, most recently, of [The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America](#). She is on the editorial board of Dissent magazine and is a monthly contributor to OpenDemocracy.net in England. Her op-eds, commentary and articles can be found on the website www.ruthrosen.org.

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38 readings

[New study to examine health impact of Alberta oilsands](#)



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 20 February 2013 09:40

By Marty Klinkenberg, Edmonton Journal

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/health/study%2Bexamine%2Bhealth%2Bimpact%2B>

Alberta%2Boilsands/7987729/story.html

February 19, 2013



FORT CHIPEWYAN

PHOTOGRAPH BY: RYAN JACKSON, FILE , EDMONTON JOURNAL

EDMONTON - An independent study will soon be launched into the health effects of the oilsands on nearby communities.

Partially funded by the provincial and federal governments, the study will be overseen by University of Calgary sociology professor Cora Voyageur and will re-examine cancer rates in Fort Chipewyan, a native community about 220 kilometres north of Fort McMurray.

Links to other health issues, including autism, will also be explored as researchers try to determine if contaminants from industrial developments are causing illnesses in residents of Fort Chipewyan and Fort MacKay, the native community closest to operations in the oilsands.

A study conducted in 2009 by the Alberta Cancer Board found higher-than-expected rates of rare cancers in Fort Chipewyan, but no research to date has directly connected pollution from the oilsands to incidence of disease.

The 2009 report recommended further analysis to determine possible causes, but until recently, government and two native bands — the Athabasca Chipewyan and Mikesew

Cree First Nations — were unable to agree on terms of reference for a comprehensive health study. At this point, it is hoped that research can begin as early as spring after memorandums of understanding are signed.

Links between development in the oilsands and contaminants, including cancer-causing polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, were revealed last month in studies released by the U.S. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences and the Wood Buffalo Environmental Association.

“My way of thinking, especially in light of these recent studies, is that we need a very strong independent public health voice on this issue,” said Dr. John O’Connor, who became embroiled in controversy in 2003 and 2004 after he reported elevated cancer rates in patients in Fort Chipewyan. “From a public health standpoint, it should have happened a long time ago.

“When you size up what’s going on and put it all together, it can’t be anything but related to development.”

The province conducted a statistical analysis of cancer cases in Fort Chipewyan in 2006 and found no evidence rates were higher in the region or the rest of Alberta. That led to O’Connor being accused of causing “undue alarm” by Alberta’s College of Physicians and Surgeons, a charge of which he was later exonerated.

On Tuesday, provincial health officials said they were committed to supporting Fort Chipewyan and Fort MacKay in their efforts to assess the health of their communities.

“We are making progress and are moving forward with the community health assessments,” said Howard May, a spokesman for Alberta’s Health Department. “We are supporting the communities in doing what we all agree is necessary — an overall assessment that will inform future steps.”

Eriel Deranger, communications co-ordinator for the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, is happy the study is about to commence, but disappointed that it has taken so long. The 2006 study done by the province was flawed, Deranger said, because it included only patients that lived within Fort Chipewyan’s postal code.

Once diagnosed, members of the native band often move to Fort McMurray and Edmonton for treatment, and were excluded from the study.

“The numbers got skewed because the data was poorly done,” Deranger said. “The report was mainly done simply to placate residents. Now it looks like government finally got its act together.”

O’Connor said it is critical that the study take a comprehensive look at the issue. The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers and the Oilsands Developers Group deferred when asked to comment.

“The fact that something is happening is good, but what is actually happening I’m not sure,” said O’Connor, who now treats patients in Fort MacKay and at the Northern Lights Regional Hospital in Fort McMurray. “At the end of the day, it better be credible and of the transparency that nobody will doubt it.

“An urgent study is needed.”

[mklinkenberg martykej](#)

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34 readings

Families abandon homes near Alberta bitumen facility



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 20 February 2013 08:22

by **CBC News** see video at <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/story/2013/02/19/alberta-bitumen-peace-river-baytex.html>

: Feb 19, 2013

Families abandon homes around bitumen plant2:01

Half a dozen families have abandoned their homes in a northwestern Alberta community, blaming emissions from a nearby heavy oil production site.

"We probably should have left earlier than we did," said Erin Lebreque, whose family moved away from the Peace River area, 365 kilometres west of Fort McMurray, in October.

Lebreque believes a nearby bitumen extractor facility, operated by Baytex Energy Corp., caused the nausea and headaches his family had been experiencing for months.

Baytex did not agree to an interview, but said it's not drilling new wells until it completes its own air quality study.

Alberta's Energy Minister Ken Hughes is looking into complaints from residents of the Peace River area, although the facility appears to be operating within provincial guidelines.

As CBC News reports, residents are calling on the government for more testing and stricter regulations.

Last Updated on Wednesday, 20 February 2013 08:46

37 readings

Precedent-Setting Verdict Should Reduce Bird Collision Deaths in Canada



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 19 February 2013 07:43

Ripples May be Felt Elsewhere as Other Cities Grapple with Similar Issue

<http://www.abcbirds.org/newsandreports/releases/130219.html>

MEDIA RELEASE

Contact: Robert Johns, [202-234-7181 ext.210](tel:202-234-7181), [Email click here](#)



Colin McConnell / Toronto Star

Yonge Corporate Centre building at 4100 Yonge St, owned by Cadillac Fairview, has been in court because so many birds are flying into the building and dying. The company is charged under the species at risk act with the death and injuries of more than 800 birds.

Washington, D.C., February 19, 2013) A significant legal precedent was set last week in Canada that could have ripple effects worldwide. A Canadian judge has recognized in a ruling the need for building owners to take action to reduce migratory bird deaths from lethal collisions with the highly reflective windows of office buildings.

“This is a significant development in an increasingly serious issue that is gaining more attention worldwide – the impact of man-made structures on wildlife, especially birds, and the need to modify existing buildings, as well as incorporating bird-friendly design into new construction,” said Dr. Christine Sheppard, Bird Collisions Campaign Manager for American Bird Conservancy, one of the leading U.S. bird conservation organizations and the only one in the U.S. with a national bird collisions program.

Cadillac Fairview, one of Canada’s largest commercial property owners and managers, was charged with violating the Environmental Protection Act (EPA) and the federal Species at Risk Act (SARA). In a ruling, Judge Melvyn Green of the Ontario Court of Justice found that hundreds of birds, including threatened species, had been injured and killed at the company’s Yonge Corporate Centre, consisting of three office buildings in Toronto, during the 2010 spring and fall migrations. Judge Green ruled that both the EPA and SARA are properly interpreted to prohibit the emission (intentional or unintentional) of reflected light where that reflection causes the death or injury of birds.

While the Toronto court acquitted Cadillac Fairview and related companies of the charges, that verdict was handed down only as a consequence to the corporate steps being taken to address the problem. The company began investigating window films as a solution after Ecojustice and Ontario Nature laid similar charges against a different building owner, and subsequently installed window films on the most lethal side of their complex at a cost of over \$100,000. The company also committed to retrofitting the remainder of the complex.

“The law is now clear that owners and managers of buildings with reflective windows

that kill or injure birds must take action. This is a major success, even if it's not a complete victory," said Ecojustice lawyer Albert Koehl, one of the case prosecutors.

The court found that light reflected from the Yonge Corporate Centre's glass windows was responsible for luring the birds to their injury or death. Migratory birds are confused by the illusion of safe havens like sky and trees reflected in windows. Buildings with highly reflective windows, like those found at the Yonge Corporate Centre, are especially dangerous for birds, although non-mirrored glass can also produce dangerous reflections.

Judge Green rejected Cadillac Fairview's argument that the law does not apply to protect migratory birds from reflected light. He concluded, however, that the company was on the way to addressing the problem and acted reasonably in the circumstances.

"The judge's ruling also means that the Ontario Ministry of Environment will now be obliged to regulate buildings whose reflective windows are killing birds," said Koehl.

The ruling marks the first time that the EPA and SARA have been found by a court to apply in the case of window strikes that kill birds.

"Ecojustice, Ontario Nature, FLAP and the City of Toronto are to be congratulated. Their efforts already have saved the lives of scores of birds and it appears the effects could be of huge benefit long term," Sheppard said.

The issue of bird collisions with buildings exists in all countries. In the U.S., estimates say as many as one billion birds are killed in such collisions each year. But interest in preventative measures has also been gaining momentum in the U.S. in recent years. The City of San Francisco passed Standards for Bird Safe Buildings; several municipalities around Chicago have taken legislative action, the State of Minnesota is poised to add requirements for bird-friendly design to their sustainability program, and more actions are in process.

In response to the interest in the issue in the U.S., ABC published Dr. Sheppard's **Bird-Friendly Building Design**, available for download at collisions.abcbirds.org. The publication provides a comprehensive review of the collisions issue and the science behind the problem and its solutions, including many examples of beautiful bird-friendly buildings that also work well for people living in and using them.

ABC has also led the team that created LEED Pilot Credit #55, which allows building owners, architects, designers and developers pursuing LEED (Leadership in Environment and Energy Design) green building certification to earn credit for incorporating design strategies that reduce bird collisions. Glass and window film manufacturers have taken notice and are starting to promote existing bird-friendly products and to develop new

ones.

Window films with markers are only necessary on the lower floors of buildings, where birds face the greatest danger. The City of Toronto has recommended the use of window markers since 2007.

The Fatal Light Awareness Program, an environmental group that works to protect migratory birds in the urban environment, estimates that collisions with the city's buildings kill one million birds each year. All buildings constructed after 2010 in the city of Toronto, are required to include measures to reduce bird strikes. The trial began in April, 2012.

#

American Bird Conservancy (ABC) is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit membership organization whose mission is to conserve native birds and their habitats throughout the Americas. ABC acts by safeguarding the rarest species, conserving and restoring habitats, and reducing threats, while building capacity in the bird conservation movement.

Last Updated on Tuesday, 19 February 2013 17:49

[Indigenous Youth Step up to Protect Their Roots](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 19 February 2013 07:37

By [Marzieh Goudarz](#)

Indigenous people around the world not only face loss of language and culture but are also often deprived of their basic human rights. Above, two indigenous women in Guatemala. Credit: Danilo Valladares/IPS

UNITED NATIONS, Feb 17 2013 (IPS) - Indigenous youth from some of the world's oldest living cultures are stepping forward to steer their communities past the threat of

disappearance and into an age of coexistence with an increasingly globalised world.

Last Updated on Tuesday, 19 February 2013 07:40

[Read more...](#)

[Correa Calls for Irreversible “Citizens’ Revolution”](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 19 February 2013 07:29

By [Leisa Sánchez](#) and [Ángela Meléndez](#)

Rafael Correa celebrates his re-election at the Palacio de Carondelet, in Quito, cheered by a crowd of supporters. Credit: Martín Sánchez/IPS

QUITO, Feb 18 2013 (IPS) - Ecuador’s President Rafael Correa secured yesterday his third term in office by a landslide, after vowing to radically deepen his project of citizens’ revolution by making the changes achieved thus far “irreversible”, fully achieving the goals of eradicating poverty, transforming the model of production and consolidating the “rule of the people”.

Last Updated on Tuesday, 19 February 2013 07:31

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[Climate Change Added to U.S. Government “High Risk” List](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 18 February 2013 10:21

By [Carey L. Biron](#)


Agriculture Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agriculture Service (FFAS) Michael Scuse (left) speaks to farmers about the drought conditions being felt across the country.

Credit: USDA photo by Jacob Maxwell

WASHINGTON, Feb 15 2013 (IPS) - For the first time, a U.S. government auditor has added climate change to a list of issues that pose the greatest financial risk to the government and country. It is also warning that Washington is markedly unprepared to deal with the scope of the problem.

Last Updated on Monday, 18 February 2013 10:23

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[Iran has no intention of developing nuclear weapons but if it wanted to, the United States could not thwart it, Iran's supreme leader says.](#) 

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 18 February 2013 10:07

Khamenei says US couldn't stop Iran getting bomb



Ayatollah Ali Khamenei speaks at a meeting with Iranian Azeri ethnic people in Tehran today. Iran has no intention of developing nuclear weapons but if it wanted to, the United States could not thwart it, Iran's supreme leader says.

AFP - Iran has no intention of developing nuclear weapons but if it wanted to, the United States could not thwart it, supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Saturday.

"We believe nuclear weapons must be abolished and we have no intention of building" such weaponry, Khamenei said in remarks posted on his website leader.ir.

But, Khamenei said, "if Iran had such intentions, the US could in no way prevent it" from building an atomic bomb.

[Read more...](#)

[Escaping to Ecovillages in Argentina](#) 

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 18 February 2013 10:02


Escaping to Ecovillages in Argentina

By [Marcela Valente](#)

Ecovillages, where people grow their own produce and live sustainably with nature, are mushrooming across Argentina. Credit: Natalia Ruiz Díaz/IPS

BUENOS AIRES, Feb 14 2013 (IPS) - Almost imperceptibly, sustainable settlements that combine community living with the preservation of natural resources have mushroomed across Argentina as an alternative to rampant consumerism.

[Read more...](#)

[The Latin American Exception How a Washington Global Torture Gulag Was Turned Into the Only Gulag-Free Zone on Earth](#) 

Posted by Joan Russow


Monday, 18 February 2013 08:17

By [Greg Grandin](#)

<http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175650/>

The map [tells](#) the story. To illustrate a damning new report, “Globalizing Torture: CIA Secret Detentions and Extraordinary Rendition,” [recently published](#) by the Open Society Institute, the *Washington Post* put together an equally damning graphic: it’s soaked in red, as if with blood, showing that in the years after 9/11, the CIA turned just about the whole world into a gulag archipelago.

[Read more...](#)

[India’s rice revolution](#) 

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 16 February 2013 15:46



Sumant Kumar photographed in Darveshpura, Bihar, India. Photograph: Chiara Goia for Observer Food Monthly

· By [John Vidal](#) in Bihar, [India](#)

[The Observer](#), Saturday http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/2013/feb/16/india-rice-farmers-revolution?CMP=twtd_f16 February 2013 21:00

In a village in India's poorest state, Bihar, farmers are growing world record amounts of rice – with no GM, and no herbicide. Is this one solution to world food shortages?

Last Updated on Saturday, 16 February 2013 15:55

[Read more...](#)

[Canadian Government's Campaign of Censorship and Lies Over Climate Change](#)



Posted by Sue Hiscocks

Saturday, 16 February 2013 13:56

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans is censoring its scientists from public statements that contradict the government policy.¹ In the same edition the same news paper claims that it will be easy to convince the US that Canada is hard at work on Climate Change.²

On the other hand they are doing everything in their power to get fossil fuels out of the tar sands and into the atmosphere. The proposed XL pipeline according to an article by Trans Canada Pipeline would put some 590+barrels per day south from the tar sands to Cushing. That amounts to between 400-440kg of carbon dioxide per barrel of oil. The damage per day then is about 240,000kg carbon dioxide a day into the atmosphere.

1. Times Colonist A4 feb 16 2013

2. Times Colonist A9 feb 16 2013

Last Updated on Saturday, 16 February 2013 14:39

[Canada's environmental activists seen as 'threat to national security'](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 15 February 2013 08:53

BY [Stephen Leahy](#) in Uxbridge, Canada

http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2013/feb/14/canada-environmental-activism-threat?CMP=tw_t_gu

14 February 2013

Police and security agencies describe green groups' protests and petitions as 'forms of attack', documents reveal



Canadian government agencies have been accused of conflating extremism with peaceful protests, such as the ongoing campaign against Keystone XL tar sands pipeline project. Photograph: Jonathan Ernst/Reuters

Canadian government agencies have been accused of conflating extremism with peaceful protests, such as the ongoing campaign against Keystone XL tar sands pipeline project. Photograph: Jonathan Ernst/Reuters

Monitoring of environmental activists in Canada by the country's police and security agencies has become the "new normal", according to a researcher who has analysed security documents released under freedom of information laws.

Last Updated on Friday, 15 February 2013 09:02

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[Why Beef Is Becoming More Like Chicken](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 14 February 2013 21:30

By [Christopher Leonard](#) Feb. 14, 2013T

Cheap, uniform, and bland



The beef industry has been shrinking for decades
Photo by Pablo H. Caridad/iStockphoto/Thinkstock

A new cattle drug called Zilmax is being widely used in the industrial feedlots where most of America's beef comes from, but not because it produces a better sirloin. In fact, it has been shown to make steak less flavorful and juicy than beef from untreated cattle. Many feedlot owners, big meatpackers, and at least one prominent industry group resisted the drug, worrying that the beef industry would turn off consumers if it started churning out lower-quality steaks.

Last Updated on Thursday, 14 February 2013 21:33

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[Scientist says new confidentiality rules will have 'chilling effect'](#)



Posted by Joan Russow
Thursday, 14 February 2013 13:44

[New regulations could prevent researchers from publishing finding](#)

By Margaret Munro, Postmedia News

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/Scientist+says+confidentiality+rules+will+have+chilling+effect/7963019/story.html>February 14, 2013

A bid by the federal government to impose sweeping confidentiality rules on an Arctic science project has run into serious resistance in the United States.

"I'm not signing it," said Andreas Muenchow, of the University of Delaware, who has taken issue with the wording that Canada's Department of Fisheries and Oceans has proposed for the Canada-U.S. project.

[Read more...](#)

[Iraq at the Brink: A Decade after the Invasion](#)



Posted by Joan Russow
Wednesday, 13 February 2013 15:14

By Ramzy Baroud

Soon after the joint US-British bombing campaign 'Operation Desert Fox' devastated parts of Iraq in Dec 1998, I was complaining to a friend in the lobby of the Palestine Hotel in Baghdad.

I was disappointed with the fact that our busy schedule in Iraq – mostly visiting hospitals packed with injured or Depleted Uranium Victims - left me no time to purchase a few Arabic books for my little daughter back in the states. As I got ready to embark on the long bus journey back to Jordan, an Iraqi man with a thick moustache and a carefully designed beard approached me. "This is for your daughter," he said with a smile as he handed me a plastic bag. The bag included over a dozen books with colorful images of traditional Iraqi children stories. I had never met that man before, nor did we ever meet again. He was a guest at the hotel and somehow he learned of my dilemma.

As I profusely, but hurriedly thanked him before taking my seat on the bus, he insisted that no such words were needed. “We are brothers and your daughter is like my own,” he said.

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10 readings

The Conquest of Nature And What We've Lost



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 12 March 2013 05:56

By [Lewis H. Lapham](#)

<http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175660/>

[This essay will appear in “Animals,” the Spring 2013 issue of [Lapham's Quarterly](#). This slightly adapted version is posted at TomDispatch.com with the kind permission of that magazine.]

London housewife Barbara Carter won a “grant a wish” charity contest, and said she wanted to kiss and cuddle a lion. Wednesday night she was in a hospital in shock and with throat wounds. Mrs. Carter, forty-six, was taken to the lions’ compound of the Safari Park at Bewdley Wednesday. As she bent forward to stroke the lioness, Suki, it pounced and dragged her to the ground. Wardens later said, “We seem to have made a bad error of judgment.”

— British news bulletin, 1976

Having once made a similar error of judgment with an Australian koala, I know it to be the one the textbooks define as the failure to grasp the distinction between an animal as an agent of nature and an animal as a symbol of culture. The koala was supposed to be affectionate, comforting, and cute. Of this I was certain because it was the creature of my own invention that for two weeks in the spring of 1959 I’d been presenting to readers of the San Francisco Examiner prior to its release by the Australian government into the custody of the Fleishacker Zoo.

The Examiner was a Hearst newspaper, the features editor

not a man to ignore a chance for sure-fire sentiment, my task that of the reporter assigned to provide the advance billing. Knowing little or nothing about animals other than what I'd read in children's books or seen in Walt Disney cartoons, I cribbed from the Encyclopedia Britannica (Phascolarctos cinereus, ash-colored fur, nocturnal, fond of eucalyptus leaves), but for the most part I relied on A.A. Milne's Winnie-the-Pooh, the tales of Brer Rabbit, and archival images of President Teddy Roosevelt, the namesake for whom the teddy bear had been created and stuffed, in 1903 by a toy manufacturer in Brooklyn.

Stouthearted, benevolent, and wise, the koala incoming from the Antipodes was the little friend of all the world, and on the day of its arrival at the airport, I was carrying roses wrapped in a cone of newsprint. The features editor had learned his trade in Hollywood in the 1940s, and he had in mind a camera shot of my enfolding a teddy bear in a warm and welcoming embrace. "Lost child found in the wilderness," he had said. "Lassie comes home." The koala didn't follow script. Annoyed by the flashbulbs, clawing furiously at my head and shoulders, it bloodied my shirt and tie, shredded the roses, urinated on my suit and shoes.

The unpleasantness didn't make the paper. The photograph was taken before the trouble began, and so the next morning in print, there we were, the koala and I, man and beast glad to see one another, the San Francisco Examiner's very own Christopher Robin framed in the glow of an A-list fairy tale with Brer Rabbit, Teddy Roosevelt, and Winnie-the-Pooh, all for one and one for all as once had been our common lot in Eden.

The Pantomime of Brutes

Rumors and reports of human relations with animals are the world's oldest news stories, headlined in the stars of the zodiac, posted on the walls of prehistoric caves, inscribed in the languages of Egyptian myth, Greek philosophy, Hindu religion, Christian art, our own DNA. Belonging within the circle of humankind's intimate acquaintance until somewhere toward the end of the nineteenth century, animals appeared as both agents of nature and symbols of culture. Constant

albeit speechless companions, they supplied energies fit to be harnessed or roasted, but they also were believed to possess qualities inherent in human beings, subject to the close observation of the ways in which man and beast both resembled and differed from one another.

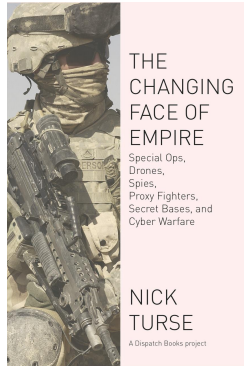
Unable to deliver lectures, the lion and the elephant taught by example; so did the turtle, the wolf, and the ant. Aesop's Fables, composed in the sixth century BC, accorded with the further researches of Aristotle, who, about 200 years later, in his History of Animals, set up the epistemological framework that for the next two millennia incorporated the presence of animals in the center ring of what became known as Western civilization:

“ Just as we pointed out resemblances in the physical organs, so in a number of animals we observe gentleness or fierceness, mildness or cross temper, courage or timidity, fear or confidence, high spirits or low cunning... Other qualities in man are represented by analogous and not identical qualities; for instance, just as in man we find knowledge, wisdom, and sagacity, so in certain animals there exists some other natural potentiality akin to these. ”

Other peoples in other parts of the world developed different sets of relations with animals worshipped as gods, but in the European theaters of operation, they served as teachers of both natural and political science. The more that was learned about their “analogous and not identical qualities, ” the more fabulous they became. Virgil's keeping of bees on his country estate in 30 BC led him in book four of the Georgics to admire their work ethic -- “At dawn they pour forth from the gates -- no loitering” ; to applaud their sense of a public and common good -- “they share the housing of their city,/passing their lives under exalted laws ” ; to approve of their chastity -- “ They forebear to indulge/in copulation or to enervate/their bodies in Venus' ways. ”

The studies of Pliny the Elder in the first century demonstrated to his satisfaction that so exceptional were the wonders of the animal kingdom that man by comparison “ is the only animal that knows nothing and can learn nothing without being taught. He can neither speak, nor

walk, nor eat, nor do anything without the prompting of nature, but only weep.”



Buy the book.

To the scientific way of looking at animals adapted by the Greco-Roman poets and philosophers, medieval Christianity added the dimension of science fiction -- any and all agents of nature not to be trusted until or unless they had been baptized in the font of a symbol or herded into the cage of an allegory. In the illuminated pages of tenth-century bibles and the rose windows of Gothic cathedrals, the bee became a sign of hope, the crow and the goat both references to Satan, the fly indicative of lust, the lamb and the dove variant embodiments of Christ. Instead of remarking upon the extraordinary talents of certain animals, the holy fathers produced mythical beings, among them the dragon (huge, batwinged, fire breathing, barbed tail) and the unicorn (white body, blue eyes, the single horn on its forehead colored red at the tip).

The resurrection of classical antiquity in fifteenth-century Italy restored the emphasis on the observable correlation between man and beast. The anatomical drawings in Leonardo da Vinci's notebooks (of horses, swans, human cadavers) are works of art of a match with *The Last Supper* and the *Mona Lisa*. He saw human beings as organisms among other organisms participant in the great chain of being, the various life forms merging into one another in their various compounds of air, earth, fire, and water. Giuseppe Arcimboldo's 1566 portrait of a man's head anticipates the conclusion reached in 1605 by the English bishop Joseph Hall: "Mankind, therefore, hath within itself his goats, chameleons, salamanders, camels, wolves, dogs, swine, moles, and whatever sorts of beasts: there are but a few men amongst

men. ”

The eighteenth-century naturalists shared with Virgil the looking to the animal kingdom for signs of good government. The Count of Buffon, keeper of the royal botanical garden for King Louis XV, recognized in 1767 the beaver as a master architect capable of building important dams, but he was even more impressed by the engineering of the beaver’s civil society, by “some particular method of understanding one another, and of acting in concert… However numerous the republic of beavers may be, peace and good order are uniformly maintained in it.”

Buffon was accustomed, as were Virgil and Leonardo, not only to the company of horses and bees but also to the sight and sound of ducks, cows, chickens, pigs, turtles, goats, rabbits, hawks. They supplied the bacon, the soup, and the eggs, but they also invited the question asked by Ralph Waldo Emerson in 1836: “Who can guess… how much industry and providence and affection we have caught from the pantomime of brutes?”

How the Animal World Lost Its License to Teach

Not much if the brutes are nowhere to be found. Over the course of the last two centuries, animals have become all but invisible in the American scheme of things, drummed out of the society of their myth-making companions, gone from the rural as well as the urban landscape. John James Audubon in 1813 on the shore of the Ohio River marveled at the slaughter of many thousands of wild pigeons by men amassed in the hundreds, armed with guns, torches, and iron poles. In 1880, on a Sioux reservation in the Dakota Territory, Luther Standing Bear could not eat of “the vile-smelling cattle” substituted for “our own wild buffalo” that the white people had been killing “as fast as possible. ”

And as observers, they were not alone. Many others have noted the departure of animals from our human world and culture. Between 150,000 and 200,000 horses could, for example, be found in the streets of New York City in 1900, requiring the daily collection of five million pounds of manure. By 1912, their function as a means of transport had been outsourced to the automobile.

As with the carriage and dray horses, so also with the

majority of mankind's farmyard associates and nonhuman acquaintances. Out of sight and out of mind, the chicken, the pig, and the cow lost their licenses to teach. The modern industrial society emerging into the twentieth century transformed them into products and commodities, swept up in the tide of economic and scientific progress otherwise known as the conquest of nature.

Animals acquired the identities issued to them by man, became labels marketed by a frozen-food or meat-packing company, retaining only those portions of their value that fit the formula of research tool or cultural symbol -- circus or zoo exhibit, corporate logo or Hollywood cartoon, active ingredient in farm-fresh salmon or genetically modified beef.

It was 10 years after my meeting with the Australian koala that I was first introduced to an animal in a state of nature -- a gray langur (*Semnopithecus entellus*, golden fur, black face, fond of fruit and flowers). It was about two feet tall, very quick on its feet, one of 60 or 70 monkeys of various species wandering around the ashram of the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi on the shore of the Ganges River, 128 miles north of New Delhi.

The Maharishi at the time (February 1968) was at the high-water mark of his fame as a guru, his science of Transcendental Meditation having captured the celebrity markets in Los Angeles, New York, and London, and that winter he was teaching the lesson of the yellow marigold to a select company of disciples, among them the four Beatles, who had made the journey from the decadent, materialist West in search of enlightened well-being in the spiritual East. The ashram was set in a forest of teak and sheesham trees at the base of the Himalayan escarpment, and again on assignment from the American press, I'd been advised by the editor of the *Saturday Evening Post* to listen for the voice of the cosmos under the roof of the world.

During my nearly three weeks on the ashram I learned nothing about the Beatles that wasn't known to their fans, from the Maharishi little more than the fact that at the fifth level of realization, "Everything becomes hilarious." But from the monkey I learned that it was somebody else -- not a pet

or a little friend to all the world, not an allegory, a movie actor, or a laboratory experiment. Two days after my arrival I noticed it standing in a tree opposite the door to the small outbuilding (one room, whitewashed stone, no window) in which I' d been granted accommodation near the ashram' s lower gate. Another two days, and it was always there whenever I was coming or going, and it occurred to me that it was I who was being observed by the monkey, not the monkey who was being observed by me.

On the morning of the fifth day, I presented it with a slice of bread, late in the afternoon with half an orange. It accepted both offerings as a matter of course; no sign of acknowledgment, much less of appreciation or affection. My sense of its attitude was that I' d been slow to pick up on the custom of the country, and later that same evening one of the Maharishi' s principal subordinates, a saffron-robed monk by the name of Raghvendra, validated my impression as not wrong. In India, he said, the gray langur was sacred. Properly known as the Hanuman langur -- Hanuman being the name of the Hindu monkey god of healing and worship -- it was revered for its willingness to accompany sadhus on pilgrimages, and therefore enjoyed almost as many privileges as the cow, free to ransack food stalls, at liberty to plunder grain shops.

For whatever reason, its motives presumably mixed, the monkey for the next 10 days, attentively on post at the height of my right knee, accompanied me on the path to pure consciousness, a path on which I was careful to scatter crumbs of stale chocolate and shards of dry cheese. If I was listening to the Maharishi discuss Vishnu in the meeting hall, the monkey would be comfortably settled on the corrugated-tin roof; when meals were served on the terrace, where the disciples received their daily ration of rice, tea, and tasteless boiled vegetables, the monkey perched in the vine-trellised arbor behind the refectory table, on watch for the chance that I might send in its direction an overcooked carrot or a destabilized turnip.

When for the last time I walked out in the morning from the stone outbuilding at the bamboo gate, on the way to the ferry across the Ganges, the monkey wasn' t standing in its

nearby tree. Possibly it understood that my time was up, that it had done all that could be done with a pilgrim who was slow to catch the drift and didn't know the language. On the other hand, probably it didn't. What was certain was that it didn't care. It had moved on, gone somewhere else, grown bored by the sound of a voice clearly not the voice of the cosmos.

A Dearth of Animals, a Plague of Pets

The Renaissance scholar and essayist Michel de Montaigne toyed with a similar line of thought in 1576 by asking himself, "When I play with my cat, who knows if I am not a pastime for her more than she is to me?" The question placed Montaigne's customary pillow of doubt under the biblical teaching that man had been made in God's image, and thereby granted "dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and for every living thing that moves upon the earth."

The claim to the throne of the universe on the part of what Montaigne called "the most vulnerable and frail of all creatures," he regarded as vainglorious impudence, man dressing himself up in the robe of divinity, separating himself from "the horde of other creatures," distributing to them "such portions of faculties and powers as he sees fit." Amused by the presumption, Montaigne took the trouble to ask follow-up questions:

"How does he [man] know, by the force of his intelligence, the secret internal stirrings of animals? By what comparison between them and us does he infer the stupidity that he attributes to them?... It is a matter of guesswork whose fault it is that we do not understand one another; for we do not understand them any more than they do us. By this same reasoning they may consider us beasts, as we consider them."

The American writer Henry Beston revisited the questions while walking on a beach at Cape Cod in the 1920s, watching constellations of shorebirds form and reform in "instant and synchronous obedience" to some sort of mysterious command. Astonished by the spiraling flight of what he likened to "living stars," Beston understood that nonhuman creatures eluded the definitions made for them by man, that

they could not be classified as mechanisms programmed by the master software designer in the sky to hop, growl, swim, glide, roar, nest, crawl, peep, mate.

“We need,” said Beston, “another and a wiser and perhaps a more mystical concept of animals... We patronize them for their incompleteness, for their tragic fate of having taken form so far below ourselves. And therein we err, and greatly err... They are not brethren, they are not underlings; they are other nations, caught with ourselves within the net of life and time, fellow prisoners of the splendor and travail of the earth.”

At the turn of the twenty-first century, what remains of the once-upon-a-time fellowship incorporating man and beast has for the most part been reduced to the care and keeping of pets. Possibly to compensate for the rapid and permanent disappearance of global wilderness species, the numbers of pets in the United States have outpaced the entire human population south of the Potomac and west of the Mississippi — 70 million dogs, 75 million cats, 5 million horses, God alone knows how many boxed reptiles and caged birds. That animals are still looked to for some form of instruction, believed to possess “analogous qualities” recognized by Aristotle as being “akin to sagacity,” is a proposition sustained by the large demand for documentaries exploring the jungles of Africa and by the fact that the Internet postings of unscripted cat videos draw bigger crowds than do the expensive mechanical dolls posed in the ritualized stagings of the Super Bowl.

For 2,500 years it has been known to the students of nature that the more one learns about animals, the more wonderful they become. The observation stands confirmed by the instruments of both science and art, but the animals are most instructively perceived when they are seen, as they were by Beston from the beach on Cape Cod, as other nations complete in themselves, “gifted with extensions of the senses we have lost or never attained, living by voices we shall never hear.”

The environmental casualty reports filed from the four corners of the earth over the last two hundred years don't leave much ground for argument on Montaigne's question as

to who is the beast and who is the man. Whether attempted by men armed with test tubes or bulldozers, the conquest of nature is a fool's errand. However it so happens that the beasts manage to live not only at ease within the great chain of being but also in concert with the tides and the season and the presence of death, it is the great lesson they teach to humanity. Either we learn it, or we go the way of the great auk.

Lewis H. Lapham is editor of [Lapham's Quarterly](#), and a TomDispatch regular. Formerly editor of Harper's Magazine, he is the author of numerous books, including *Money and Class in America*, *Theater of War*, *Gag Rule*, and, most recently, [Pretensions to Empire](#). The New York Times has likened him to H.L. Mencken; Vanity Fair has suggested a strong resemblance to Mark Twain; and Tom Wolfe has compared him to Montaigne. This essay, slightly adapted for TomDispatch, introduces "Animals," the Winter 2013 issue of [Lapham's Quarterly](#), soon to be released at that website.

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Last Updated on Tuesday, 12 March 2013 13:46

35 readings

[Nuclear Industry Withers in U.S. as Wind Pummels Prices](#)



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 11 March 2013 21:05

By Julie Johnsson & Naureen S. Malik - Mar 11, 2013 <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-03-11/nuclear-industry-withers-in-u-s-as-wind-pummels-prices-energy.html>

A glut of government-subsidized wind power may help accomplish a goal some environmentalists have sought for decades: kill off U.S. nuclear **power plants** while

reducing reliance on electricity from burning coal.

That's the assessment of executives and utility experts after the U.S. wind-energy industry went on a \$25 billion growth binge in 2012, racing to qualify for a federal tax credit that was set to expire at year's end.

The surge added a record 13,124 megawatts of **wind turbines** to the nation's power grid, up 28 percent from 2011. The new wind farms increased financial pressure on traditional generators such as **Dominion Resources (D)** Inc. and Exelon Corp. in their operating regions. That's because wind energy undercut power prices already driven to 10-year-lows by an abundance of natural gas.

"Right now, natural gas and wind power are more economic than nuclear power in the Midwestern **electricity market**," Howard Learner, executive director of the Environmental Law and Policy Center, a Chicago-based advocate of cleaner energy, said in a phone interview. "It's a matter of economic competitiveness."

Wind-generated electricity supplied about 3.4 percent of U.S. demand in 2012 and the share is projected to jump to 4.2 percent in 2014, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

The wind power boom has benefited consumers in regions where wind development is fastest, contributing to a 40 percent wholesale power-price plunge since 2008 in the Midwest, for example. Yet the surplus is creating havoc for nuclear power and coal generators that sell their output into short-term markets.

'Perfect Storm'

The impact is greatest in the capacity-glutted Midwest. There, Richmond, Virginia-based Dominion is closing a money-losing reactor and selling coal plants, Exelon warns of shrinking nuclear margins and an **Edison International (EIX)** merchant coal-plant unit has gone into bankruptcy.

"It's a perfect storm," said Charley Parnell, a Chicago-based spokesman for Edison's Midwest Generation unit, in a phone interview. Pricing, already under pressure from cheap natural gas and the lingering effects of recession, now has a wind factor. "Wind absolutely plays a part in that," he said, "especially in the off-peak hours."

Atomic-power providers complain that the upheaval is an example of government subsidies distorting the market -- to the particular detriment of nuclear which provides 19 percent of the nation's electricity, is clean and has proved safe despite perennial concern by activists that it poses a danger to public safety.

Prices Below Zero

Wind power has two advantages. Green energy laws in many states require utilities to buy **wind energy** under long-term contracts as part of their clean-energy goals and take that power even when they don't need it. Wind farms also receive a federal tax credit of \$22 for every megawatt-hour generated.

Thus, even when there is no demand for the power they produce, operators keep turbines spinning, sending their surplus to the grid because the tax credit assures them a profit.

On gusty days in the five states with the most wind power - - **Texas**, California, **Iowa**, **Illinois** and **Oregon** -- this can flood power grids, causing prices to drop below zero during times when demand is light. Wholesale electricity during **off-peak hours** in Illinois has sold for an average price of \$23.39 per megawatt hour since Jan. 1, after hitting a record low of -\$41.08 on Oct. 11, the least since the Midwest Independent Transmission System Operator Inc. began sharing real-time pricing in 2005.

'Negative Prices'

Meanwhile, nuclear and coal plants must continue running even as this "negative pricing" dynamic forces them to pay grid operators to take the power they produce. "It is becoming more pronounced as more wind is coming on," Christopher Crane, chief executive officer of Chicago-based **Exelon Corp. (EXC)**, said in a phone interview. If the push to "over-develop" subsidized wind continues, "there is a very high probability that existing safe, reliable nuclear plants will no longer be competitive and will have to be retired early," according to Crane.

More development seems a certainty. Wind power got another boost when Congress, as part of January's deficit deal, extended the production tax credit through Dec. 31, amending current law so that projects begun this year will receive the 10-year tax break regardless of when they come online.

Defending Wind

While few new projects are expected to be built out this year due to developers' mad dash at the end of 2012, "we think 2014 will pick up again," said Rob Gramlich, interim CEO of the **American Wind Energy Association**, a trade group.

Gramlich doubts wind power is the chief reason that spot-market power producers like Exelon are suffering a profit drain. "Low prices are due to a lot of things, mostly shale gas," he said. "But to some extent wind does reduce power prices and that's a good thing for homes and businesses."

Natural gas is fuel for a growing number of U.S. power plants because of its cost advantage and new environmental rules for coal. Wind is gaining as turbine costs

plummet -- they are down one-third since 2010 -- and technology gains make windmills economical in states with lower average wind speeds.

Google Inc. (GOOG) is investing \$1 billion in wind and solar projects and **Warren Buffett's** MidAmerican Energy Holdings, Iowa's largest utility owner, owns 6 percent of U.S. wind-energy capacity and has invested about \$13 billion in renewable energy.

Tenfold Rise

U.S. wind installations have risen 10-fold since 2003 to 60,007 megawatts, attracting \$120 billion investment that has produced new capacity equivalent to 14 nuclear power plants and enough to power 14.7 million homes, the AWEA, the industry group based in **Washington**, D.C., said in a Jan. 30 report.

Wind's rapid gains have created headaches for grid operators since winds often blow strongest when homes and businesses use the least amount of power: at night and during the spring and fall seasons, said **Paul Patterson**, a New York-based analyst with Glenrock Associates LLC.

"I think this model's got problems with it," Patterson said in a phone interview. "There are not many examples where the product you produce actually has negative value."

Before 2006, when wind power began its latest growth spurt, negative prices were extremely rare. The phenomenon is now prevalent in parts of the Midwest, Texas and the West Coast where turbine installations are growing fastest, data compiled by Bloomberg show.

"We can't find enough demand for the amount of energy created by Mother Nature," said **Doug Johnson**, spokesman for the Bonneville Power Administration, which manages the grid in the Pacific Northwest. The transmission operator, based in **Portland**, Oregon, paid wind operators \$2.7 million last year to stay off line so it could make room for the power from hydroelectric generators handling the runoff from melting mountain snows.

Wind vs Fossil Fuels

The surge in wind generation is also squeezing the number of hours that fossil-fuel plants are needed to supply some wind-heavy markets, said Michael Blaha, the principal analyst of North American power research for Wood Mackenzie Ltd. in Houston. "It makes it economically harder for fossil units because when the wind's up, it's going to start depressing prices," he added.

Negative prices are starting to seep into a Southern California power hub and may become more frequent as state regulations mandate that 33 percent of its power come from renewable sources by 2020, Blaha said. "That extra amount is going to knock out about 15 percent" of energy filled by fossil fuels.

Exelon in Illinois

Exelon, the largest U.S. nuclear operator, says a surplus of wind power is making negative pricing a problem in Illinois, where it owns six nuclear plants and a wind project. Prices for markets served by Exelon's Clinton and Quad Cities reactors trade below zero between 8 percent and 14 percent of off-peak hours, said Joseph Dominguez, Exelon's senior vice-president for governmental and regulatory affairs and public policy.

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The market should remain "open and fair" even in the "very rare instances" when demand can't support two low-cost sources like wind and nuclear, Gramlich of the wind trade group said. "Just because one was there first doesn't mean they automatically get the right of way to operate 24-7."

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[Enlarge image](#)

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12 readings

SEND a MESSAGE ASAP to BC's politicians to rescind the TFL expansion bill



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 11 March 2013 20:54

SEND a MESSAGE ASAP to BC's politicians to rescind the TFL expansion bill
at: www.BCForestMovement.com



The BC Liberal government proposes new law to expand Tree Farm Licences (TFL's) to give major companies exclusive logging rights over vast areas of public forest lands - to the detriment of conservation, communities, and First Nations.

NOTE: The proposed bill could go through its critical 2nd reading THIS WEEK.

Also **PLEASE COME** to the **Sat., Mar. 16 "RALLY for ANCIENT FORESTS and BC FORESTRY JOBS"** in Victoria to send the strongest message to BC's politicians - and recruit as many friends and family to attend! (11:30am Centennial Square, 12:00 noon Legislature, Victoria - see above website for details)

Also **WRITE your own personal email** to Minister of Forests Steve Thomson (steve.thomson.mla@leg.bc.ca), Legislature House Leader Mike de Jong (mike.dejong.mla@leg.bc.ca) and to your own provincial MLA representative for your riding, who you can find at: <http://www.leg.bc.ca/mla/3-1-1.htm>

Recently, the BC Liberal government introduced a bill that, if passed into law, could be used to massively expand private property-like rights for major logging companies on BC's public forest lands and on unceded First Nations lands. The proposed law, included within a larger omnibus bill, Bill 8, would empower BC's Forest Minister to readily create new Tree Farm Licences (TFL's) that give exclusive logging rights over large expanses of Crown lands to major companies who currently have "volume-based" logging rights (ie. in cubic metres of wood). This undemocratic, anti-environmental proposal could increase the claims to compensation - to be paid for by BC's taxpayers - by major logging companies in light of future conservation designations and First Nations treaty settlements.

It's key to tell the BC Liberal government to delete section 24 (the part with the TFL expansion proposal) of Bill 8, because the proposed law would:

1. Undermine forest protections for wildlife, scenery, water quality, and recreation, by making it more difficult and expensive to create new protected areas.
2. Further entrench the current unsustainable rate of overcutting taking place in BC's forests.
3. Make First Nations treaty settlement on their unceded lands more difficult, lengthy and expensive.
4. Privatize forest inventories into the hands of logging companies.
5. Result in more locked gates and obstructions to forest recreationists.

Next week, the BC Liberals are planning to introduce Bill 8 for its second reading - a critical phase toward's the bill's passage. They must be STOPPED and convinced to delete section 24.

Key articles on this issue:

MLA Bob Simpson's update: [Tell Ministers to Stop Bill](#)

[Tree licence rollover has no public benefit](#)

AFA Media Release: [Pine Beetle used as Trojan Horse to Increase Privatization of BC's Public Forest Lands](#)

MLA Bob Simpson: [Claim vs. Fact](#)

The Tye: [Sweeping forest bill gathers foes](#)

The Province: [Sneaky Liberals are planning a BC forest giveaway \(Ben Parfitt, CCPA\)](#)

[Privatizing our public forests](#) (Bob Simpson, Independent MLA)

MLA Bob Simpson's Response to Minister Thomson: [The real facts about the proposed tenure legislation](#)

SEND a MESSAGE to STOP this PROPOSAL at: www.BCForestMovement.com and come out to our March 16 forest rally in Victoria (details on website).

3 readings

Scientific freedom in Canada **KEEP IT TO YOURSELVES**



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 11 March 2013 14:04

By the Economist

<http://www.economist.com/blogs/americasview/2013/03/scientific-freedom-canada>

Mar 7th 2013, 1:48

by M.D. | OTTAWA

ONE of the hallmarks of the Conservative government led by Stephen Harper, Canada's prime minister, has been its ultra-tight control of communications. A central group in the Privy Council Office, the department that supports the prime minister and cabinet, vets most speeches, news releases and responses to media queries, and provides talking points to help ministers and bureaucrats toe the party line. They are usually offered a simple choice: Sing from the same songbook or shut up.

From the government's point of view this approach has worked splendidly, with politicians and officials delivering a uniform message. Journalists are less happy, however, and complain about receiving responses long after deadlines have passed—if their inquiries are answered at all. An even more disgruntled group is scientists working for the state, who say their ability to explain their research and findings to the people who pay for it—the Canadian public—has been severely restricted.

The scientists and the union representing them have complained mightily in the past, with little effect. The government shrugged off a scolding it received last year from *Nature*, a leading journal, which advised Canada "to set free its scientists". However, it will be harder to ignore a new wave of criticism stemming from the government's effort to extend its communications control to American scientists working on joint projects.

At issue is the wording of a contract for a proposed collaboration in the Arctic between America's University of Delaware and the Canadian department of fisheries and oceans. Whereas a contract for a previous effort stipulated that "project-related information shall be freely available to all Parties to this Agreement and may be used, disseminated or published by any Party, at any time", the new agreement says that "any technology, data or other information of any kind related or arising from the Project...shall be deemed confidential and neither Party may release any such Information to others in any way whatsoever without the prior written authorisation of the other Party".

Andreas Muenchow, one of the American scientists involved, cried foul. "I feel that it threatens my academic freedom and potentially muzzles my ability to publish data and interpretation and talk timely on science issues of potential public interest without government interference," he wrote on his [blog](#). "I cannot in good conscience sign away my freedom to speak, publish, educate, learn, and share both of what I know and what I do not know." The wording is being renegotiated.

The source of the criticism was particularly noteworthy given America's own about-face on scientific disclosure in recent years. During the presidency of George W. Bush, the United States government was **often accused** of ignoring or burying significant research. Upon taking office in 2009, Barack Obama promptly ordered all heads of federal agencies to make available as much information as possible. He followed that up last month with a directive that his administration increase public access to federally funded scientific research and that researchers publish their data. In contrast, Canada has maintained its tight lid on communications between government scientists and the media (although researchers are mostly free to speak at conferences and publish in journals). Combined with the Conservatives' occasionally ostrich-like attitude towards science—"We're not governing on the basis of the latest statistics," the justice minister once proudly proclaimed—the government finds itself painted as both secretive and retrograde.

The record is not uniformly grim. As part of its commitment to the **Open Government Partnership**, which it joined in April 2012, Canada has been making more data available online. Statistics Canada, the public statistical agency, has made its entire database free. However, these moves are often overshadowed by comical excesses in communication control, such as **preventing** a scientist from talking to journalists about his work on a flood 13,000 years ago without approval from a minister, or ordering a researcher not to attend the launch of his own novel because it dealt with climate change.

The information commissioner, an independent officer of parliament, is considering a **request** from a group of environmental lawyers to investigate whether the government is violating the Access to Information Act by muzzling its scientists. Given that her office is already fighting the government in court over perceived violations in four other areas, the scientists are unlikely to get relief from that quarter any time soon.

8 readings

Quota rises as herring count falls



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 11 March 2013 09:20

by JUDITH LAVOIE / TIMES COLONIST

MARCH 9, 2013 <http://www.timescolonist.com/news/local/quota-rises-as-herring-count-falls-1.88502>

Gilnetters and seiners hauled in thousands of tons of herring from the Strait of Georgia this week, but there are fewer fish in the water than last year, even though the quota for the roe herring fishery is higher. That has herring conservationists concerned about the future of stocks, especially as some populations, such as in the Gorge, have all but disappeared while others, such as on the west coast of Vancouver Island, remain too depleted to allow a fishery. "Herring are more valuable in the water feeding the salmon than they are

being killed so their eggs can go to sushi bars in Japan," said David Ellis, a private Vancouver fisheries planner. "They have taken a very large tonnage of herring. It leaves little for the killer whales, marbled murrelets, chinook and coho salmon that are heavily affected by the loss of so much herring at the most critical time in their breeding cycle."

Roger Kanno, herring resource manager for Fisheries and Oceans Canada, said the estimated herring biomass this year in the Strait of Georgia — an assessment area that runs from Campbell River, to Howe Sound and down to Victoria — is 82,952 tons. That is down from 152,613 tons last year. "That population is doing quite well, it is considered to be productive, but it is actually down a bit this year," he said. Kanno said it is not known why numbers drop. "It's a very short-lived species and there are a lot of them, so stocks fluctuate," he said.

The quota for the roe herring fishery — fish caught for their eggs — for the Strait of Georgia is 13,005 tons this year, up from 11,500 tons last year, Kanno said. However, that is not the whole picture as there are other herring fisheries — such as the winter food and bait fisheries — in the area, he said. "A maximum of 20 per cent of the forecast biomass is allocated to all the fisheries," he said. Last year, fishers took only 12 per cent of the allocated quota because of poor market conditions. Kanno has heard anecdotally that more large females are being caught this year.

Ellis said that is not good news. "Roe fishing doesn't work because they are taking all the large female fish. If you take 90 per cent of all the females going back to one bay, it removes that population," he said. However, Kanno said it is sustainable to take 20 per cent. "It is based on science. The Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat approves it every year," he said. DFO surveys five areas of B.C. for herring fisheries and, this year, only the Strait of Georgia and Prince Rupert are open. "The three other areas, the Central Coast, West Coast of Vancouver Island and Haida Gwaii are below the commercial fishing threshold, so we're not fishing in those areas," Kanno said.

There has been no fishery on the west coast of Vancouver Island since 2006. Haida Gwaii has been closed since 2003 and the Central Coast since 2008. Ellis wonders whether those populations will ever return. "The Vancouver Island stocks are so over-fished from the past, they can't go back there," he said. "They say nature has not provided good ocean survival, but I think that's a cover-up." Instead of killing fish for roe, British Columbians should be looking to First Nations, Ellis said. First Nations, many of whom have lost their roe harvest and blame commercial overfishing, traditionally harvested the roe after it had been laid on kelp, leaving the adult fish alive to spawn another year.

Meanwhile, Andrew Paine, founder of the Salish Sea Herring Enhancement Society, said few herring have appeared in the Gorge this year, despite efforts to enhance habitat. "It's really hard to say what is happening with this population and why they are not coming back," he said. Historic commercial overfishing and creosote pilings — the chemicals can kill the eggs — are the most obvious reasons, Paine said. "I'm not a scientist, but 20 per cent of the whole population seems like an unsustainable amount when you are taking the largest, spawning fish," he said.

<http://www.timescolonist.com/news/local/quota-rises-as-herring-count-falls-1.88502>

30 readings

Across U.S., Health Concerns Vie with Fracking Profits



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 11 March 2013 08:14

By **George Gao**

NEW YORK, Mar 8 2013 (IPS) - Peter "Pete" Seeger is a 93-year old U.S. folk legend who resides near Wappingers Falls in southern New York. He can be spotted occasionally on the traffic-heavy Route 9,

flanked by world peace signs and armed with a banjo.



Activists behind a New York Police Department vehicle at an anti-fracking demonstration in Manhattan, New York City organized by CREDO Action and New Yorkers Against Fracking. The demonstration was aimed at New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, who was holding a policy summit in the New York Sheraton across the street. Credit: Adam Welz for CREDO Action/cc by 2.0

Seeger is famous for his protest songs – which tackle topics ranging from U.S. wars abroad to environmental degradation at home.

Last month, Seeger **signed a letter** – along with hundreds of health professionals and local organisations – addressed to Governor Andrew Cuomo, encouraging him to take into account “any and all public health impacts before deciding whether or not to allow fracking in New York”.

The letter – released to the public on Feb. 27 by Concerned Health Professionals of NY – warned of “public health consequences” that have emerged in neighbouring Pennsylvania, where fracking is allowed.

Formally termed “high pressure hydraulic fracturing”, fracking is a method used to capture natural gas from shale rocks. It requires horizontal drilling deep beneath the earth’s surface, then pressurising fluid to fracture shale rocks, which allows natural gas to escape.

According to the letter, health risks associated with fracking include hazardous air pollutants; improper disposal of radioactive wastewater; and climate-altering methane emissions.

“What they’re finding in Pennsylvania are people with rashes, nosebleeds, people with serious abdominal pain and so on,” said Sandra Steingraber, a distinguished scholar in residence at Ithaca College and founder of Concerned Health Professionals of NY.

“In general, we need better data on all this, and the problem is that fracking got rolled out across the

landscape without any advanced health studies being done," she told IPS.

On Mar. 6, the New York State Assembly voted to extend the moratorium on fracking until 2015, which would delay drilling for two more years and make way for new health assessments to be conducted.

The legislation must now pass through the state Senate and be approved by Cuomo if it is to take hold.

"This is the first time in my knowledge that the oil and gas industry (may be) stopped in its tracks because of unanswered questions about health," said Steingraber.

Will Fracking Spread Internationally?

When asked whether fracking will expand to the global south, Michael T. Klare – director of the Five College Program in Peace and World Security Studies at Hampshire College – told IPS, "It will happen, but they (currently) don't have the capacity to do it on their own.

"So countries, like China, are buying into (U.S.) companies to acquire the know how to do so," he said.

If shale gas projects were to expand into Poland and Ukraine, which are currently exploring the option, "(it) would be a blow to Russia, because Russia now is a major supplier of natural gas to Europe, and depends on that for income and for political influence," he added.

David G. Victor, a professor at the Graduate School of School of International Relations and Pacific Studies, told IPS, "Cheap natural gas will make it harder for countries (in the global south) to justify natural gas projects, because the price they're going to get for the gas will be much lower."

"If you're Nigeria or any of these countries that are exporting liquified natural gas, [it costs] 10 dollars or 12 dollars per BTU for your gas when you deliver it... that's a ton of money.

"There are a lot of places that could produce a lot of gas very quickly, but the problem is getting it to the markets. That's the main difference between gas and oil," he added.

On the price of coal, Victor said, "While stock prices have come down a lot, the long-term contracts are more stable."

He cites a few reasons: the weak world economy has lowered demand for coal, which has driven down its prices; and coal burning is facing more regulations, due to the heavy pollution it causes.

"The third reason is low natural gas prices here in the U.S.," he said.

In response to an IPS inquiry, Christopher Neal, a senior communications officer at the World Bank, stated, "The Bank is not financing shale gas exploration or projects involving hydraulic fracturing, and there are no planned projects of this nature."

U.S. energy trends

The decision in New York came at a time when natural gas is abundant in the U.S., at unprecedented levels, largely due to fracking.

But with increasing awareness of fracking's potential side effects and the lack of regulations over the industry, a national opposition is growing as well.

"There are a couple of other states that have moratoriums: New Jersey has one, Maryland has one – and North Carolina is developing new rules on fracking," said Amy Mall, a senior policy analyst at the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC).

"Companies that aren't highly regulated don't have to prove anything, and therefore, data is not collected. So we don't have the type of data (on fracking) that we might for another industry, because it has been so severely under-regulated," she told IPS.

Part of the reason fracking rolled out with little oversight was due to the influence of powerful oil and gas industries in politics.

Michael T. Klare, director of the Five College Programme in Peace and World Security Studies at Hampshire College, told IPS, "The experience in Pennsylvania and elsewhere is that local people just get steamrolled

by the oil companies and their lawyers and lobbyists.”

He said, “The biggest (player) is ExxonMobil, because they bought XTO (Energy), which was the biggest natural gas company using fracking... and they’ve been pushing (fracking) very hard. And other giant companies are in on the act.”

The U.S. energy mix

Proponents of fracking argue that natural gas is cleaner than coal, and could act as a bridge between fossil fuels and renewable energy.

However, “When you say bridge, people use it to mean different things. For example, how long a bridge, how wide a bridge, how high a bridge... it’s just a term that doesn’t have a lot of details,” said Mall of NRDC.

Klare, a defence correspondent at The Nation, warned, “Companies and utilities that might invest in renewable sources of energy are all rushing to convert their electricity generation to natural gas.

“These facilities will be in operation for decades to come, so there’s no sign that the country’s moving in the direction of renewable energy... It’s unclear where this bridge is leading to, except more gas,” he told IPS.

David G. Victor, a professor at the Graduate School of International Relations and Pacific Studies, noted that renewable technologies are currently unreliable, in terms of “keeping the lights on”.

“There’s a world of difference between some engineer thinking about a clever solution that works in the laboratory under ideal conditions, and then (using it in) actual power grids,” he said, arguing that they exist in small markets and depend too heavily on subsidies.

When asked about renewable energy, Klare agreed that they were in infant stages.

“Renewable energy is a much younger, newer kind of energy. Naturally, at this stage of its development, it’s less efficient and more expensive than oil and natural gas,” he said.

However, Klare argued that renewable energy deserves more government support, saying that this would be good for the U.S. in the long term.

“After all, oil has been around for 150 years, and natural gas has been around for 50 years or so. They’ve had more time; they’ve had a lot of government subsidies along the way and they still get government subsidies,” said Klare.

Mall of NRDC added that there is also a middle ground: “As long as we do need natural gas... There are much better ways to produce it, with much stronger protections and much cleaner methods than the industry is using now,” she said.

Mall cited ways to capture air pollutants, encase wastewater in steel tanks, use less toxic chemicals in fluids and keep fracking away from watersheds.

Health and community

Mall said, “Because of (U.S.) property laws, a lot of (homeowners) don’t own the oil and gas rights beneath their property. Therefore, they can’t stop (fracking) on their own land, and they’re not (fully) compensated for the damage to their own land.”

Related IPS Articles

- [Local Opposition Rises Against Fracking Proposal](#)
- [More Aging U.S. Coal Plants Hit the Chopping Block](#)
- [U.S. Security Establishment Increasingly Worried about Climate Change](#)

Steingraber, author of “Living Downstream: An Ecologist’s Personal Investigation of Cancer and the Environment” (2010), added, “There are potential avenues of (chemical) exposure to people who didn’t consent to any of this.”

She noted that health problems associated with chemical exposure from fracking are expensive ones.

“We’re talking about preterm birth, which is the leading cause of infant mortality and the leading cause of disability (in the U.S.),” she said.

“Before we decide that fracking is this bonanza economically, providing royalty money and so on, we really

need a full picture of the costs and benefits," she argued.

"The job of government (is) to protect people from harm... whether that's protecting us from some invading foreign army, or against chemicals others are putting into environments that get into our bodies," she said.

Last Updated on Monday, 11 March 2013 08:18

14 readings

Lockheed Martin's Herculean Efforts to Profit From Defense Spending The Epic Story of the C-130



Peace News

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 10 March 2013 06:29

By **Jeremiah Goulka** <http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175659/>

When I was a kid obsessed with military aircraft, I loved Chicago's O'Hare airport. If I was lucky and scored a window seat, I might get to see a line of C-130 Hercules transport planes parked on the tarmac in front of the 928th Airlift Wing's hangars. For a precious moment on takeoff or landing, I would have a chance to stare at those giant gray beasts with their snub noses and huge propellers until they passed from sight.

What I didn't know then was why the Air Force Reserve, as well as the Air National Guard, had squadrons of these big planes eternally parked at O'Hare and many other airports and air stations around the country. It's a tale made to order for this time of sequestration that makes a mockery of all the **hyperbole** about how any spending cuts will "hollow out" our forces and "devastate" our national security.

Consider this a parable to help us see past the alarmist **talking points** issued by defense contractor lobbyists, the public relations teams they hire, and the **think tanks** they fund. It may help us see just how effective defense contractors are in growing their businesses, whatever the mood of the moment.

Meet the Herk

The C-130 Hercules is a mid-sized transport airplane designed to airlift people or cargo around a theater of operations. It dates back to the Korean War, when the Air Force decided that it needed a next generation ("NextGen") transport plane. In 1951, it asked for designs, and Lockheed won the competition. The first C-130s were delivered three years after the war ended.

The C-130 Hercules, or Herk for short, isn't a sexy plane. It hasn't inspired hit Hollywood films, though it has prompted a few photo books, a [beer](#), and a "[Robby the C-130](#)" trilogy for children whose military parents are deployed. It has a fat sausage fuselage, that snub nose, overhead wings with two propellers each, and a big back gate that comes down to load and unload up to [21](#) tons of cargo.

The Herk can land on short runways, even ones made of dirt or grass; it can airdrop parachutists or cargo; it can carry four drones under its wings; it can refuel aircraft; it can fight forest fires; it can morph into a frightening gunship. It's big and strong and can do at least 12 types of labor -- hence, Hercules.

Too Much of a Good Thing

Here's where the story starts to get interesting. After 25 years, the Pentagon decided that it was well stocked with C-130s, so President Jimmy Carter's administration [stopped](#) asking Congress for more of them.

Lockheed was in trouble. A few years earlier, the Air Force had started looking into replacing the Hercules with a new medium-sized transport plane that could handle [really short](#) runways, and Lockheed wasn't selected as one of the finalists. Facing bankruptcy due to cost overruns and cancellations of programs, the company squeezed Uncle Sam for a bailout of around \$1 billion in loan guarantees and other relief (which was unusual back then, as William Hartung points out his magisterial [Prophets of War: Lockheed Martin and the Making of the Military-Industrial Complex](#)).

Then a scandal exploded when it was revealed that Lockheed had proceeded to spend some [\\$22 million](#) of those funds in bribes to foreign officials to persuade them to buy its aircraft. This helped prompt Congress to pass the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.

So what did Lockheed do about the fate of the C-130? It bypassed the Pentagon and went straight to Congress. Using a procedure known as a congressional "add-on" -- that is, an earmark -- Lockheed was able to sell the military another

fleet of C-130s that it didn' t want.

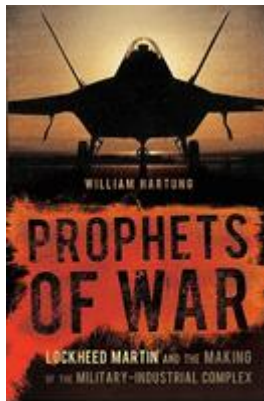
To be fair, the Air Force did request some C-130s. Thanks to Senator John McCain, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) did a study of how many more C-130s the Air Force requested between 1978 and 1998. The answer: Five.

How many did Congress add on? **Two hundred and fifty-six.**

As Hartung **commented**, this must “surely [be] a record in pork-barrel politics.”

Standard Operating Procedure

Lockheed made this happen by putting its lobbyists to work. They focused on legislators in key committee positions and in states where Lockheed, like others in the defense industry, had strategically located their operations and subcontracts. The company poured millions of dollars into lobbying and political donations.



Buy the book

Tracking lobbying is hard to do, but to give a sense of the scope of the numbers, Lockheed has reported **\$22,289,859** in political donations since 1990 and millions in lobbying expenses every year, peaking in 2008 at **\$16,181,506**, according to the Center for Responsive Politics. And that doesn't include what it paid its PR people or the work of defense and aerospace industry advocacy groups or the think tanks those industries fund. As an example of the latter, consider the boldly titled "research study," **C-130J: How the Best Military Aircraft Became Even Better**, written by **Lockheed consultant** Loren Thompson and published by the **Lexington Institute**, which was founded by a Lockheed lobbyist. Of course, the puff

piece mentions no affiliations with the company. For these reasons, Dina Rasor of the Project on Government Oversight, which ranks the company #1 on its [Federal Contractor Misconduct Database](#), calls Lockheed "the ultimate pay-to-play contractor."

Most of the dollars the company spends on lobbying are tax dollars. According to its [2011 annual report](#), "82% of our \$46.5 billion in net sales were from the U.S. Government, including 61% from the Department of Defense." And don't forget that a significant part of the 17% of its sales that went to international customers in 2011 were actually paid for by Uncle Sam under the rubric of foreign military aid. Only 1% of its sales that year were to "U.S. commercial and other customers." Its CEO made [\\$20,538,981](#), while the company paid only \$722 million in net federal and foreign taxes in that same year.

When it came to the C-130, the process worked like a dream.

"By following this strategy from year to year," [writes](#) a team of scholars of lobbying, "Lockheed has been able to turn what was to be the C-130's doom in the 1970s into a regularly funded military spending program, all without a single request having been sent by the administration to Congress." Lockheed was so successful on Capitol Hill that its work even garnered a name in honor of the 50 planes bought for every one requested: "C-130 math."

John McCain complained that "we're going to have a C-130 for every schoolyard in America before this is over." The "add-on" legislators were unabashed. Senator Max Cleland of Georgia -- where Lockheed assembles the C-130 -- [responded](#), "I'm for schoolyards being able to be moved anywhere in the world on a moment's notice."

I felt that way, too -- when I was five.

How to Win Friends in the States and Influence People in Congress

So what happened to those extra planes? The Air Force didn't have the space for them, so they retired some older models that still had plenty of life in them and shunted most of the rest off to the Air Force Reserves and Air National Guard. That's why I used to see them at O'Hare.

The reason I usually saw them parked in front of the hangars is that sufficient operating and maintenance funds didn't always come with the planes, which mattered even more after Lockheed introduced a new version, the C-130J Super Hercules, in the mid-1990s.

The Air Force's approach of passing unwanted Herks off to the Air Guard and Reserves worked out nicely for Lockheed. The company allied with Air Guard and reservist advocacy groups to lobby Congress further. In an era of base closures, heavily lobbied governors would use the arrival of new planes to argue for the continuing life of bases in their states. In turn, states and their congressional delegations would fight to get new planes or hang onto existing ones. It was a veritable Lockheed feedback loop. Washington Post reporter Walter Pincus quoted a Pentagon official as seeing C-130 politics as a twist on the old military-industrial complex: "a **triangle** of the Guard, Lockheed, and politicians."

The result: the military was often prevented from retiring the oldest Herks, the ones that really needed to be put out to pasture. For example, as Pincus reported, the Joint Chiefs and the Air Force concluded in 1996 that they had 50 more C-130s than they needed, but Congress stymied efforts to retire any of them. One tactic used was to hold nominees hostage: a Kentucky senator repeatedly held up Air Force promotions until four Kentucky Air Guard C-130s were taken off the chopping block.

And it hasn't ended yet. In its FY2013 budget, the Pentagon planned to **retire** 65 older C-130s to save a little money. However, National Guard groups successfully mobilized **state governors** and congressional delegations from states like Alaska to, in the words of Alaska Senator Mark Begich "**fight** this action every step of the way." Congress managed to save **all of them** for a year, and **half** of them permanently.

The Not-So-Super Hercules, or the Program That Just Won't Die

Air Force attempts to replace the C-130 with a new generation of transport planes also have a habit of dying or getting rerouted. The Herk's turf has generally proved

remarkably sacrosanct. The "Advanced Medium STOL" (short takeoff and landing) program of the 1970s, for instance, **fizzled**, possibly due to Lockheed's lobbying. The competing C-27J is being cancelled **in favor of** more C-130s. The C-130 Avionics Modernization Program (AMP), which in a surprise move was handed to competitor Boeing -- as one of several gifts from a senior Pentagon procurement official shortly before she took a **high-paying job** there (en route to prison) -- is being **cancelled**, too. (Though a new congressional C-130 Modernization Caucus spawned by Boeing and led by the **congressman** in whose **district** the AMP's training program is located, is doing its best to cancel the cancellation.)

Knowing that it could keep the C-130 alive through congressional add-ons and foreign sales well into the future, Lockheed took the unusual step of developing the next generation of the plane without new funding from the Pentagon. It invested **\$1 billion** of its profits from government contracts in the new C-130J Super Hercules. This has kept the factory in Marietta, Georgia, humming, and with over 2,400 C-130s already built, Lockheed calls it "the longest continuously operating military aircraft production line **in history**."

Humming, yes, but not always in tune. The C-130J has been plagued by problems. In 2004, after the military had acquired 50 of the planes, the Pentagon's **Inspector General** found that, even while the Air Force and Congress kept ordering more of the planes, they didn't meet contracted standards. The weather chasers couldn't chase storms because propellers would crack in bad weather. The military wouldn't use C-130Js for air drops in Iraq or Afghanistan because they didn't think they were safe. "The design of the C-130J is not stable and the C-130J aircraft has not passed operational testing," the Inspector General concluded. It "is not operationally effective or suitable."

To fix these problems, the unit cost rapidly ran up to **\$81 million per plane**. The problems proved so daunting that Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld axed the C-130J program in 2005 -- **or tried to**.

For the lobbyists and the plane's fans in Congress, it was

once more unto the breach. Lockheed also got help on the inside. The Air Force made up some numbers indicating that it would be far more expensive to cancel the program than to just keep buying -- overstating the possible cancellation cost by at least **\$1.1 billion**. In the end, Rumsfeld **surrendered**. In 2006, in a relatively rare step, the Pentagon **forced** Lockheed to take a hit on its profits and negotiate a new contract reducing the sticker price of the planes by several million dollars. But that didn't last long. The unit cost soon bounced back; the basic C-130J now costs **\$93.6 million**.

When it comes to military contracting like this, it doesn't seem to matter which party occupies the White House or controls Congress. It doesn't even seem to matter how many planes the Air Force puts on its additional "unfunded" wish list beyond the Pentagon's official request, because Congress so often buys more. Sure, some years Congress doesn't provide. In 2010, the Air Force asked for **12** Herks in its main request and put **two** more on its unfunded wish list, yet Congress only gave it **six**. And sometimes money is pushed around from one year to another or from one bucket to another, making it challenging to track through the intentionally hard-to-understand (and **not even auditable**) Pentagon **labyrinth**.

At the present time, the military is asking both for more standard C-130Js (to replace old or heavily used Herks) and for new AC-130 gunships as well as Special Operations MC-130 variants on the plane in the questionable belief that these will be **"invaluable"** for fighting insurgents and terrorists. This means that the **abolition** of earmarks isn't all that big a deal for Lockheed.

But that doesn't stop it. Even with the threat of sequestration looming, and the Pentagon **asking** for seven new Herks in 2013, the House still inserted funding for **14**.

What will happen in this year's request? We don't know yet, because it's late in coming thanks to sequestration. But Lockheed isn't worried: even while **threatening** sequestration layoffs, the company forecasts **record profits** this year.

And why should it worry? As of last October, it had contracts to build [337](#) more Herks for the Pentagon and a variety of foreign countries. In November, it scored the program's biggest foreign military sale ever, \$6.7 billion to [build 25](#) of the planes for the Royal Saudi Air Force. It has three [NextGen](#) models in the works, including a [wider](#) version (suitably named the XL) to carry oversized new Army equipment. And with the Air Force [starting](#) to think about replacing the C-130 (again), Lockheed has [already secured](#) a spot as one of the two companies developing prototypes for that future plane with its nifty "[Speed Agile](#)" design. Besides, judging by the Pentagon's ongoing experiences with Lockheed's F-22 and F-35 advanced fighters, whose costs have hit the stratosphere, any next generation "trash hauler" is bound to carry a strikingly higher initial sticker price than the C-130J -- and that, of course, is before the inevitable cost upticks begin.

Out the Window

C-130s have a special place in my heart. The first military aircraft I got to ride in was a Coast Guard Herk. An Air Force C-130 got me out of Iraq. Now that the 928th Airlift Wing is no more, I get a little wistful when I fly through Chicago and all I see out the window are private cargo hangars.

Or at least I did before I wrote this story.

But not to worry. There are plenty of other airports around the country with excess C-130s just sitting out there on the tarmac, gathering dust.

Jeremiah Goulka, a [TomDispatch regular](#) and former RAND Corporation analyst, writes about American politics and culture, focusing on security, race, and the Republican Party. You can follow him on Twitter [@jeremiahgoulka](#) or contact him through his website [jeremiahgoulka.com](#).

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29 readings

Vaya con Dios, Hugo Chávez, mi



Amigo

Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 07 March 2013 08:35

By Tuesday, March 5, 2013

By Greg Palast for **Vice Magazine** <http://www.gregpalast.com/vaya-con-dios-hugo-chavez-mi-amigo/>



President Hugo Chavez shows reporter Greg Palast the sword of Simon Bolivar seen in portrait in background. Miraflores Palace, Caracas, 2006. Photo by Richard Rowley.

Reverend Pat Robertson said,

"Hugo Chavez thinks we're trying to assassinate him. I think that we really ought to go ahead and do it."

It was 2005 and Robertson was channeling the frustration of George Bush's State Department. Despite Bush's providing intelligence, funds and even a note of congratulations to the crew who kidnapped Chavez (we'll get there), Hugo remained in office, reelected and wildly popular.

But why the Bush regime's hate, hate, HATE of the President of Venezuela?

Reverend Pat wasn't coy about the answer: It's the oil.

"This is a dangerous enemy to our South controlling a huge pool of oil."

A really BIG pool of oil. Indeed, according to Guy Caruso, former chief of oil intelligence for the CIA, Venezuela hold a recoverable reserve of 1.36 trillion barrels, that is, a whole lot more than Saudi Arabia.

If we didn't kill Chavez, we'd have to do an "Iraq" on his nation. So the Reverend suggests,

"We don't need another \$200 billion war... It's a whole lot easier to have some of the covert

operatives do the job and then get it over with."

Chavez himself told me he was stunned by Bush's attacks: Chavez had been quite chummy with Bush Senior and with Bill Clinton.

So what made Chavez suddenly "a dangerous enemy"? Here's the answer you won't find in The New York Times:

Just after Bush's inauguration in 2001, Chavez' congress voted in a new "Law of Hydrocarbons." Henceforth, Exxon, British Petroleum, Shell Oil and Chevron would get to keep 70% of the sales revenues from the crude they sucked out of Venezuela. Not bad, considering the price of oil was rising toward \$100 a barrel.

But to the oil companies, which had bitch-slapped Venezuela's prior government into giving them 84% of the sales price, a cut to 70% was "no bueno." Worse, Venezuela had been charging a joke of a royalty – just one percent – on "heavy" crude from the Orinoco Basin. Chavez told Exxon and friends they'd now have to pay 16.6%.

Clearly, Chavez had to be taught a lesson about the etiquette of dealings with Big Oil.

On April 11, 2002, President Chavez was kidnapped at gunpoint and flown to an island prison in the Caribbean Sea. On April 12, Pedro Carmona, a business partner of the US oil companies and president of the nation's Chamber of Commerce, declared himself President of Venezuela – giving a whole new meaning to the term, "corporate takeover."

U.S. Ambassador Charles Shapiro immediately rushed down from his hilltop embassy to have his picture taken grinning with the self-proclaimed "President" and the leaders of the coup d'état.

Bush's White House spokesman admitted that Chavez was, "democratically elected," but, he added, "Legitimacy is something that is conferred not by just the majority of voters." I see.

With an armed and angry citizenry marching on the Presidential Palace in Caracas ready to string up the coup plotters, Carmona, the Pretend President from Exxon returned his captive Chavez back to his desk within 48 hours. (How? Get *The Assassination of Hugo Chavez*, the film, expanding on my reports for BBC Television. You can [download it for free](#) for the next few days.)

Chavez had provoked the coup not just by clawing back some of the bloated royalties of the oil companies. It's what he did with that oil money that drove Venezuela's One Percent to violence.

In Caracas, I ran into the reporter for a TV station whose owner is generally credited with plotting the coup against the president. While doing a publicity photo shoot, leaning back against a tree, showing her wide-open legs nearly up to where they met, the reporter pointed down the hill to the "ranchos," the slums above Caracas, where shacks, once made of cardboard and tin, where quickly transforming into homes of cinder blocks and cement.

"He [Chavez] gives them bread and bricks, so they vote for him, of course." She was disgusted by "them," the 80% of Venezuelans who are negro e indio (Black and Indian)—and poor. Chavez, himself negro e indio, had, for the first time in Venezuela's history, shifted the oil wealth from the privileged class that called themselves "Spanish," to the dark-skinned masses.

While trolling around the poor housing blocks of Caracas, I ran into a local, Arturo Quiran, a merchant seaman and no big fan of Chavez. But over a beer at his kitchen table, he told me,

"Fifteen years ago under [then-President] Carlos Andrés Pérez, there was a lot of oil money in Venezuela. The 'oil boom' we called it. Here in Venezuela there was a lot of money, but we didn't see it."

But then came Hugo Chavez, and now the poor in his neighborhood, he said, "get medical

attention, free operations, x-rays, medicines; education also. People who never knew how to write now know how to sign their own papers."

Chavez' Robin Hood thing, shifting oil money from the rich to the poor, would have been grudgingly tolerated by the US. But Chavez, who told me, "We are no longer an oil colony," went further...too much further, in the eyes of the American corporate elite.

Venezuela had landless citizens by the millions – and unused land by the millions of acres tied up, untilled, on which a tiny elite of plantation owners squatted. Chavez' congress passed in a law in 2001 requiring untilled land to be sold to the landless. It was a program long promised by Venezuela's politicians at the urging of John F. Kennedy as part of his "Alliance for Progress."

Plantation owner Heinz Corporation didn't like that one bit. In retaliation, Heinz closed its ketchup plant in the state of Maturin and fired all the workers. Chavez seized Heinz' plant and put the workers back on the job. Chavez didn't realize that he'd just squeezed the tomatoes of America's powerful Heinz family and Mrs. Heinz' husband, Senator John Kerry, now U.S. Secretary of State.

Or, knowing Chavez as I do, he didn't give a damn.

Chavez could survive the ketchup coup, the Exxon "presidency," even his taking back a piece of the windfall of oil company profits, but he dangerously tried the patience of America's least forgiving billionaires: The Koch Brothers.

How? Well, that's another story for another day. [Watch this space. Or read about it in the book, *Billionaires & Ballot Bandits*. Go to BallotBandits.org].

Elected presidents who annoy Big Oil have ended up in exile—or coffins: Mossadegh of Iran after he nationalized BP's fields (1953), Elchibey, President of Azerbaijan, after he refused demands of BP for his Caspian fields (1993), President Alfredo Palacio of Ecuador after he terminated Occidental's drilling concession (2005).

"It's a chess game, Mr. Palast," Chavez told me. He was showing me a very long, and very sharp sword once owned by Simon Bolivar, the Great Liberator. "And I am," Chavez said, "a very good chess player."

In the film *The Seventh Seal*, a medieval knight bets his life on a game of chess with the Grim Reaper. Death cheats, of course, and takes the knight. No mortal can indefinitely outplay Death who, this week, Chavez must know, will checkmate the new Bolivar of Venezuela.



Greg Palast (top left) meets with Venezuelan Vice-President Nicolás Maduro (top right) and his team. New York, 2004. Photo by Richard Rowley

But in one last move, the Bolivarian grandmaster played a brilliant endgame, naming Vice-President Nicolas Maduro, as good and decent a man as they come, as heir to the fight for those in the "ranchos." The One Percent of Venezuela, planning on Chavez's death to return them the power and riches they couldn't win in an election, are livid with the choice of Maduro.

Chavez sent Maduro to meet me in my downtown New York office back in 2004. In our run-down detective digs on Second Avenue, Maduro and I traded information on assassination plots and oil policy.

Even then, Chavez was carefully preparing for the day when Venezuela's negros e indios would lose their king—but still stay in the game.

Class war on a chessboard. Even in death, I wouldn't bet against Hugo Chavez.

* * * * *

Investigative reporter Greg Palast covered Venezuela for BBC Television Newsnight and Harper's Magazine.

Palast is the author of the New York Times bestsellers **Billionaires & Ballot Bandits**: How to Steal an Election in 9 Easy Steps, **The Best Democracy Money Can Buy**, **Armed Madhouse** and the highly acclaimed **Vultures' Picnic**, named Book of the Year 2012 on BBC Newsnight Review.

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Last Updated on Thursday, 07 March 2013 08:40

155 readings

Sign-on Petition on Challenging Militarized Security: Abolition of War



Peace News

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 07 March 2013 07:08

The UN Commission on the Status of Women is taking place in New York from March 4 to 15. The Canadian Voice of Women has prepared a Petition to submit with signatures during the conference. The Petition is enclosed and e-mails of endorsement can be sent and included in the petition submitted at the UN

The Petition that at petition from <http://www.causes.com/actions/1737985-challenging-militaristic-security-abolition-of-wa> continues on <http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/challenging-militaristic-security-abolition-of/>

2013 Commission on Status of Women (CSW 57):

CHALLENGING MILITARIZED SECURITY:

ABOLITION OF WAR

Violence Against Women is and always has been integral to war and all armed conflict. It pervades all forms of militarism. It is likely to endure so long as the institution of war is a legally sanctioned instrument of state, so long as arms are the means to political, economic or ideological ends. To end violence against women; to eliminate its acceptance as a “regrettable consequence” of armed conflict; to exorcize it as a constant of the “real world” requires the abolition of war, the renunciation of armed conflict and the full and equal political empowerment of women as called for by the UN Charter.

– Betty Reardon, International Institute on Peace Education

BACKGROUND

For many years the member states of the United Nations incurred obligations and made commitments to reallocate military expenses and to embrace disarmament

AWARE THAT the States Members of the United Nations in 1969 called for:

The achievement of general and complete disarmament and the channeling of the progressively released resources to be used for economic and social progress for the welfare of people everywhere and in particular for the benefit of developing countries (article 27 (a) XXIV of 11 December 1969 Declaration on Social Welfare, Progress and Development)

AWARE AS WELL that the States Members of the United Nations in 1975 made a commitment in a

Declaration that “Scientific Technological Progress should be in the Interests of Peace and for the Benefit of humanity.”

RECALLING THAT the States Members of the United Nations In 1996 affirmed:

"The waste and misuse of resources in war and armaments should be prevented. All countries should make a firm commitment to promote general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, in particular in the field of nuclear disarmament. Part of the resources thus released should be utilized so as to achieve a better quality of life for humanity and particularly the peoples of developing countries." (II, 12 Habitat 1).

COGNIZANT THAT the States Members of the United Nations solemnly proclaimed:

“The peoples of our planet have a sacred right to peace.” (1. Declaration on the Right of Peoples to Peace approved by General Assembly resolution 39/11 of 12 November 1984)

RECALLING THAT the States Members of the United Nations in 1984 affirmed:

their determination to make further collective efforts aimed at strengthening peace and international security and eliminating the threat of war, and agreed that in order to facilitate the process of disarmament, it was necessary to take measures and pursue policies to strengthen international peace and security and to build confidence among states. (Declaration on the Right of Peoples to Peace approved by General Assembly resolution 39/11 of 12 November 1984)

AWARE THAT the States Members of the United Nations in 1985 affirmed:

the first special session devoted to disarmament encompassing all measures thought to be advisable in order to ensure that the goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control is realized. This document describes a comprehensive programme of disarmament, including nuclear disarmament; which is important not only for peace but also for the promotion of the economic and social development of all, particularly in the developing countries, through the constructive use of the enormous amount of material and human resources otherwise expended on the arms race. (Para. 13, The Nairobi Forward Looking Strategy, 1985)

RECALLING THAT the Member States of the United Nations in 1985 at Nairobi stated that

safeguarding world peace and averting a nuclear catastrophe is one of the most important tasks today in which women have an essential role to play, especially by supporting actively the halting of the arms race followed by arms reduction and the attainment of a general and complete disarmament under effective international control... (Para. 25 Nairobi Forward Looking strategies for the Advancement of Women, 1985)

NOTING THAT the Members of States the United Nations in 1986 reaffirmed that:

there is a close relationship between disarmament and development and that progress in the field of disarmament would considerably promote progress in the field of development and that resources released through disarmament measures should be devoted to the economic and social development and well-being of all peoples and, in particular, those of the developing countries. (Declaration on the Right to Development, General Assembly resolution 41/128 of 4 December 1986)

NOTING THAT the States Members of the United Nations, In 1992, made a commitment

"to reallocate resources presently committed to military purposes" (Agenda 21, 33.16) UNCED)

REMINDED THAT States Members of the United Nations in 1995 made a commitment

to ...work actively towards general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control... (143(f) (i) Beijing Platform) and support negotiations and conclusions, without delay, of a universal and multilateral and effectively verifiable comprehensive nuclear-test ban treaty...nuclear disarmament and the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects. (143 (f) (ii),Beijing Platform)

REMINDED ALSO THAT States Members of the United Nations made a commitment

to take positive steps to ensure peace for the advancement of women and, recognizing the leading role that women have played in the peace movement (Art. 28 Beijing Platform) and "to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls." (Art. 29 Beijing Platform). And the important role, for women under UNSC1325, to prevent war.

AWARE THAT States Members of the United Nations made a commitment

to consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them. (**Article 19** Declaration on the

Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007)

AWARE THAT the global military expenditure is equal

to 700 years of the UN regular budget or almost 3,000 years of the new UN women's agency, UN Women THAT true security is NOT "human security" (Iraq 1991), "humanitarian intervention" (Kosovo, 1999), "self defense" (Afghanistan, 2001-), "Pre-emptive-preventive" (Iraq, 2003)", "Responsibility to Protect" (Haiti, 2004, Libya, 2011) or "will to intervene" (Mali, 2013)

BUT common security.

Common security was a concept initiated by Olof Palme, a former president of Sweden, and has been extended to embody the following objectives

- to achieve a state of peace, and disarmament; through reallocation of military expenses and delegitimization of war
- to create a global structure that respects the rule of law and the International Court of Justice;
- to enable socially equitable and environmentally sound employment, and ensure the right to development and social justice;
- to promote and fully guarantee respect for human rights including labour rights, women's rights (**including SC Res. 1325**), civil and political rights, indigenous rights, social and cultural rights – right to food, housing, safe drinking water and sewage, education, and to universally accessible not-for-profit health care system;
- to ensure the preservation and protection of the environment, the respect for the inherent worth of nature beyond human purpose, reduction of the ecological footprint e move away from the current model of unsustainable and excessive overconsumption furthering the cult of war;
- to end **violence against women** that is a result of and tool of war.

Common security through the adherence to the rule of international law will lead to the fulfillment, under Security Council 1325 – of the important role of women, to prevent war.

RECOMMENDATIONS

IN THE LIGHT OF THESE PRECEDENTS AND POSSIBILITIES:

WE CALL FOR the years of international rhetoric on moving to a culture of peace to be translated into action by the international system, including the Commission on the Status of Women ;

WE CALL FOR the delegitimization of war. Given the social, economic, ecological, health and psychological consequences of war, under no circumstance or condition is war legal or just;

WE CALL FOR all states to reduce their military budgets by at least 50% to stem the 1.7 trillion dollars global

annual military budget and to reallocate the savings to the promotion of true global security, common security

WE CALL UPON all governments to help prevent war by invoking the UN charter's chapter VI - the peaceful resolution of disputes;

WE CALL FOR the United Nations to promote common security and call upon the member states to sign and ratify international covenants and conventions which embody obligations and commitments related to common security;

WE CALL FOR allStates to reform their domestic laws and judicial procedures so they provide *effective and meaningful protections* for the rights of indigenous women within their jurisdictions, and to take steps, immediately, to ensure elimination of the direct and indirect impacts that militarization and development and utilization of nuclear processes/ byproducts have on indigenous people, particularly indigenous women and girls*, using the transfer of capital money no longer being used to fund war. *Note., who *are* the most severely impacted, as a result of various States *intentionally identifying and locating industries related to militarization, nuclear facilities and related waste disposal sites on their legally protected homelands;*

WE CALL UPON the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to calculate the contribution of militarism to greenhouse gas emissions;

WE CALL FOR the conversion, to peaceful purposes, of military bases, including those on foreign soil.

NAME

ORGANIZATION IF APPLICABLE

COUNTRY

Drafted by Joan Russow and Janis Alton, Canadian Voice of Women for Peace.

List in process. Please e-mail drjussow@gmail.com or info@vowpeace.org

to indicate endorsement. NOTE; e-mails will not be made public

16 readings

U.N. Declares Zero Tolerance for Violence Against Women



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 07 March 2013 06:53

By [Marzieh Gouda](#)

U.N. delegates listen to a high-level heads of agencies panel at the 57th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). Credit: Lusha Chen/IPS

UNITED NATIONS, Mar 6 2013 (IPS) - U.N. agency heads gathered Tuesday to reassert their unified commitment to ending the epidemic of violence against women and girls, and bringing justice and healing to survivors.

Grim statistics underscore the urgency of this issue: 70 percent of women worldwide report experiencing physical and/or sexual violence, 50 percent of reported sexual assaults are committed against girls under 16 years of age, and 603 million women live in countries where domestic violence has not been criminalised.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon articulated another fact: "Too many women and girls face intimidation and physical and sexual abuse often from those who should care for and respect them most – fathers, husbands, brothers, teachers, colleagues, and supervisors."

Related IPS Articles

- [U.S. Finally Passes Stronger Protections for Women against Abuse](#)
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- ['Marks of Manhood' Fuel Gender-Based Violence](#)

Tuesday's forum transpired as a part of the [57th Commission on the Status of Women](#) (CSW), whose primary theme is the elimination of violence against women and girls.

It opened with remarks from the secretary-general and continued with a panel of high-level U.N. agency representatives, including Michelle Bachelet, executive director of U.N. Women, and Irina Bokova, director-general of the U.N. Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

Bachelet stressed the importance of the diverse contributions of U.N. agencies to the efforts of the CSW.

"Whether we're talking about UNESCO through education, UNDP (U.N. Development Programme) through government cooperation, UNFPA (U.N. Population Fund) through the promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights, or UNICEF (U.N. Children's Fund) through protecting the rights of children, this work is making a difference on the ground," she said.

[UN Heads of Agencies Forum on Violence Against Women and Girls](#) from [IPS Inter Press](#)

Service on Vimeo.

Also represented were the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), World Health Organisation (WHO), International Labor Organisation (ILO), U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and U.N. Joint Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS).

Perhaps the strongest message of this forum was its unified and indisputable affirmation of violence against women and girls as a priority on the international human rights agenda.

The long struggle for recognition of violence against women as a human rights issue first achieved serious global attention at the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, quickly followed by the General Assembly Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women.

Commenting on the development of the issue at the U.N., Bokova told IPS that today, "there is a lot more awareness, commitment, and concrete action... But of course we are not there at all – it's just the beginning."

UNICEF Deputy Executive Director Geeta Rao Gupta added, "I can tell you that over this past decade, the amount of attention that this issue has received internationally would not have happened if the U.N. had not taken a leadership position."

"I think the major difference is that it has become a public issue. (Violence against women) is not tolerated in the way it was before," Rebeca Grynspan, associate administrator of UNDP, told IPS.

"Having acknowledged that, I think that we have not had the accelerated progress that we expected," she said. "Many times we are pedaling to stay in the same place and not go backward. That's why I really welcome the fact that this issue has come again to the table of the CSW."

A recent milestone was the 2010 establishment of U.N. Women, which last year provided capacity-building for stronger legislation and provision of services to survivors of violence in 57 countries.

U.N. Women manages the secretary-general's campaign, United to End Violence Against Women, and works with U.N. Habitat and UNICEF on the Global Safe Cities Initiative, striving to make urban spaces violence-free for women and girls.

Speaking on behalf of UNESCO, Bokova stated, "Raising awareness and changing the environment through education is crucial. We have to go deep to the root of the violence," explaining the need to instill within youth the idea that violence is not a "normal" part of life.

UNESCO has created international guidelines on sexuality education, HIV education, gender equality in education, and guidelines for teachers on stopping violence in schools.

Research shows that violence is a major threat to girls' education, causing poor attendance and forcing many to drop out of school – another reason why the issue is high among UNESCO's priorities.

Grynspan argued that violence against women is also a dangerous obstacle to global productivity, currently preventing seven in 10 women from achieving their greatest potential contribution to society and the economy by making them more likely to be absent from or quit school and work; violence also costs society in terms of health and legal services for victims, she explained.

Grynspan cited the 2010-2011 Human Development Report, which showed 49 percent loss in human development due to gender inequality. "There is one thing that will bring productivity up and cost down," she said, "and that is ending violence against women."

Director-General Margaret Chan spoke via video on the WHO's commitment to combating this violence and discussed the wide range of health repercussions women face, including injuries to organs/tissues, unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, premature birth, maternal mortality, psychological trauma, and increased risk of sexually-transmitted diseases, such as HIV.

Deputy Executive Director Anne-Birgitte Albrechtsen of UNFPA and Regional Director of UNAIDS Sheila Tlou reiterated the extremely detrimental effects of violence against women on the battle against AIDS, which has come too far to be stopped now.

Across the panel, representatives recognised the wide range of causes and perpetrators of the violence against women.

They made references to cultural practices of early, forced marriages of girls and female genital mutilation; they pointed to cultural norms that shame women as victims, discourage seeking help, and normalise violence in domestic, educational, and work settings; they discussed the vulnerability of women in conflict and post-conflict societies, where rape often becomes a weapon.

Recognising the vast majority of women both on the panel and in the audience, the representatives also called for greater engagement of men and boys and male ownership of the issues.

As Grynspan noted, with her fellow panelists nodding in agreement, "We are still, by and large, talking to ourselves."

Last Updated on Thursday, 07 March 2013 06:56

[Mission Unaccomplished Why the Invasion of Iraq Was the Single Worst Foreign Policy Decision in American History](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 07 March 2013 06:43

By [Peter Van Buren](#) <http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175658>

/I was there. And "there" was nowhere. And nowhere was the place to be if you wanted to see the signs of end times for the American Empire up close. It was the place to be if you wanted to see the madness -- and oh yes, it was madness -- not filtered through a complacent and sleepy media that made Washington's war policy seem, if not sensible, at least sane and serious enough. I stood at Ground Zero of what was intended to be the new centerpiece for a *Pax Americana* in the Greater Middle East.

[Read more...](#)

[Breaking: NY Assembly Passes Two Year Fracking Moratorium, Senate Expected to Follow](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 06 March 2013 21:04

by Steve Horn march 5 2013 Desmogblog

<http://www.desmogblog.com/2013/03/06/breaking-ny-assembly-passes-two-year-fracking-moratorium-senate-expected-follow>



In a roll call vote of 95-40, the [New York State Assembly has passed a two-year moratorium](#) on [hydraulic fracturing \("fracking"\)](#), the toxic horizontal drilling process through which oil and gas is procured that's found within shale rock basins across the country and the world.

The bill, if passed by the Senate and signed off by Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo, would close the state's doors to the oil and gas industry's desire to begin operating in New York's portion of the [Marcellus Shale basin](#) until May 2015. New York has had a moratorium on the books since 2008.

Last Updated on Wednesday, 06 March 2013 21:08

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[Chávez Leaves a Deep Imprint](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 06 March 2013 10:21

By [Humberto Márquez](#)




Hugo Chávez greeting a little girl in a campaign rally. Credit: Carabobo Comando in the 2012 election campaign.

CARACAS, Mar 6 2013 (IPS) - Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez died Tuesday in the Military Hospital of Caracas after a long battle with cancer in his abdominal region, which was diagnosed in June 2011.

Born on Jul. 28, 1954 in Sabaneta, a small town in Venezuela's southwestern plains, Chávez was the second of the six sons born to rural schoolteachers Hugo de los Reyes Chávez and Elena Frías.

Last Updated on Wednesday, 06 March 2013 10:23

[Read more...](#)

[The NGO, UN Watch, targets specific states like Venezuela and leaders, such as Hugo Chavez and ignores the failings of other states, such as the US, Canada and Israel.](#) 

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 06 March 2013 09:55


by Joan Russow – Global Compliance Research Project.

Since Chavez's death, there have been many derogatory comments made , by opponents of Chavez, and by mainstream Canadian media, including the Globe and Mail and CBC; many of the comments undermine what Chavez has achieved. His death is a tragic loss for global social justice.

Today, at the UN Human Rights Council, there is a derogatory comment, about Chavez by the Canadian Director of UN Watch, Hillel Neuer who said: "Sad: UN Human Rights Council holds minute's silence for fellow member Chavez"

Last Updated on Wednesday, 06 March 2013 10:00

[Read more...](#)

[Statement of the Revolutionary Government: Farewell, Commander.](#) 

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 06 March 2013 07:59

by Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations

Sitio WEB:www.cubadiplomatica.cu/onu

It was with profound and searing grief that our people and the Revolutionary Government learned about the decease of President Hugo Chávez Frías and are therefore preparing to pay a heartfelt and patriotic tribute to him, for he will

go down in history as a Hero of Our America.

We convey our sincere condolences to his parents, brothers, daughters and son as well as all of his relatives, whom we feel are already ours, for Chávez is also a son of Cuba, Latin America, the Caribbean and the whole world.

Drone Warfare is Neither Cheap, Nor Surgical, Nor Decisive The Ever-Destructive Dreams of Air Power Enthusiasts



Peace News

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 24 March 2013 14:06

By [William J. Astore](http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175665/) <http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175665/>

Today's unmanned aerial vehicles, most famously Predator and Reaper drones, have been **celebrated** as the culmination of the longtime dreams of airpower enthusiasts, offering the possibility of victory through quick, clean, and selective destruction. Those drones, so the (very old) story goes, assure the U.S. military of command of the high ground, and so provide the royal road to a speedy and decisive triumph over helpless enemies below.

Fantasies about the certain success of air power in transforming, even ending, war as we know it arose with the plane itself. But when it comes to killing people from the skies, **again and again** air power has proven neither cheap nor surgical nor decisive nor in itself triumphant. Seductive and tenacious as the dreams of air supremacy continue to be, much as they automatically attach themselves to the latest machine to take to the skies, air power has not

fundamentally softened the brutal face of war, nor has it made war less dirty or chaotic.

Indeed, by emboldening politicians to seek seemingly low-cost, Olympian solutions to complex human problems -- like Zeus hurling thunderbolts from the sky to skewer puny mortals -- it has fostered fantasies of illimitable power emboldened by contempt for human life. However, just like Zeus' s obdurate and rebellious subjects, the mortals on the receiving end of death from on high have shown surprising strength in frustrating the designs of the air power gods, whether past or present. Yet the Olympian fantasy persists, a fact that requires explanation.

The Rise of Air Power

It did not take long after the Wright Brothers first put a machine in the air for a few exhilarating moments above the sandy beaches of Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, in December of 1903, for the militaries of industrialized countries to express interest in buying and testing airplanes. Previously balloons had been used for reconnaissance, as in the Napoleonic wars and the U.S. Civil War, and so initially fledgling air branches focused on surveillance and intelligence-gathering. As early as 1911, however, Italian aircraft began dropping **small bombs** from open-air cockpits on the enemy -- we might today call them "insurgents" -- in Libya.

World War I encouraged the development of specialized aircraft, most famously the dancing bi- and tri-winged fighter planes of the dashing "knights of the air," as well as the more ponderous, but for the future far more important, bombers. By the close of World War I in 1918, each side had developed multi-engine bombers like the **German Gotha**, which superseded the more vulnerable zeppelins. Their

mission was to fly over the trenches where the opposing armies were stalemated and take the war to the enemy's homeland, striking fear in his heart and compelling him to surrender. Fortunately for civilians a century ago, those bombers were too few in number, and their payloads too limited, to inflict widespread destruction, although [German air attacks](#) on England in 1917 did spread confusion and, in a few cases, panic.

Pondering the hecatombs of dead from trench warfare, air power enthusiasts of the 1920s and 1930s not surprisingly argued strongly, and sometimes insubordinately, for the decisive importance of bombing campaigns launched by independent air forces. A leading enthusiast was Italy's [Giulio Douhet](#). In his 1921 work *Il dominio dell'aria* (Command of the Air), he argued that in future wars strategic bombing attacks by heavily armed "battle-planes" (bombers) would produce rapid and decisive victories. Driven by a fascist-inspired logic of victory through preemptive attack, Douhet called for all-out air strikes to destroy the enemy's air force and its bases, followed by hammer blows against industry and civilians using high-explosive, incendiary, and poison-gas bombs. Such blows, he predicted, would produce psychological uproar and social chaos ("shock and awe," in modern parlance), fatally weakening the enemy's will to resist.

As treacherous and immoral as his ideas may sound, Douhet's intent was to shorten wars and lessen casualties -- at least for his side. Better to subdue the enemy by pressing hard on select pressure points (even if the "pressing" was via high explosives and poison gas, and the "points" included concentrations of innocent civilians), rather than forcing your own army to bog down in bloody, protracted land wars.

That air power was inherently offensive and uniquely efficacious in winning cheap victories was a conclusion that found a receptive audience in Great Britain and the United States. In England, [Hugh Trenchard](#), founding father of the Royal Air Force (RAF), embraced strategic bombing as the most direct way to degrade the enemy's will; he boldly asserted that "the moral effect of bombing stands undoubtedly to the material effect in a proportion of twenty to one."

Even bolder was his American counterpart, [William "Billy" Mitchell](#), famously court-martialed and romanticized as a "martyr" to air power. (In his honor, cadets at the U.S. Air Force Academy still eat in Mitchell Hall.) At the Air Corps Tactical School in the 1930s, U.S. airmen refined Mitchell's tenets, developing a "vital centers" theory of bombing -- the idea that one could compel an enemy to surrender by identifying and destroying his vulnerable economic nodes. It therefore came as no accident that the U.S. entered World War II with the world's best heavy bomber, the [B-17 Flying Fortress](#), and a fervid belief that "precision bombing" would be the most direct path to victory.

World War II and After: Dehousing, Scorching, Boiling, and Baking the Enemy

In World War II, "strategic" air forces that focused on winning the war by heavy bombing reached young adulthood, with all the swagger associated with that stage of maturity. The moral outrage of Western democracies that accompanied the German bombing of civilian populations in [Guernica](#), Spain, in 1937 or [Rotterdam](#) in 1940 was quickly forgotten once the Allies sought to open a "second front" against Hitler through the air. Four-engine strategic bombers like the B-17 and the

British **Lancaster** flew for thousands of miles carrying bomb loads measured in tons. From 1942 to 1945 they rained two million tons of ordnance on Axis targets in Europe, but accuracy in bombing remained elusive.

While the U.S. attempted and failed at precision daylight bombing against Germany's "vital centers," Britain's RAF Bomber Command began employing what was bloodlessly termed "area bombing" at night in a "dehousing" campaign led by **Arthur "Bomber" Harris**. What became an American/British combined bomber offensive killed 600,000 German civilians, including 120,000 children, reducing cities like Cologne (1942), Hamburg (1943), Berlin (1944-45), and Dresden (1945) to rubble.

Yet, contrary to the dreams of air power advocates, Germany's will to resist remained unbroken. The vaunted second front of aerial battle became yet another bloody attritional brawl, with hundreds of thousands of civilians joining scores of thousands of aircrews in death.

Similarly mauled but unbroken by bombing was Japan, despite an air campaign of relentless intensity that killed hundreds of thousands of Japanese civilians. Planned and directed by Major General **Curtis LeMay**, new B-29 bombers loaded with incendiaries struck Tokyo, a city made largely of wood, in March 1945, creating a firestorm that in his words "scorched and boiled and baked [the Japanese] to death." As many as 100,000 Japanese died in this attack.

Subsequently, 60 more cities were firebombed until the apotheosis of destruction came that August as atomic bombs incinerated Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing another 200,000 people. It quickly became an article of faith among American air power enthusiasts that these bombs had driven Japan to surrender; together with

this, the “decisive” air campaign against Germany became reason enough to justify an independent U.S. Air Force, which was created by the [National Security Act](#) of 1947.

In the total war against Nazi and Japanese terror, moral concerns, when expressed, came privately. [General Ira Eaker](#) worried that future generations might condemn the Allied bombing campaign against Germany for its targeting of “the man in the street.” Even LeMay, not known for introspective doubts, worried in 1945 that he and his team would likely be tried as war criminals if the U.S. failed to defeat Japan. (So Robert McNamara, then an Army Air Force officer working for LeMay, recalled in the [documentary](#) *The Fog of War*.)

But moral qualms were put aside in the post-war glow of victory and as the fear rose of future battles with communism. The Korean War (1950–1953) may have ushered in the jet age, as symbolized by the dogfights of American Sabre Jets and Soviet MiGs over the Yalu River, but it also witnessed the devastation by bombing of North Korea, even as the enemy took cover underground and refused to do what air power strategists had always assumed they would: give up.

Still, for the U.S. Air Force, the real action of that era lay largely in the realm of dystopian fantasies as it created the [Strategic Air Command](#) (SAC), which coordinated two legs of the nuclear triad, land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles in silos and nuclear-armed long-range bombers. (The third was nuclear-missile-armed submarines.) SAC kept some of those bombers carrying thermonuclear weapons in the air 24/7 as a “deterrent” to a Soviet nuclear first strike (and as a constant first strike threat of our

own). “Thinking about the unthinkable” -- that is, nuclear Armageddon -- became all the rage, with “massive retaliation” serving as the byword for air power enthusiasts. In this way, dreams of clean victories morphed into nightmares of global thermonuclear annihilation, leaving the 1930s air power ideal of “clean” and “surgical” strikes in the dust -- for the time being.

Reaping What We Sow

Despite an unimaginably powerful nuclear deterrent that essentially couldn't be used, the U.S. Air Force had to relearn the hard way that there remained limits to the efficacy of air power, especially when applied to low-intensity, counterinsurgency wars. As in Korea in the 1950s, air power in the 1960s and 1970s failed to provide the winning edge in the Vietnam War, even as it spread wanton destruction throughout the Vietnamese countryside. But it was the arrival of “smart” bombs near that war's end that marked the revival of the fantasies of air power enthusiasts about “precision bombing” as the path to future victory.

By the 1990s, laser- and GPS-guided bombs (known collectively as PGMs, for **precision guided munitions**) were relegating unguided, “dumb” bombs largely to the past. Yet like their predecessors, PGMs proved no panacea. In the opening stages of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, for example, 50 precision “decapitation strikes” targeting dictator Saddam Hussein's top leadership **failed to hit** any of their intended targets, while **causing** “dozens” of civilian deaths. That same year, air power's inability to produce decisive results on the ground after Iraq's descent into chaos, insurrection, and civil war served as a reminder that the vaunted success of the U.S. air

campaign in the First Gulf War (1991) was a fluke, not a flowering of air power's maturity. (Saddam Hussein made his traditionally organized military, defenseless against air power, occupy static positions after his invasion of Kuwait.)

The recent marriage of PGMs to drones, hailed as the newest “ **perfect weapon** ” in the air arsenal, has once again led to the usual fantasies about the arrival -- finally, almost 100 years late -- of clean, precise, and decisive war. Using drones, a military need not risk even a pilot's life in its attacks. Yet the nature of war -- its horrors, its unpredictability, its tendency to outlive its original causes -- remains fundamentally unaltered by “precision” drone strikes. War's inherent fog and friction persist. In the case of drones, that fog is often generated by faulty intelligence, the friction by **malfunctioning weaponry** or **innocent civilians** appearing just as the Hellfire missiles are unleashed. Rather than clean wars of decision, drone strikes decide nothing. Instead, they produce their share of “collateral damage” that only spawns new enemies seeking revenge.

The fantasy of air war as a realm of technical decision, as an exercise in decisively finding, fixing, and dispatching the enemy, appeals to a country like the United States that idolizes technology as a way to quick fixes. As a result, it's hardly surprising that two administrations in Washington have **ever more zealously** pursued drone wars and aerial global assassination campaigns, already killing **4,700 “terrorists” and bystanders**. And this has been just part of our Nobel Peace Prize-winning president's campaign of **20,000 air strikes** (only 10% of which were drone strikes) in his first term of office. Yet despite -- or perhaps because of -- these attacks, our global war against al-Qaeda, its affiliates, and other

groups like the Taliban appears no closer to ending.

And that is, in part, because the dream of air power remains just that: a fantasy, a capricious and destructive will-o'-the-wisp. It's a fantasy because it denies agency to enemies (and others) who invariably find ways to react, adapt, and strike back. It's a fantasy because, however much such attacks seem both alluringly low-risk and high-reward to the U.S. military, they become [a rallying cause](#) for those on the other end of the bombs and missiles.

A much-quoted line from the movie *Apocalypse Now* captured the insanity of the American air war in Vietnam. "I love the smell of napalm in the morning," [says](#) an Air Cav commander played by Robert Duvall. "Smelled like... victory." Updated for drone warfare, this line might read: "I love the sound of drones in the morning. Sounds like... victory." But will we say the same when armed drones are hovering, not only above our enemies' heads but above ours, too, in fortress America, enforcing security and conformity while smiting citizens judged to be rebellious?

Something tells me [this](#) is not the dream that airpower enthusiasts had in mind.

William J. Astore, a retired lieutenant colonel (USAF) and professor of history, is a [TomDispatch regular](#). He welcomes reader comments at wjastore@gmail.com.

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69 readings

Human Right to Water March 22,2013

International Water Day

Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 23 March 2013 14:48



By Joan Russow Global Compliance Research Project



In 2010, the UN General Assembly overwhelmingly agreed to a resolution declaring the human right to "safe and clean drinking water and sanitation"

IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMITMENTS and OBLIGATIONS RELATED TO RIGHT TO WATER

PREAMBLE

MINDFUL THAT FOR YEARS STATES COMMITMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO DECLARE THE RIGHT TO WATER,(FOR HUMANS AND FOR THE ECOSYSTEM, TO PROVIDE SAFE DRINKING WATER, TO SATISFY THE BASIC NEED FOR WATER.

In 1974, member states of the United Nations acknowledged in the Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, the failure to satisfy basic requirements including "water"

inequitable economic growth, reflected in the wide disparities in wealth which now exist between countries and between human beings and which condemn millions of people to a life of poverty, without satisfying the basic requirements for food, education, health services, shelter, environmental hygiene, water and energy; (Principles, Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, 1974).

(II 17, I, Hábitat I, 1976).

IN 1976 All member states of the United Nations decried the increasing degradation of life-supporting resources of air water and land

social economic, ecological and environmental deterioration which are exemplified at the national and

international levels by inequalities in living conditions, social segregation, racial discrimination, acute unemployment, illiteracy, disease and poverty, the breakdown of social relationships and traditional cultural values and the increasing degradation of life-supporting resources of air , water and land; (Principles Habitat I, 1976)

The member states of the United Nations have for years made commitments to ensure the right and access to safe drinking water, and to sewage treatment:.

CONCERNED ABOUT THE FAILURE TO IMPLEMENT THE COMMITMENT MADE IN 1977 TO ENSURE THE RIGHT TO ACCESS TO DRINKING WATER

In 1977, in Mar del Plata, an international action plan was developed and member states of the United Nations agreed that

all peoples, whatever their stage of development and their social and economic conditions, have the right to have access to drinking water in quantities and of a quality equal to their basic needs.

CONCERNED AS WELL THAT THE COMMITMENT MADE TO PROVIDE SAFE DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION BY 1990 HAS BEEN IGNORED

In 1981 the United Nations launched the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade whose

"target of the decade was to provide safe drinking-water and sanitation to underserved urban and rural areas by 1990."

NOTING AGAIN THAT while the goal in 1981 had not been achieved, this goal was reaffirmed In 1992, at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), , when every members state of the United Nations adopted Chapter 18, Freshwater, in Agenda 21,

... The most outstanding of these efforts was the launching in 1981 of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, which resulted from the Mar del Plata Action Plan adopted peoples, whatever their stage of development and their social and economic conditions, have the right to have access to drinking water in quantities and of a quality equal to their basic needs". 2/ The target of the Decade was to provide safe drinking-water and sanitation to underserved urban and rural areas by 1990, but even the unprecedented progress achieved during the Decade was not enough. One in three people in the developing world still lacks these two most basic requirements for health and dignity. (Chapter 18: protection of the quality and supply of freshwater resources:18.4, Agenda 21, UNCED, 1992).

NOTING FURTHER THAT IN 1992 THROUGHOUT AGENDA 21 THERE WERE OVER 150 COMMITMENTS MADE TO ADDRESS THE ACCESS TO WATER AND THE IMPORTANCE OF WATER FOR THE ECOSYSTEM

- To make certain that adequate supplies of water of good quality are maintained for the entire population of this planet, while preserving the hydrological, biological and chemical functions of ecosystems, adapting human activities within the capacity limits of nature and combating vectors of water-related diseases. Innovative technologies, including the improvement of indigenous technologies, are needed to fully utilize limited water resources and to safeguard those resources against pollution. (Chapter 18: protection of the quality and supply of freshwater resources:18.2)
- To have ensured, by the year 2000, that all urban residents have access to at least 40 litres per capita per day of safe water and that 75 per cent of the urban population are provided with on-site or community facilities for sanitation; (Chapter 18: protection of the quality and supply of freshwater resources:18.58.a)

)

- To have, by the year 2000, established and applied quantitative and qualitative discharge standards

for municipal and industrial effluents; (Chapter 18: protection of the quality and supply of freshwater resources:18.58. b Agenda 21, UNCED)

- To have, by the year 2000, ensured that 75 per cent of solid waste generated in urban areas are collected and recycled or disposed of in an environmentally safe way. (Chapter 18: protection of the quality and supply of freshwater resources:18.58. c Agenda 21, UNCED)

- [To acknowledge that] Freshwater resources are an essential component of the earth's hydrosphere and an indispensable part of all terrestrial ecosystems. The freshwater environment is characterized by the hydrological cycle, including floods and droughts, which in some regions have become more extreme and dramatic in their consequences. Global climate change and atmospheric pollution could also have an impact on freshwater resources and their availability and, through sea-level rise, threaten low-lying coastal areas and small island ecosystems. (Chapter 18: protection of the quality and supply of freshwater resources:18.1)

- **There is uncertainty with respect to the prediction of climate change at the global level. Although the uncertainties increase greatly at the regional, national and local levels, it is at the national level that the most important decisions would need to be made. Higher temperatures and decreased precipitation would lead to decreased water-supplies and increased water demands; they might cause deterioration in the quality of freshwater bodies, putting strains on the already fragile balance between supply and demand in many countries. Even where precipitation might increase, there is no guarantee that it would occur at the time of year when it could be used; in addition, there might be a likelihood of increased flooding. Any rise in sealevel will often cause the intrusion of salt water into estuaries, small islands and coastal aquifers and the flooding of low-lying coastal areas; this puts low-lying countries at great risk.(Chapter 18: protection of the quality and supply of freshwater resources:18.82.)**

- To protect Groundwater (Chapter 18: protection of the quality and supply of freshwater resources)

- To prevent aquifer pollution through the regulation of toxic substances that permeate the ground and the establishment of protection zones in groundwater recharge and abstraction areas; (Chapter 18: protection of the quality and supply of freshwater resources:d iii)

- To promote.. the construction of treatment facilities for domestic sewage and industrial effluents and the development of appropriate technologies, taking into account sound traditional and indigenous practices; (Chapter 18: protection of the quality and supply of freshwater resources:18.40. b ii)

- To initiate effective water pollution prevention and control programmes, based on an appropriate mixture of pollution reduction-at-source strategies, environmental impact assessments and enforceable standards for major point-source discharges and high-risk non-point sources, commensurate with their socio-economic development; (Chapter 18: protection of the quality and supply of freshwater resources:18.29.c)

- **{To recognize that } The complex interconnectedness of freshwater systems demands that freshwater management be holistic (taking a catchment management approach) and based on a balanced consideration of the needs of people and the environment. The Mar del Plata Action Plan has already recognized the intrinsic linkage between water resource development projects and their significant physical, chemical, biological, health and socio-economic repercussions. The overall environmental health objective was set as follows: "to evaluate the consequences which the various users of water have on the environment, to support measures aimed at controlling water-related diseases, and to protect ecosystems". (Chapter 18: protection of the quality and supply of freshwater resources:18.36).**

- **To introduce ...the precautionary approach in water-quality management, where**

appropriate, with a focus on pollution minimization and prevention through use of new technologies, product and process change, pollution reduction at source and effluent reuse, recycling and recovery, treatment and environmentally safe disposal; (Chapter 18: protection of the quality and supply of freshwater resources:18.40.b iv)

water is needed in all aspects of life. (Chapter 18: protection of the quality and supply of freshwater resources:18.2)

- In many locations around the world the general environment (air, water and land), workplaces and even individual dwellings are so badly polluted that the health of hundreds of millions of people is adversely affected. This is, inter alia, due to past and present developments in consumption and production patterns and lifestyles, in energy production and use, in industry, in transportation etc., with little or no regard for environmental protection. (Chapter 6 Protection and promotion of human health 6.39.)`
- To protect water resources from depletion, pollution and degradation:(Chapter 18: protection of the quality and supply of freshwater resources:18.59 a Agenda 21, UNCED):.
- To introduce sanitary waste disposal facilities based on environmentally sound low-cost and upgradable technologies; (Chapter 18: protection of the quality and supply of freshwater resources:18.59. a i Agenda 21, UNCED)
- To recognize Atmospheric changes can have important impacts on forests, biodiversity and freshwater and marine ecosystems. (Chapter 9: protection of the atmosphere 9.19).
- To [carry out] mandatory environmental impact assessment of all major water resource development projects potentially impairing water quality and aquatic ecosystems, combined with the delineation of appropriate remedial measures and a strengthened control of new industrial installations, solid waste landfills and infrastructure development projects; (Chapter 18: protection of the quality and supply of freshwater resources:18.40.b v)
- To use of risk assessment and risk management in reaching decisions in this area and ensuring compliance with those decisions; (Chapter 18: protection of the quality and supply of freshwater resources:18.40.b vi)
- To apply preventive and precautionary approaches in project planning and implementation, including prior assessment and systematic observation of the impacts of major projects; (Chapter17 protection of the oceans,17.5. d)
- To provide health and hygiene education and to ensure universal access to safe drinking water and universal access to sanitary measures of excreta disposal, thereby markedly reducing waterborne diseases such as cholera and schistosomiasis and reducing: (Chapter 6: Protection and promotion of human health6.12 e)**

Combating Poverty

• To Provide the poor with access to fresh water and sanitation

Government with the assistance of and in cooperation with appropriate international, non-governmental and local community organizations should establish measures that will directly or indirectly Provide the poor with access to fresh water and sanitation (Chapter 3: Combating Poverty 3.8)

• Safe water-supplies and environmental sanitation are vital for protecting the environment, improving health and alleviating poverty. Safe water is also crucial to many traditional and cultural activities. An estimated 80 per cent of all diseases and over one third of deaths in developing countries are caused by the consumption of contaminated water, and on average as much as one tenth of each person's productive time is sacrificed to water-related diseases. Concerted efforts during the 1980s brought water and sanitation services to hundreds of millions of the world's poorest people. (Chapter 18: protection of the quality and supply of freshwater resources:18.47).

• Access to land resources is an essential component of sustainable low-impact lifestyles. Land resources are the basis for (human) living systems and provide soil, energy, water and the opportunity for all human activity. In rapidly growing urban areas, access to land is rendered increasingly difficult by the conflicting demands of industry, housing, commerce, agriculture, land tenure structures and the need for open spaces. Furthermore, the rising costs of urban land prevent the poor from gaining access of Governments to respond adequately. (Chapter 7: Promoting sustainable human settlement development 7.27).

• To apply.. the "polluter pays" principle, where appropriate, to all kinds of sources, including on-site and off-site sanitation;

(Chapter 18: protection of the quality and supply of freshwater resources:18.40.(b) (i)

AWARE OF FORTHCOMING RELEVANT CELEBRATIONS

THAT 2010 IS THE YEAR CELEBRATING BIODIVERSITY AND THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AND THAT WATER IS ESSENTIAL TO BIODIVERSITY

THAT IN APRIL 2010 THERE IS THE PEOPLES CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND RIGHTS OF MOTHER EARTH

THAT IN MEXICO 2010 THERE WILL BE COP 16

THAT IN 2012 WILL BE THE TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NEGOTIATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK ON CLIMATE CHANGE

THAT IN 2012 THERE WILL BE THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF AGENDA 21, AND THE RIO DECLARATION

CONCERNED THAT AT THE COP 15, THE ISSUE OF THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON WATER ECOSYSTEMS AND SUPPLY OF WATER AS WELL AS THE CONTRIBUTION OF DESTRUCTIVE WATER PRACTICES TO CLIMATE CHANGE ITSELF

WE COMMIT

TO FINALLY ABIDE BY THE YEARS OF COMMITMENTS MADE AND OBLIGATIONS INCURRED RELATED TO WATER AND DO THE FOLLOWING:

1. TO INCLUDE THE HUMAN RIGHT TO WATER IN THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

2. TO INCLUDE HUMAN RIGHT TO WATER IN OPTIONAL PROTOCOLS TO THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT OF SOCIAL ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL RIGHTS, AND THE COVENANT OF CIVL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

to protect watershed and the water commons

3 AT THE CONFERENCE IN BOLIVIA TO RECOGNIZE THE IMPACT ON WATER SYSTEMS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AS WELL AS THE CONTRIBUTION OF DESTRUCTIVE WATER MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Is widely acknowledged that that climate change is having a profoundly negative impact on fresh water systems around the world, - desertification, melting glaciers and more, and these impacts are disproportionately burdening the poor and marginalized in the South. In addition, the collective abuse and mismanagement of fresh water is also a contributing cause of climate change .

4. TO COMMIT AT THE CONFERENCES IN BOLIVIA IN MEXICO AND COP 16 TO A TEMPERATURE RISE OF NOT MORE THAN 1 DEGREE FROM PRE-INDUSTRIAL LEVELS, AND TO A RETURN TO 300PPM, AND ACKNOWLEDGE THE SERIOUS IMPACT OF WATER AND WATER SYSTEMS OF FAILING TO ADHERE TO THIS COMMITMENT

5 TO FULFILL ALL THE COMMITMENTS, RELATED TO WATER, MADE AT UNCED BY THE ANNIVERSARY 2012

Last Updated on Saturday, 23 March 2013 15:02

51 readings

GROUP ANGRY OVER OLD-GROWTH CLEARCUT IN WALBRAN VALLEY



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 23 March 2013 08:30

BY JUDITH LAVOIE / TIMES COLONIST

March 22, 2013 <http://www.timescolonist.com/news/local/group-angry-over-old-growth-clearcut-in-walbran-valley-1.96796>

Torrance Coste, a Wilderness Committee campaigner, stands beside a stump in a clearcut in the Upper Walbran Valley, close to Castle Grove. Some of the trees were 900 years old, the group says.

Previous related articles

Province has no plans to cut old-growth stand in Walbran, near Port Alberni Judith Lavoie, November 30, 2012 **Markers stir**

fears of Walbran logging Judith Lavoie, August 29, 2012

As Torrance Coste stood beside giant stumps in a clearcut in the Upper Walbran Valley, he wondered why anyone would cut down 900-year-old trees.

"Unlogged stands and 900-year-old trees are incomparable in terms of their value in sequestering carbon," said Coste, a campaigner with the Wilderness Committee.

"Given what we know about climate change, liquidating the last few stands of old growth for very short-term profit is extremely irresponsible."

Coste drove into the Walbran Valley this month with a student movie crew that wanted to film giant trees.

The story they have taken back to New York will not reflect positively on B.C.'s logging practices, he said.

"I just stopped dead in my tracks. The forest was now a field of stumps. It was the worst sort of clearcut you will see anywhere."

The area is about one kilometre from Castle Grove, which contains the "Castle Giant" — a western red cedar with a five-metre diameter, considered one of the widest trees in Canada.

The area has also been ground zero for forest protests on Vancouver Island.

Protests in 1991 resulted in the lower half of the Walbran Valley and the Upper Carmanah Valley being added to Carmanah Walbran Provincial Park in 1995.

In 2003, more protests erupted, resulting in the arrest of environmentalist Betty Krawczyk, who was 74 at the time.

Last year, after another skirmish over logging plans near Castle Grove, the company backed off and the province promised to look for new ways to protect ancient stands of trees.

"We need an old-growth logging ban right off the bat," Coste said.

The recent logging, which took place on Crown land, was conducted by the Teal Jones Group of Surrey in late November. The company had all necessary permits and plans in place, said Forests Ministry spokesman Brennan Clarke in an emailed response to questions.

The cuts took place within a special management zone that includes 2,600 hectares along the east side of the Walbran protected area, he said. Clearcuts are limited to a maximum of five hectares and cutblocks that are selectively logged cannot be larger than 40 hectares.

"The government is still actively working on new ways to protect ancient or giant trees," Clarke wrote. "On Vancouver Island, 46 per cent of the forest on Crown land is old growth. Of the 862,125 hectares of old-growth forest, it is estimated that over 520,000 hectares will never be harvested."

No one from Teal Jones was available to comment on the logging because of spring break holidays.

Rob Fleming, the B.C. NDP's environment critic, said the clearcut beside the road leading into Castle Grove shows the need to strengthen old-growth management areas.

"I think we need to look at gaps in the current laws and designated protected areas and look at why 900-year-old trees and stands are not protected," he said.

The problems were underlined recently by auditor general John Doyle, who said B.C. is not

doing enough to protect the province's biodiversity, Fleming said.

"A patchwork doesn't protect biodiversity," he said.

"On Crown land there should be better opportunities to have old growth preserved. We just don't see any proactive old-growth or conservation strategies in B.C."

jlavoie@timescolonist.com

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60 readings

German research institute pulls out of Canadian tar sands project



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 22 March 2013 22:52

By Nickel Institute

<http://www.euractiv.com/science-policymaking/german-research-institute-pulls-news-51860819> March 2013, updated 21 March 2013



EXCLUSIVE / Germany's largest and most prestigious research institute has pulled out of a Canadian government-funded CAN\$25 million research project into sustainable solutions to tar sands pollution, citing fears for its environmental reputation.

As many as 20 scientists at the world-famous **Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres** have ceased involvement in **the Helmholtz Alberta Initiative** (HAI), after a moratorium on contacts was declared last month.

"It was seen as a risk for our reputation," Professor Frank Messner, Helmholtz UFZ's head of staff said stiffly over the phone from his offices in Leipzig.

"As an environmental research centre we have an independent role as an honest broker and doing research in this constellation could have had reputational problems for us, especially after Canada's withdrawal from the Kyoto Protocol," he said.

The HAI had been tasked with upgrading bitumen and lignite coal to reduce energy consumption, and finding ways to deal with overspill from the tar sands industry such as 'tail ponds'- toxic lakes that now cover up to 176 square kilometers of Alberta.

But in reply to a written question from the German socialist MP Frank Schwabe, a statement from the country's education and research ministry on February 20 said that a moratorium had been imposed on collaboration, pending an independent assessment into its environmental bona fides which will conclude in June.

"The assessment evaluates whether a project conforms to sustainability principles," Thomas Rachel, the

education and research minister said.

"The purpose of the procedure is to ensure that sustainability criteria are being adhered to and that the research carried out as part of HAI can contribute significantly to the improvement of sustainability outcomes."

The suspension of research ties follows intense debate within Germany's scientific and political communities, and will not go unnoticed in Ottawa.

"It's a clear signal that Canada's energy and climate policy is not accepted by the international community, especially Germany," Messner said.

High-polluting tag

The EU is inching forward plans to assign fuel from the controversial tar sands a high-polluting tag under its Fuel Quality Directive, which mandates a 6% decarbonisation of Europe's transport fuels by 2020, as measured against a 2010 baseline.

Canada has the world's third largest crude reserves – after Venezuela and Saudi Arabia – overwhelmingly in the form of tar sands.

Mining the sands currently involves the use of huge amounts of water and chemical solvents to extract oil from bitumen, a viscous substance found in sand and clay. The extra energy required by the process of steam injection, strip mining – removing large stretches of overlying soil – and refining is a turbo-booster to CO₂ emissions.

Canada's tar sands deposits contain twice the amount of carbon dioxide emitted by global oil use in human history, according to James Hansen, the head of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies.

"If Canada proceeds, and we do nothing, it will be game over for the climate," **Hansen famously wrote**. It would elevate global temperatures to levels not seen since the Pliocene era, more than 2.5 million years ago, he added.

Environmentalists say that by 2020, a planned expansion in Alberta's tar sands operation would sprawl to an area the size of Austria, the Netherlands and Switzerland combined.

Punch and Judy

Europe imports very little of the unconventional fuel but Canada fears that an EU ruling will influence other markets, such as the US and China and that has set the scene for a lobbyist Punch and Judy, in which science has often been used as a stick.

A **2011 report** commissioned by the EU from Adam Brandt, an Assistant Professor at Stanford University, found that the lifecycle emissions of fuel from tar sands – also known as oil sands – were between 12-40% higher than conventional crude, with the most likely barrel being 22% more carbon intensive.

Brandt wrote that tar sands were "significantly different enough from conventional oil emissions that regulatory frameworks should address this discrepancy with pathway-specific emissions factors that distinguish between oil sands and conventional oil processes."

That led the Alberta Petroleum Marketing Commission to task a rival paper to Jacobs Consultancy, which found that output from better-performing tar sands was "within 12% of the upper range of carbon intensity for diesel from representative crude oils refined Europe."

On paper, this should still be enough to have it assigned a high-polluting default value, albeit by slightly less than the 107 grams of CO₂ per megajoule – compared to 87.5g for conventional crude – in the EU's Fuel Quality Directive.

But Canada's interpretation has been different.

Canada fears persecution

Speaking at a press briefing in Brussels in January, Alberta's environment minister Diana McQueen told journalists: "We look at the Jacobs study and they said that the oil sands should not be discriminated against and be taken out of that basket [of conventional crudes]."

Canada says it is being discriminated against because emissions from its tar sands operations are more transparent and better-reported than other unconventional fuel sources such as shale gas.

"We ask why the oil sands from Alberta would be singled out and unfairly targeted, especially if the intent is truly about climate change and reducing emissions in the EU," McQueen said.

Canada has **previously threatened to launch a suit** against the EU at the World Trade Organisation if it proceeds with the Fuel Quality Directive as planned, and has raised the issue in the context of a planned

\$20 billion EU-Canada Free Trade Agreement.

Within Canada though, it is often climate scientists **that say they are being persecuted against.**

Atmosphere of patriotism

An atmosphere of patriotism has been stirred around tar sands by a massive PR campaign involving advertisements on national TV and in cinemas.

Environmental and climate science budgets have been axed, and one of the world's top Arctic research stations for monitoring global warming has been closed.

Hundreds of scientists have lost their jobs, and those that remain have been forbidden from talking to the media without a government minder present.

As such, environmentalists welcomed the pushback from Germany. "A number of high level EU decision makers have stated that the Canadian lobbying effort goes beyond what is considered acceptable," Darek Urbaniak of Friends of the Earth told EurActiv.

"The fact that a renowned scientific institute from Germany has decided to pull out of cooperation with Alberta is a further blow to this strategy."

Last Updated on Friday, 22 March 2013 22:58

44 readings

EPA Favors 'Bee-Toxic Pesticides' Over Future of Food, Groups Charge



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

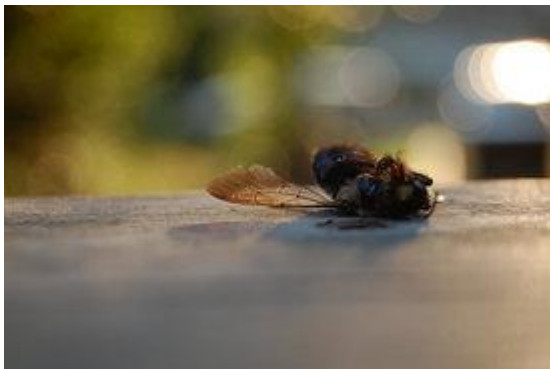
Friday, 22 March 2013 22:31

By - Jacob Chamberlain, staff writer March 22 Common Dreams

<http://www.commondreams.org/headline/2013/03/22-2>

THE EPA HAS REFUSED TO PROTECT BEES, "SO WE'VE BEEN COMPELLED TO SUE," SAID FOOD SAFETY GROUP

Arguing that the Environmental Protection Agency has failed in its obligation to protect the nation's bee population—one of the Earth's most vital pollinators—from dangerous pesticides, a group of beekeepers and environmental groups **have filed a lawsuit** in federal court saying the EPA's inaction is causing great harm to biodiversity and the future of food in the U.S.



(Saire Elizabeth via Flickr / Creative Commons License) The suit filed by the coalition aims to compel the EPA to suspend the licensing of insecticides that have repeatedly been identified as highly toxic to honey

bees and that act as "significant contributors to the devastating ongoing mortality" of bees known as colony collapse disorder (CCD).

"Our country depends on bees for crop pollination and honey production. It's time for EPA to recognize the value of bees to our food system and agricultural economy," said plaintiff Steve Ellis, a Minnesota and California beekeeper.

The groups involved, which have long been fighting on behalf of the bees, say that the EPA has ignored their efforts, including a petition which urged the agency to take swift action against two insecticides classified as neonicotinoids filed over one year ago.

"Beekeepers and environmental and consumer groups have demonstrated time and time again over the last several years that EPA needs to protect bees. The agency has refused, so we've been compelled to sue," said attorney Peter T. Jenkins of the Center for Food Safety (CFS), which is representing the coalition in the suit. "EPA's unlawful actions should convince the Court to suspend the approvals for clothianidin and thiamethoxam products until those violations are resolved."

While the EPA has failed to ban these highly toxic pesticides outright, they have also, according to CFS, failed to properly regulate them.

Those failures include improper labeling of toxic substances, "lax enforcement" for pesticide usage, and the continued practice of allowing companies to exploit regulatory loopholes—often in the form of a process called "conditional registrations."

"Pesticide manufacturers use conditional registrations to rush bee-toxic products to market, with little public oversight," said Paul Towers, a spokesperson for Pesticide Action Network. "As new independent research comes to light, the agency has been slow to re-evaluate pesticide products and its process, leaving bees exposed to an ever-growing load of hazardous pesticides."

The pesticides in the case—clothianidin and thiamethoxam—are also included in a list of pesticides that are currently being considered for a ban in the European Union. However, the EU failed to reach a decision in a heated vote last week—a result which "flies in the face of science and public opinion and **maintains the disastrous chemical Armageddon on bees**, which are critical for the future of our food," **according** to campaigners working for the European wide ban on the toxic substances.

While clothianidin is manufactured by Bayer, and thiamethoxam is made by Syngenta, neither company chose to comment on the lawsuit, the Guardian **reports**.

The plaintiffs in the case include four beekeepers, Steve Ellis of Old Mill Honey Co. (MN, CA), Jim Doan of Doan Family Farms (NY), Tom Theobald of Niwot Honey Farm (CO) and Bill Rhodes of Bill Rhodes Honey (FL) as well as Beyond Pesticides, Center for Food Safety, Pesticide Action Network North America, Sierra Club, and the Center for Environmental Health.

Last Updated on Friday, 22 March 2013 22:36

31 readings

Indigenous youth on epic journey to Ottawa deserve attention and respect



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russov

Friday, 22 March 2013 08:55

Cathryn Atkinson | March 18, 2013

<http://rabble.ca/news/2013/03/indigenous-youth-epic-journey-ottawa-deserve-attention-and-respect#.UUsf3rS51PI.facebook>



David Kawapit Jr. is a name that everyone who cares about this country deserves to know.

This young man, a 17-year-old Cree from the isolated community Whapmagoostui on Hudson Bay in northern Quebec, decided it would be a good idea to walk 1,600 kilometres to Ottawa in support of the Idle No More movement. Some of his friends joined him.

So with temperatures apparently hovering at around -50C, he and six others left home on Jan. 16, trekking on snowshoes and pulling their supplies, stopping at communities along the way to tell people that they wanted changes to how Indigenous people are treated in Canada.

They want to change the contempt with which they are treated, they want to end the blockage placed in front of them designed to quash their aspirations and heritage, they want to end the mentality of relegation that sees so many First Nations forced into to the lowest status imaginable by the political and cultural mainstream.

The gesture reflected the mood across the country in the middle of January, when Idle No More was in full flow with protests and media attention.

But there was little attention shown to these young people quietly walking through the forests. At the time of writing, I can't find much in the mainstream national press, nothing in the Globe and Mail about it, nothing in the National Post, a couple of stories on CBC North, one story in the Toronto Star -- but nothing for the whole country to see.

It's all over social media, mainly via astonishing photos of the young people walking in a long line across frozen open spaces like lakes, with trees -- and Ottawa -- in the distance. Over the last two months it has been possible to mark the trek south by location on Google and imagine step after step, tree after tree, village after village. The website for the journey is www.nishiyuu.ca. (Click [here](#) join the Facebook group, which now has over 30,000 members.)

As the walkers moved slowly through the wilderness they stopped off at other isolated communities, gathering up young people who want to be a part of it. There were plenty and so the numbers grew.

As they entered Lac Simon, Quebec, on March 6, the original seven walkers had turned into 80 people. There was a feast and dance that night and when the walkers left the next morning, their numbers had swelled to 93, with young Algonquins joining them. By March 11, on the last part of the walk, the numbers had risen to over 170.

Marilyne Jerome, the director of education for Lac Simon, 30 kilometres from Val d'Or, told the CBC that her daughter had joined the walkers.

"This is the message of what they want as a future," she said. "The future they want is to know who they are and where they come from."

She said she believed the walkers symbolized part of an Anishinaabe prophecy known as the Seven Fires -- which describes the time for aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples to come together.

The talk from the walkers themselves seems to emphasize the warmth of their situation, rather than the

cold around them.

Sixteen-year-old Saige Mukash joined the walk in Waskaganish and spoke to the CBC after a month of walking.

"I wanted to walk because I wanted to get better with myself. I wanted to learn how to take care of myself and how to be happy with myself. So far I've learned a lot and I'm really, really happy to be here," she said.

"It's an amazing experience walking in snowshoes, and feeling the pain in your feet and your legs is pretty amazing because that is what our people used to do and we know how much they suffered walking from place to place."

This is a life-changing moment for these young people and those who love them. This is an achievement they will embrace all their lives. It's an epic journey, awesome in the real sense. It's the example of an accomplishment that we ought to wish on any people who want to seize life for themselves and determine their own fates. It's an act of personal reclamation and a declaration. And it shows that these are ordinary young people who are also extraordinary young people. They deserve respect. They are an inspiration that I want the young people in my community, in my family, to know about.

In a little over a week, on March 25, the walkers expect to reach the Parliament buildings. How they will be received by the Harper government, which has tried to ignore or delegitimize the Idle No More Movement while shaving away at longstanding health, education, and development programming for indigenous people, remains to be seen.

But whether they get the attention from the media or officialdom is one thing, what needs to be understood is that two things will arrive together in Ottawa that day. One will be a group of Indigenous teens on a quest for themselves and the other is an idea of justice and autonomy that I believe can no longer be repressed.

Cathryn Atkinson is a reporter with Pique Newsmagazine in Whistler, B.C. and a former rabble.ca editor. This article was originally published in **Pique** and is reprinted here with permission.

Last Updated on Friday, 22 March 2013 18:19

39 readings

Elections Canada asked to probe donations from SNC-Lavalin execs



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 22 March 2013 08:15

By John Nicol, Brigitte Noël, Jeremy McDonald and Dave Seglins, **CBC News** Mar 21, 2013

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/story/2013/03/21/canada-quebec-snc-lavalin-political-donations-elections-canada-probe.html?cmp=rss>

BLOC QUEBECOIS, NDP COMPLAIN CONSERVATIVE RIDINGS IN QUEBEC GOT 'CORPORATE' DONATIONS



The Bloc Québécois has asked Elections Canada to investigate political donations made by 12 executives from SNC-Lavalin — and two of their wives — during the 2011 federal election. (Ryan Remiorz/Canadian Press)

The Bloc Québécois has written Elections Canada demanding an investigation into political donations made to Conservative candidate Michel-Eric Castonguay in the 2011 federal election after CBC News yesterday revealed 12 executives from engineering giant SNC-Lavalin — and two of their wives — donated a total of \$14,900 just two days before Canadians went to the polls.

“What is the link between those people [in Montreal] and this candidate in Montmorency?” asked Bloc Leader Daniel Paillé. “We have to make an inquiry about that. Is it ethical?”

In the letter to Elections Canada shared with CBC News, the Bloc’s André Bellavance expressed concerns about donations made to Conservatives in two other ridings, Laurier-Sainte-Marie in 2009 and Rivière-des-Milles-Îles in 2008.

Last November, Postmedia News investigated a series of donations made to the Conservative riding association of Laurier-Sainte-Marie, in downtown Montreal. They reported a dozen donors — tied to a total contribution of \$14,333.19 accrued between 2006 and 2009 — had claimed they were not responsible for the donations.

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RELATED: SNC-Lavalin staff donated \$15K to

Conservative nominee

The Bloc's letter also states concerns that in 2008, in little less than a month, the Conservatives amassed almost \$90,000 for candidate Claude Carignan, in the Rivière-des-Milles-Îles riding. Bellavance writes that according to records, this sum was collected from a number of individuals who have since been accused of electoral fraud at the Charbonneau inquiry, which is looking into corruption in Quebec's construction industry.

The Canada Elections Act was changed in 2006 to prohibit corporate donations.

Earlier this week, SNC-Lavalin claimed the executives who donated to Castonguay did so of their "own volition" and were not reimbursed. A spokesperson said the fact that all donations but one were for the same amount, \$1,100, and that all were filed on the same day, is just a coincidence.

'We are concerned that those donations might be a scheme, the scheme that we saw at the municipal level or the provincial level might exist at the federal level too.' —

Alexandre Boulerice, NDP MP for Rosemont-La Petite-Patrie

But the company today would not answer questions about whether the donations were orchestrated by someone within SNC-Lavalin. SNC-Lavalin spokesperson Leslie Quinton issued a statement instead saying "The contributions ... are, to our knowledge, made by employees at their own volition and were not reimbursed. Because these are personal donations and not those of the company, there is nothing we can add to this."

Quebec's Charbonneau Commission, an inquiry into corruption in the province's construction industry, heard from SNC-Lavalin executive Yves Cadotte within the last week. Cadotte testified that the company had a pattern of reimbursing executives through bonuses for provincial and municipal political contributions.

"It's more than troubling," said the NDP's Alexandre Boulerice, MP for **Rosemont-La Petite-Patrie**. "We are concerned that those donations might be a scheme, the scheme that we saw at the municipal level or the provincial level might exist at the federal level too.

"We have to shine a light on those dark areas."

During Tuesday's question period, the NDP grilled the Tories about another Quebec riding where executives from SNC-Lavalin gave political contributions. Elections Canada records show that in 2009, seven SNC executives and six of their wives donated a total of \$14,100 to the Conservative Party's Portneuf-Jacques-Cartier Riding Association. The riding, located on the outskirts of Quebec City, has had no Conservative candidate in the last two federal elections.

AMERICAN REGULATIONS ARE MORE TRANSPARENT

Tyler Sommers, co-ordinator of Democracy Watch, a non-profit that advocates for open and more accountable government, told CBC News that Ottawa should implement laws that are

more explicit, such as those in the United States.

"In the U.S. you are required to state who your employer is and what your associations are, and that can be helpful to elections agencies because it will help them identify these patterns," said Sommers.

"It'll help them to ensure that when they see a wave of people donating from the same company, perhaps for the same amount or in a very limited time frame at the very least, they fully look into those situations to ensure the Elections Act or provincial election acts are being followed."

Sommers is also advocating smaller limits, such as the \$100 personal contribution cap permitted in Quebec's provincial elections, which ensures that firms attempting to coordinate employees to contribute wouldn't be able to raise significant amounts.

Last Updated on Friday, 22 March 2013 08:25

39 readings

Citizens' campaign to arrest Blair continues



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 21 March 2013 21:16

by **Simon Hooper** Last Modified: 21 Mar 2013

08:07 <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/03/20133209727608817.html>

Citizens band together to arrest former British prime minister over involvement in Iraq's invasion a decade ago.



Blair's schedule is now a closely guarded secret to avoid protesters who stalk his public appearances [AFP]

London, United Kingdom - It was only as David Cronin saw Tony Blair and his entourage striding towards him that he finally plucked up the courage to go through with his plan to attempt to arrest the former British prime minister over his role in the invasion of Iraq and claim a bounty on his head.

"I walked up to him very briskly and managed to put my hand on his arm and say, 'Mr Blair, this is a citizen's arrest,'" Cronin told Al Jazeera of the 2010 encounter at the European Parliament in Brussels, where he worked as a journalist.

"I didn't have time to say anything else before his bodyguards pushed me away, so I just shouted at him, 'You are guilty of war crimes!' He looked at me for a split-second before I was bundled off. I can only describe it as a look of puzzlement and contempt."

"It's a complete joke that a guy who had helped to start two wars in the wider Middle East region is now swanning around posing as a peace envoy."

- David Cronin, Blair-arrest attemptee

Ten years since British forces joined the US-led assault, many in the UK are more critical than ever of the country's involvement in a conflict **documented** by the Iraq Body Count database to have killed more than 112,000 civilians.

More than a fifth - 22 percent - of Britons polled by YouGov this month **said** they believed Blair should be tried as a war criminal for his role in the conflict, which was preceded by massive anti-war demonstrations in London and other cities.

Fifty-three percent said the invasion was wrong, while half said Blair, a key international ally of US President George W Bush, had deliberately misled the British people over the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction.

Blair's schedule these days is a closely guarded secret to avoid ambushes by the protesters who stalk his public appearances armed with eggs, shoes and banners reading: "BLIAR". Even his testimony at last year's phone-hacking inquiry was interrupted by an intruder shouting, "This man is a war criminal!"

Online campaign

Cronin, meanwhile, is one of four people to have claimed a reward from an

online campaign, **Arrest Blair**, which offers a share of a bounty pot for each attempted arrest.

Arrest Blair's guide to
citizen arrest

The method we **recommend** is calmly to approach Mr Blair and in a gentle fashion to lay a hand on his shoulder or elbow, in such a way that he cannot have any cause to complain of being hurt or trapped by you, and announce loudly: "Mr Blair, this is a citizens' arrest for a crime against peace, namely your decision to launch an unprovoked war against Iraq. I am inviting you to accompany me to a police station to answer the charge."

Launched in 2010, the campaign has already paid out about \$16,600, though it concedes its efforts are largely symbolic. According to its rules, attempts must be non-violent and must be reported by at least one mainstream media outlet.

Cronin, who donated his \$4,200 bounty to a Gaza-based charity, said he was moved to act not just by Iraq but also in protest at Blair's appointment as Middle East envoy for the Quartet of the UN, the US, the EU and Russia.

"It's a complete joke that a guy who had helped to start two wars in the wider Middle East region is now swanning around posing as a peace envoy," Cronin said.

Moves to hold Blair accountable are also gaining momentum in Scotland, where some campaigners believe he could be tried under the country's separate legal system.

Margo MacDonald, an independent member of the Scottish parliament, told Al Jazeera that she planned to table a motion on Wednesday calling for Scottish law to be amended to make illegal "the waging of aggressive war with the intention of regime change", specifically so that Blair could be brought to trial.

Last Updated on Friday, 22 March 2013 08:33

[must be finally set up to try the Bush Regime](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 21 March 2013 08:10

by Joan Russow Global Compliance Research Project



Tenth Anniversary of the invasion of Iraq:An international tribunal set up by the UN General Assembly must finally to try the Bush Regime

<http://www.petitiononline.com/5t4r3e2w/petition.html> or

versions of the petition are after the English [on the petition site The French and Spanish has to be edited- the correct version is in this posting]

In Canada, on March 17, 2011 rather than arresting Bush as a war criminal, the police arrested a citizen calling for Bush to be put on trial. John Boncore (Splitting the Sky) who died recently attempted to arrest Bush in Vancouver; John was arrested but Bush continues to jet set around the world on speaking tours

Over the years, the United States has supported the setting up, by the United Nations, of tribunals to judge leaders of other states. To avoid, the perception of Bias, the United Nations General Assembly must be prepared to invoke Article 22 of the Charter of the United Nations, to set up an International Tribunal to try the Bush Regime. No state or state leader is above the rule of international law, particularly those states justifying aggression on the grounds of self-defence, under Article 51 of the UN Charter, or of

preventive/pre-emptive aggression.

Last Updated on Friday, 22 March 2013 08:32

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[Men Who Kick Down Doors Tyrants at Home and Abroad](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 21 March 2013 06:54

By [Ann Jones](#) <http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175663/>

Picture this. A man, armored in tattoos, bursts into a living room not his own. He confronts an enemy. He barks orders. He throws that enemy into a chair. Then against a wall. He plants himself in the middle of the room, feet widespread, fists clenched, muscles straining, face contorted in a scream of rage. The tendons in his neck are taut with the intensity of his terrifying performance. He chases the enemy to the next room, stopping escape with a quick grab and thrust and body block that pins the enemy, bent back, against a counter. He shouts more orders: his enemy can go with him to the basement for a “private talk,” or be beaten to a pulp right here. Then he wraps his fingers around the neck of his enemy and begins to choke her.

[Read more...](#)

[Biologist and filmmaker tour BC with controversial new documentary](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 20 March 2013 16:00

Press Release MARCH 16 2013 www.SalmonConfidential.ca

<http://player.vimeo.com/video/61301410>

Biologist Alexandra Morton and filmmaker Twyla Roscovich hit the road to bring

“Salmon Confidential” to communities around British Columbia.

Salmon Confidential is a new film on the government cover up of what is killing BC's wild salmon. When biologist Alexandra Morton discovers BC's wild salmon are testing positive for dangerous European salmon viruses associated with salmon farming worldwide, a chain of events is set off by government to suppress the findings. Tracking viruses, Morton moves from courtrooms, into British Columbia's most remote rivers, Vancouver grocery stores and sushi restaurants. The film documents Morton's journey as she attempts to overcome government and industry roadblocks thrown in her path and works to bring critical information to the public in time to save BC's wild salmon.

Last Updated on Wednesday, 20 March 2013 16:28

1448 readings

Fifty percent of the domestic honeybee population is dead, the greatest single-year loss of honeybees in the United States ever recorded. The dramatic loss of the bees is expected to affect consumers.



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 10 April 2013 14:33

By Catholics on line

<http://www.catholic.org/green/story.php?id=50432>

Fifty percent of the domestic honeybee population is dead, the greatest single-year loss of honeybees in the United States ever recorded.

The dramatic loss of the bees is expected to affect consumers.



Colony Collapse Disorder has killed half of the honeybees in the United States this year alone.

LOS ANGELES, CA (Catholic Online) - Scientists and beekeepers have been baffled by Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) which is characterized by the sudden disappearance of the hive's worker population.

According to the USDA, Symptoms of CCD include few or no adult honeybees present, honey and immature bees (broods) remain present in the hive suggesting a sudden abandonment of the hive--a possible response to stress. However, the bees are never found elsewhere, they simply disappear and die. Usually, the queen bee is left behind but dies without establishing a new population.

The disorder has significantly affected bee populations since the 1970s with a sharp increase in losses since 2006. Now, as beekeepers return to their hives to prepare for spring pollination, they are finding that at least half of their bees are gone.

The 2013 year now marks the highest loss on record with at least 50 percent of all European honeybees in the U.S. reported lost to CCD.

The attrition rate for honeybee hives is normally around 5 to 10 percent per year. After 2006, that rate increased to about one third. This year, it is one half.

That one-half figure is a critical point beyond which many beekeepers think prices will be affected.

Bees are important because they pollinate most of the fruit and vegetable supply in the United States. They also produce honey, which is still widely consumed as a sweetener on bread and in a variety of other products.

Just what's killing the bees remains a mystery but beekeepers are beside themselves, often approaching their hives to find hundreds of worker bees dying outside the hives each day. As the bees die, farmers lose the ability to pollinate crops, reducing yields and thereby the food supply. Farmers are now projecting that the decrease in the supply of fruits and

vegetables will be so great that prices will be impacted by the summer of this year.

A number of beekeepers blame pesticides for the loss of their bees, specifically as class known as neonicotinoids. Neonicotinoids are a form of pesticide that work by blocking the nerve endings in insects, paralyzing them so that they die slowly by starvation. Beekeepers think their bees are being exposed to the pesticides and are dying as a result.

Research done on dead bees confirms the pesticide is occasionally present.

This has prompted beekeepers to work together to sue the EPA for failing to ban neonicotinoids.

Others still think the causes could be more complex, a combination of natural and man-made factors which are contributing to the extreme mortality rate.

What researchers have widely observed is that bees are being exposed to a wider variety of chemicals in the environment than previously supposed. A virtual cocktail of pesticides and chemicals could be contributing to their demise.

Other research has looked into the possibility of diseases such as parasites or viruses, but no single factor has demonstrated the lethality that beekeepers are reporting.

Although the cause remains inconclusive, the effects are now beyond question. The dramatic reduction in honeybee population means fewer crops will be pollinated and farmers will pay more for their beehives this year. That means less food and higher costs for fruits and vegetables later in the year.

Of course, so few Americans still eat fresh fruits and vegetables these days, the impact will probably be mitigated somewhat by our extremely poor dietary habits.

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78 readings

Down Is a Dangerous Direction How the 40-Year "Long Recession" Led to the Great Recession



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 10 April 2013 07:48

By [Barbara Garson](#) <http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175685/> If you had to date the Great Recession, you might say it started in September 2008 when Lehman Brothers vaporized over a weekend and a massive mortgage-based Ponzi scheme began to go down. By 2008, however, the majority of American workers had already endured a 40-year decline in wages, security, and hope -- a Long

Recession of their own.

In the 1960s, I met a young man about to be discharged from the Army and then, by happenstance, caught up with him again in each of the next two decades. Though he died two months before the Lehman Brothers collapse, those brief encounters taught me how the Long Recession led directly to our Great Recession.

In the late 1960s, I was working at an antiwar coffee house near an army base from which soldiers shipped out to Vietnam. One gangly young man, recently back from “the Nam,” was particularly handy and would fix our record player or make our old mimeograph machine run more smoothly. He rarely spoke about the war, except to say that his company had stayed stoned the whole time. “Our motto,” he once told me, “was ‘let’s not and say we did.’” Duane had no intention of becoming a professional Vietnam vet like John Kerry when discharged. His plan was to return home to Cleveland and make up for time missed in the civilian counterculture of that era.

I often sat with him during my breaks, enjoying his warmth and his self-aware sense of humor. But thousands of GIs passed through the coffee house and, to be honest, I didn’t really notice when he left.

In the early 1970s, General Motors set up the fastest auto assembly line in the world in Lordstown, Ohio, and staffed it with workers whose average age was 24. GM’s management hoped that such healthy, inexperienced workers could handle 101 cars an hour without balking the way more established autoworkers might. What GM got instead of balkiness was a series of slowdowns and snafus that management labeled systematic “sabotage” until they realized that the word hurt car sales.

I visited Lordstown the week before a strike vote was to be taken, amid national speculation about whether a generation of “hippy autoworkers” could “humanize the assembly line” and so change forever the way America worked. On a guided tour of the plant, I was surprised to spot Duane shooting radios into cars with an air gun. He recognized me and slipped me a note with his phone number.

I called and, later that evening at his home, he offered me

a quick summary of life since his discharge: “Remember, you guys gave me a giant banana split the day I ETSed [got out as scheduled]. Well, it’s been downhill since then. I came back to Cleveland, stayed with my dad who was unemployed. Man, was that ever a downer. But I figured things would pick up if I got wheels, so I got a car. But it turned out the car wasn’t human and that was a problem. So I figured, what I need is a girl. But it turned out the girl was human and that was a problem. So I wound up working at GM to pay off the car and the girl.”

And he introduced me to his pregnant wife, of whom he seemed much fonder than his story made it sound. The young couple had no complaints about the pay at GM. Still, Duane planned to move on after his wife had the baby. “I’m staying so we can use the hospital plan.”

And what did he think was next? “Maybe we’ll go live on the land,” he told me. If that didn’t pan out, he said that he’d look for a job someplace less regimented, someplace where he’d get to do something “worthwhile.” To Duane, worthwhile work didn’t necessarily mean launching a space shuttle or curing cancer. It meant getting to see what he’d actually accomplished — like those repairs on our mimeo machine back at the coffee house — instead of performing repetitive snaps, twists, and squirts on cars that moved past him every 36 seconds.

When Duane and his friends talked about quitting well-paying jobs, they weren’t just blowing off steam. In those years, there was enough work around that if a friend moved to Atlanta or there was a band you liked in Cincinnati, you could hitchhike there and find a job in a day or two that would cover your rent and food.

That, of course, made it harder to run a business. GM echoed many other U.S. employers in its complaints about absenteeism and high turnover among young workers. In retrospect, this was probably the moment when many U.S. manufacturers began looking around to see just what could be done about their labor problem. But neither Duane nor I had any premonition of the outsourcing and offshoring that would start the Great Recession decades early for so many working families. For us, it was still a time when jobs abounded and

Americans talked not about finding work, but “humanizing” it.

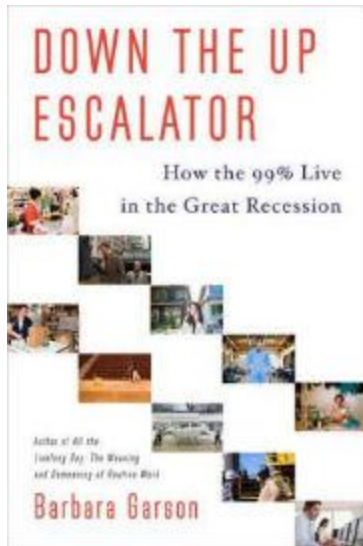
In the mid-1980s, I spoke at a university in Michigan and once again spotted Duane -- this time in the audience. After the talk, we chatted and I asked him to come out with the professors who ’ d sponsored my lecture, but he had to collect his children from school and drop them off with the babysitter in time to get to his late afternoon shift. His wife, he told me, would pick them up when her day shift ended.

“Complicated logistics!” I said.

“It ’ s a tighter maneuver than my company in Nam ever pulled off,” he quipped.

In the brief moments we had, Duane filled me in on his work life. He hadn ’ t gone back to the land, but he no longer worked in the auto industry either. “Too many lay-offs ” was his summary of the intervening years. In order to “keep ahead of it, ” he ’ d upgraded and become a skilled machinist. He had, in fact, continued to upgrade his skills to the point where, as he explained, “ I program the machines that program the other machinists. ” Then he shrugged as if to say: What ’ re you gonna do?

At that time, computers were just being introduced into machine shops and had the effect of taking planning away from the operators at their benches and centralizing a lot of the thinking about production in a management office or planning department. Duane understood perfectly well that he was “keeping ahead of it” by using his own skills to de-skill others, hence that apologetic shrug.



Buy the book

His wife's job was being similarly automated. She was a data processor at an insurance company and regularly came home with a headache from staring into the era's immobile, blinking CRT screens. They had little choice, though. By then, two incomes were needed to maintain anything like a middle-class home.

In the summer of 2008, the phone rang and a man's voice began to explain to me that he and his sisters were contacting people whose names they had found in their father's address book to let them know that he had passed away. Duane had died suddenly in Arizona. He'd moved there a few years earlier to work in a shop that, his son told me, had something to do with industrial lasers ("keeping ahead of it" to the end).

The funeral was scheduled for a weekend and because of Duane's handiwork, there was plenty of room for out-of-town guests, so his son assured me. In his Arizona home, "Dad built these beautiful built-in sleeping spaces." His sisters, he mentioned, were toying with the idea of moving to the house because they couldn't imagine a stranger fully appreciating their father's work. They were even exploring the employment situation out there. One was then a medical receptionist, the other a delivery truck driver.

Two months later, the economy crashed. It wasn't exactly the moment to give up steady jobs. By then, the Arizona

real-estate bubble had fully burst, leaving the house, with all their father's beautiful handiwork, "underwater." Even if they could sell it at a reasonable post-crash price, they'd still owe the bank more than \$200,000.

As his inheritance, all Duane had left was that house, a \$15,000 death benefit, and \$6,000 in credit card debt. His children had no way to keep paying the mortgage, and so, on the advice of a lawyer, they mailed the keys to the bank and walked away.

Of this situation, his son said, "Dad would have made some joke. 'When I was alive I once stopped you from running away from home, but I taught you to walk away from a home after I was dead.' Something like that. Only he'd make it come out funny."

I thought back to the G.I. coffee house and Duane's quips about his hapless army unit. Yes, were he around, he might indeed have made a joke about a hapless American worker trudging steadily up an incline, who, like his mortgaged house, somehow wound up underwater anyway, and he probably would have made it come out funny, too -- sort of.

This is not to say that Duane led either a deprived or a worthless life. His estate might have fallen victim to the economic meltdown of 2008, but he himself had worked steadily at increasingly skilled and perhaps even "worthwhile" jobs. He had raised three children who still admired their father. And he seems to have retained his self-aware but not self-deprecating humor to the end.

On the other hand, here was a working man, part of a two-income family, who had kept ahead of off-shoring, outsourcing, and automation by regularly retraining himself. He worked hard for four decades, yet died with no savings, negative equity in his house, and credit-card debt.

Despite his growing set of skills, Duane's income seems not to have risen significantly over his lifetime. He was, it seems, always close to the edge. Of course, I can hardly claim to have known him well. Perhaps he squandered his money on secret vices, but the likelihood that his income simply stagnated over four decades certainly fit a national pattern.

Between 1971 and 2007, real hourly wages in the U.S. rose by only 4%. (That's not 4% a year, but 4% over 36 years!) During those same decades, productivity essentially doubled, increasing by 99%. In other words, the average worker's productivity rose 25 times more than his or her pay.

This was, of course, a bonanza for corporations and for the richest Americans. In 1976, the top 1% of U.S. families held 19% of the country's wealth. By 2000, they held 40% of it. In those same years, 58% of every dollar of income growth went to the top 1%.

There was, however, one small problem: we Americans sell to one another more than 70% of what we produce. If the majority of American workers were producing more without earning more, who was going to buy all the stuff?

CEOs and financiers were desperate to answer that question, for during those years of high productivity and low wages, immense profits and "returns" kept accumulating in brokerage accounts and banks. But a bank can't keep its money in the bank. Under the pressure of those swelling piles of capital, the answer they offered to worker-consumers like Duane was: instead of paying you enough to buy what you produce, we'll lend you the money.

First, they loaned for big-ticket items: cars, homes, college educations; then, through credit cards, for everyday household expenses. As we came to realize after the meltdown of 2008, the ultimate Ponzi scheme of the era would involve bundling and reselling mortgage loans made to people who couldn't afford houses in the first place.

The answer offered to those who had ever less money to spend was: take out more loans. The folly of lending money to people with stagnant or declining wages may seem obvious now, but like many houses of cards it must have looked solid enough to some back then. Still, let's not underestimate our major financiers. On a CNBC program, former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan was asked why no one had seen the mortgage crisis coming and told the bankers, "You know what? This is going to end badly."

Greenspan answered: "It's not that they weren't aware that the risks were there, I mean I spoke to them. It's not that the people were dumb. They knew precisely what was

going on. The vast majority of them thought that they knew when to get out.”

In fact, creative financial spinning had kept this unbalanced vehicle upright for a remarkably long time. Nonetheless, like any other Ponzi scheme it eventually collapsed, and that’s when Duane’s long recession turned into the world’s Great Recession.

Barbara Garson is the author of a series of books describing American working lives at historical turning points, including *All the Livelong Day* (1975), *The Electronic Sweatshop* (1988), and *Money Makes the World Go Around* (2001). Her new book, just published, is [Down the Up Escalator: How the 99% Live in the Great Recession](#) (Doubleday).

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410 readings

77 readings

[Demolition and Eviction of Bedouin Citizens of Israel in the Naqab \(Negev\) - The Prawer Plan](#)



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 06 April 2013 16:21

By the legal centre for Arab Rights in Israel

<http://adalah.org/eng/?mod=articles&ID;=1589>



In September 2011, the Israeli government approved the Praver Plan for mass expulsion of the Arab Bedouin community in the Naqab (Negev) desert. If fully implemented this plan will result in the forced displacement of up to 70,000 Arab Bedouin citizens of Israel and the destruction of 35 “unrecognized” villages. Despite the Arab Bedouin community’s complete rejection of the plan and strong disapproval from the **international community** and human rights groups, the Praver Plan is happening now. More than 1,000 homes were demolished in 2011 and in August a special police force is slated to officially begin implementing the plan, and demolish even more. Adalah and our NGO partners have been challenging the Praver Plan before courts, government authorities and the international community, but we need your help to stop what would be the largest single act of forced displacement of Arab citizens of Israel since the 1950s!

Please [sign our petition](#) and [visit our Facebook page](#) to find out what you can do to Stop the Praver Plan!

[Sign up for Adalah's Newsletter](#) to stay informed.

What is the Praver Plan?

Arab Bedouin citizens of Israel, inhabitants of the Naqab (Negev) desert since the seventh century, are the most vulnerable community in Israel. For over 60 years, the indigenous Arab Bedouin have faced a state policy of displacement, home demolitions and dispossession of their ancestral land. Today, 70,000 Arab Bedouin citizens live in 35 villages that either predate the establishment of the State in 1948, or were created by Israeli military order in the early 1950s. The State of Israel considers the villages “unrecognized” and the inhabitants “trespassers on State land,” so it denies the citizens access to state infrastructure like water, electricity, sewage, education, health care and roads. The state deliberately withholds basic services from these villages to “encourage” the Arab Bedouin citizens to give up their ancestral land.

In September 2011, the Israeli government approved the Praver Plan, the brainchild of former Deputy Chair of the National Security Council, Mr. Ehud Praver. If implemented, the Praver Plan will result in the destruction of the unrecognized villages and the forced displacement of up to 70,000 Arab Bedouin citizens. This plan was completed without consultation of the local community, and is a gross violation of the constitutional rights of the Arab Bedouin citizens to property, dignity, equality, adequate housing, and freedom to choose their own residence.

Praver is Happening Now

Despite complete rejection of the plan by the Arab Bedouin, and strong disapproval from the international

community, Praver is happening now. Media reports indicate that on 1 August 2012, a special police force will begin work to implement Praver and demolish homes. More than 1,000 houses were demolished in 2011 alone, and civil society is seeing the same practices in 2012. Since Praver was announced, the government announced plans that will displace over 10,000 people and plant forests, build military centers, and establish new Jewish settlements in their place.

In March 2012, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination called on Israel to withdraw the proposed implementing legislation of the Praver Plan, on the grounds that it was discriminatory. If Israel applied the same criteria for planning and development that exist in the Jewish rural sector, all 35 unrecognized villages would be recognized where they are.

In July 2012, the European Parliament passed a historic resolution calling on Israel to Stop the Praver Plan and its policies of displacement, eviction, and dispossession.

Adalah calls on the Israeli government to:

- Cancel the Praver Plan
- Recognize the "unrecognized villages" and the land claims of the indigenous Arab Bedouin community
- Halt home demolitions and forced evictions
- Engage in meaningful dialogue with the Arab Bedouin community and the Arab political leadership to justly resolve the land claims
- Invest in greater health, education, and employment opportunities for Arab Bedouin citizens of Israel

Find out More:

Briefing Paper: [Analysis of the Praver Plan](#)

Briefing Paper: [The Praver Plan Bill](#)

Adalah and ACRI Press Release: [Praver Plan Law Violates Rights of Bedouin](#)

Four Reasons to [Reject the Praver Plan](#)

The Arab Bedouin: [Myths and Misconceptions](#)

[UN CERD](#) Calls on Israel to Withdraw the Praver Plan Law

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Last Updated on Saturday, 06 April 2013 16:26

410 readings

Boycott foods that use Monsanto Products and stop approval of GM Alfalfa



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 06 April 2013 18:41

the occult truth Time line photos [Back to Album](#) · [Stopping Monsanto's Photos](#) · [Stopping Monsanto's Page](#)[Previous](#) · [Next](#)

And Stop the approval of Monsanto`s Genetically GM Alfalfa attend rallies across the Canada

http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9064:april-9-rallies-across-the-country-to-stop-monsantos-gm-alfalfa-&catid=87:cearth-news&Itemid=212

SEE VIDEOS OF RALLY IN VICTORIA

Part 1:

<http://youtu.be/5IPdFfJLH2g>

Part 2:

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HEALTH DANGERS IN MILK

<http://www.activistpost.com/2013/04/monsantos-power-two-reporters-fired-for.html>

Victoria Rally

**APRIL 9, 12 NOON TO 1PM
AT 816 GOVERNMENT ST VICTORIA**

Part 1:

<http://youtu.be/5IPdFfJLH2g>

Part 2:

http://youtu.be/_Eac5DYA1nU

Monsanto's GM alfalfa is poised to be released in Ontario. It will only be a matter of time before it is released across Canada. It must be stopped. The National Farmers Union-Ontario has called for consumers to support farmers in a Day of Action to Stop GM Alfalfa .This Day of Action will be across the country on April 9 Ontario farmers have organized protest rallies in 12 communities, in Ontario including in Ottawa where a final rubber-stamp to release Roundup Ready alfalfa is expected any day. On There are also 11 rallies confirmed in support of Ontario farmers happening in towns in BC, Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan (at the office of the Minister of Agriculture), Quebec, and Nova Scotia.

Monsanto's GM alfalfa could be registered for use in eastern Canada this April. GM roundup ready alfalfa varieties have just been cleared for the last step before they hit the market – all they need now is a final registration rubber-stamp by the Canadian food inspection agency. the Canadian seed trade association and its corporate members including Monsanto, pioneer and forage genetics international are also actively trying to get support for the release of GM alfalfa.

For more information on rally in Victoria , please contact Joan Russow at **DrjRussow@gmail.com** or **250-294-1339**

[April 9 Rallies Across the Country to Stop Monsanto's GMAlfalfa](#)

or for more information see Canadian Biotechnology Action Network Report

<http://www.cban.ca/Press/Press-Releases/New-Report-Warns-of-Inevitable-Contamination-if-GM-Alfalfa-Released-in-Ontario>

Also see video about

MONSANTO'S POWER: TWO REPORTERS FIRED FOR REVEALING HEALTH DANGERS IN MILK

Last Updated on Thursday, 18 April 2013 08:54

81 readings

Monsanto Protection Act put GM companies above the federal courts



Justice News

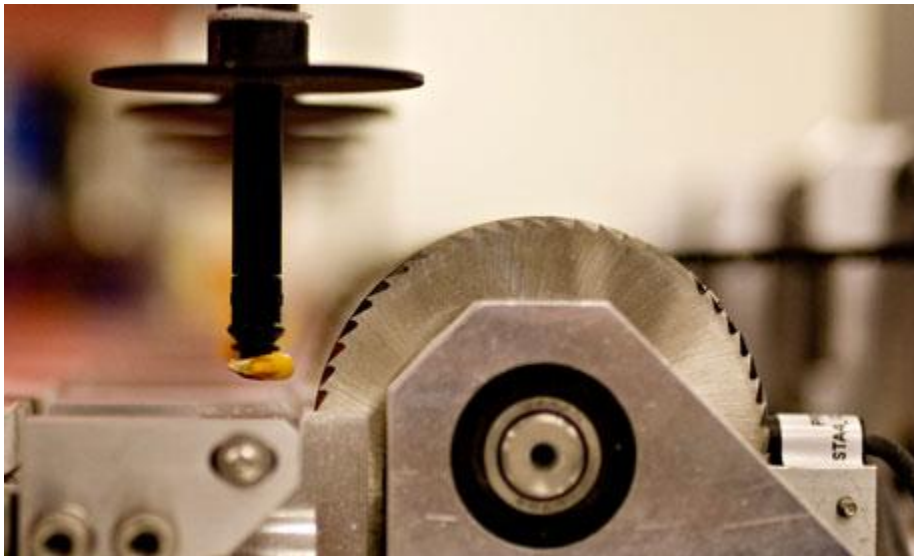
Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 06 April 2013 15:59

By The Guardian Environmental Blog

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/blog/2013/apr/04/monsanto-protection-act-gm>

Campaigners say that not even the US government can now stop the sale, planting, harvest or distribution of any GM seed



A seed corn kernel is held in position near the blade of a chipping machine, which will remove a small piece of the seed for testing, inside a Monsanto lab in St Louis, Missouri, US. Photograph: Daniel Acker/Getty Images

A seed corn kernel is held in position near the blade of a chipping machine, which will remove a small piece of the seed for testing, inside a Monsanto lab in St Louis, Missouri, US. Photograph: Daniel Acker/Getty Images

Monsanto and the US farm biotech industry wield legendary power. **A revolving door** allows corporate chiefs to switch to top posts in the **Food** and Drug Administration and other

agencies; [US embassies around the world push GM technology](#) onto dissenting countries; government subsidies back corporate research; [federal regulators do largely as the industry wants](#); the companies [pay millions of dollars a year to lobby politicians](#); conservative thinktanks combat any political opposition; the [courts enforce corporate patents on seeds](#); and [the consumer is denied labels or information](#).

But even people used to the closeness of the US administration and food giants like Monsanto have been shocked by the latest demonstration of the GM industry's political muscle. Little-noticed in Europe or outside the US, President Barack Obama last week signed off what has become widely known as "the Monsanto Protection Act", technically the Farmer Assurance Provision rider in [HR 933: Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act 2013](#)

The key phrases are a mouthful of legal mumbo jumbo but are widely thought to have been added to the bill by the Missouri republican senator [Roy Blunt who is Monsanto's chief recipient of political funds](#). For the record, they read:

"In the event that a determination of nonregulated status made pursuant to section 411 of Plant Protection Act is or has been invalidated or vacated, the secretary of agriculture shall, notwithstanding any other provision of law upon request by a farmer, grower, farm operator, or producer, immediately grant temporary permit(s) or temporary deregulation in part, subject to necessary and appropriate conditions consistent with section 411(a) or 412c of the Plant Protection Act, which interim conditions shall authorise the movement, introduction, continued cultivation, commercialisation and other specifically enumerated activities and requirements, including measures designed to mitigate or minimise potential adverse environmental effects, if any, relevant to the secretary's evaluation of the petition for nonregulated status, while ensuring that growers or other users are able to move, plant, cultivate, introduce into commerce and carry out other authorised activities in a time manner ..."

According to an array of food and consumer groups, organic farmers, civil liberty and trade unions and others, this hijacks the constitution, sets a legal precedent and puts Monsanto and other biotech companies above the federal courts. It means, they say, that not even the US government can now stop the sale, planting, harvest or distribution of any GM seed, even if it is linked to illness or environmental problems.

The backlash has been furious. Senator Barbara Mikulski, chair of the powerful Senate appropriations committee which was ultimately responsible for the bill, [has apologised](#). A [Food Democracy Now](#) petition has attracted 250,000 names and sections of the liberal press and blogosphere are outraged. "This provision is simply an industry ploy to continue to sell genetically engineered seeds even when a court of law has found they were approved by US department of agriculture illegally," [says one petition](#). "It is unnecessary and an unprecedented attack on US judicial review. Congress should not be meddling with the judicial review process based solely on the special interest of a handful of companies."

Remarkably, though, it has also offended the Conservative right and libertarians. [FreedomWorks](#), the conservative thinktank that helped launch the Tea Party, says corporations should "play by the rules of the free market like everyone else, instead of hiring insider lobbyists to rewrite the rules for them in Washington". Dustin Siggins, [a blogger for the Tea Party patriots](#) has called it a "special interest loophole" for friends of Congress. "We are used to subsidies, which give your tax dollars to companies to give them advantages over competitors. We are used to special interest tax loopholes and tax credits, which provide competitive and financial benefits to those with friends in Congress. And we are familiar with regulatory burden increases, which often prevent smaller companies from competing against larger ones because of the cost of compliance. This is a different kind of special interest giveaway altogether. This is a situation in which a company is given the ability to ignore court orders, in what boils down to a deregulation scheme for a particular set of industries," he writes.

Even Monsanto appears a touch embarrassed. The company whose seeds make up 93% of US soybeans, 88% of cotton and 86% of maize and which on Wednesday announced a 22% increase in earnings, has sought to align itself with others in the industry, even though it is far and away the main beneficiary. [In a statement, it says: "As a member of the Biotechnology Industry Organisation \(BIO\), we were pleased to join major grower groups in supporting the Farmer Assurance Provision, including the American Farm Bureau Federation, the American Seed Trade Association, the American Soybean Association, the American Sugarbeet Growers](#)

Association, the National Corn Growers Association, the National Cotton Council, and several others."

The company's friends are now on the defensive, seeking to blame "activists". Here is John Entine, director of the Genetic Literacy Project, and a visiting fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, the pro-business, anti-regulation think tank: "The legislation does not, as critics allege, allow farmers or Monsanto to sell seeds proven to be harmful. Rather, it provides legal consistency for farmers and businesses so that they will not be jerked around by temporary findings by competing court systems as activist challenges make their way up the legal food chain."

The only good news, say the opponents, is that because the "Monsanto Protection Act" was part of the much wider spending bill, it will formally expire in September. The bad news however is that the precedent has been set and it is unlikely that the world's largest seed company and the main driver of the divisive GM technology will ever agree to give up its new legal protection. The company, in effect, now rules.

Last Updated on Saturday, 06 April 2013 16:05

69 readings

Russia to restrict more Canadian meat imports



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 06 April 2013 07:39

by The Canadian Press<http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/story/2013/04/05/russia-meat-pork-cattle-producers.html>

Apr 5, 2013



Since December, Russia has restricted the import of Canadian meats that contain this additive and are anticipated to tighten these regulations further. (Ryan Remiorz/Canadian Press)

Russia is set to impose new restrictions on its meat imports next week, a move that is being watched closely by pork and cattle producers in Canada.

The guidelines, which will be unveiled Monday, are expected to be related to concerns over the use of the feed additive ractopamine in livestock.

Since December, Russia has restricted the import of Canadian meats that contain this additive and are anticipated to tighten these regulations further.

Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz said the government is "disappointed" in Russia for going ahead with these

restrictions, even though they are "not rooted in science."

Jacques Pomerleau, president of the Canada Pork International, says the restrictions will mean that pork producers may have re-examine their use of ractopamine, if they want to continue to export into Russia.

Pomerleau says Russia is Canada's third-largest market for Canadian pork, with imports worth about \$500 million last year.

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THE CANADIAN PRESS 

Last Updated on Saturday, 06 April 2013 07:43

77 readings

A WAR WITH KOREA MUST BE AVOIDED



Peace News

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 05 April 2013 20:16

Reflections by Comrade Fidel

A few days ago I referred to the great challenges humankind is facing today. Intelligent life has been on our planet for around 200,000 years, unless some new discoveries show otherwise.

Not to confuse the existence of intelligent life with the existence of life itself which, from its elementary forms in our solar system, came into being millions of years ago.

A practically infinite number of life forms exists. In the sophisticated work being done by the most eminent scientists in the world, the idea of reproducing the sounds following the Big Bang, the great explosion that took place more than 13,700 millions of years ago, has been conceived.

This introduction would be far too lengthy if it were not to explain the gravity of such an incredible and absurd event as the one created on the Korean Peninsula, in a geographical area inhabited by almost five thousand of the seven billion people living today on the planet.

We are dealing with one of the most serious risks of nuclear war since the Cuban Crisis in October of 1962, fifty years ago.

In 1950, a war broke out there which took millions of lives. Just 5 years earlier, two atomic bombs had been dropped over the defenceless cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing and irradiating hundreds of thousands of persons in a matter of minutes.

General Douglas MacArthur wanted to use atomic weapons on the Korean Peninsula against the Peoples' Democratic Republic of Korea. Not even Harry Truman permitted that.

According to statements, the Peoples' Republic of China lost a million brave soldiers to prevent an enemy army from taking up positions on that country's border with its homeland. And the USSR provided the weapons, air power, technological and economic aid.

I had the honor of meeting Kim Il Sung, a remarkably brave and revolutionary historic figure,

Should a war break out there, the peoples on both sides of the peninsula will be terribly sacrificed, at no benefit for either. The Peoples' Democratic Republic of Korea has always been a friend to Cuba, just as Cuba has always been, and will continue to be, its friend.

Now that their technical and scientific advances have been demonstrated, we remember their duties with the countries that have been its great friends, and it would be unfair to forget that such a war would especially affect more than 70 per cent of the planet's population.

Should that kind of conflict erupt over there, the second term of Barack Obama's government would be buried under a flood of images that would represent him as the most sinister character in U.S. history. Avoiding war is also his duty and that of the people of the United States.

Fidel Castro Ruz

April 4, 2013

11:12 p.m.

79 readings

Making Disaster Pay From the San Francisco Earthquake to Superstorm Sandy, How Capitalism Stacks the Deck on Disaster



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 04 April 2013 08:02

By **Steve Fraser** <http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175678/>

In 2007, a financial firestorm ravaged Wall Street and the rest of the country. In 2012, Hurricane Sandy obliterated a substantial chunk of the Atlantic seaboard. We think of the first as a man-made calamity, the second as the malignant innocence of nature. But neither the notion of a man-made nor natural disaster quite captures how the power of a few and the vulnerability of the many determine what is really going on at ground level. Causes and consequences, who gets blamed and who leaves the scene permanently scarred, who goes down and who emerges better positioned than before: these are matters often predetermined by the structures of power and wealth, racial and ethnic hierarchies, and despised and favored forms of work, as well as moral and social prejudices in place before disaster strikes.

When it comes to our recent financial implosion, this is easy enough to see, although great efforts have been expended trying to deny the self-evident. “Man” did not bring the system to its knees; the country’s dominant financial institutions and a complicit government did that. They’ve recovered, the rest of us haven’t.

Sandy seems a more ambiguous case. On the one hand, it’s obvious enough that an economy resting on fossil fuels played a catalytic role in intensifying the storm. Those corporate interests profiting from that form of energy production and doing all they can to defend it are certainly culpable, not the rest of mankind which has no other choice

but to depend on the energy system we' re given.

On the other hand, rich and poor, big businesses and neighborhood shops suffered; some, however, more than others. Among them were working class communities; public-housing residents; outer borough homeowners; communities in Long Island, along the New Jersey shore, and inland as well; workers denied unemployment compensation; and the old, the sick, and the injured abandoned for days or weeks in dark and dangerous high-rises without medical help or access to fresh food or water. Help, when it came to these "disadvantaged" worlds, often arrived late, or last, or not at all.

Cleaning up and rebuilding New York City and other places hit by the storm will provide a further road map of who gets served and whose ox gets gored. It' s ominous, if hardly shocking, that Mayor Bloomberg has already [appointed](#) Mark Ricks of Goldman Sachs to the business-dominated team planning the city' s future. Where would this billionaire mayor turn other than to his fraternity brothers, especially in this era when, against all the odds, we still worship at the altar of the deal-makers, no matter their malfeasances and fatal ineptitudes?

Still, it is early days and the verdict is not in on the post-Sandy future. However, an [incisive analysis](#) by sociologists Kevin Fox Gotham and Miriam Greenberg of what happened after the 9/11 attacks in New York and in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina offers some concrete forebodings. Everyone knows that, as soon as Katrina made landfall, the racial divisions of New Orleans became the scandal of the month when it came to which communities were drowned and which got helped, who got arrested (and shot), and who left town forever. To be poor in New Orleans during and after Katrina was a curse. To be poor and black amounted to excommunication.

Gotham and Greenberg prove that, post-9/11 and post-Katrina, reconstruction and rehabilitation was also skewed heavily in favor of the business community and the wealthier. In both cities, big business controlled the redevelopment process -- and so where the money landed and where it didn' t.

Tax breaks and private sector subsidies became channels for

federal aid. “Public benefit” standards, which once accompanied federal grants and tax exemptions to insure that projects served some public purpose, especially to “benefit persons of low and moderate income,” were eliminated, leaving poorer people out in the cold, while exacerbating existing inequalities. Governments scurried around inventing ways to auction off reconstruction projects to private interests by issuing tax exempt “Private Activity Bonds.” These were soon gloriously renamed “Liberty Bonds,” though the unasked question was: Whose liberty?

The lion’s share of grants and exemptions went, of course, to the biggest corporations. In New York, more than 40% of all bonds, or \$2.4 billion, went to a single developer, Larry Silverstein. Second to Silverstein was -- don’t be shocked -- Goldman Sachs. Yet these institutions and their inhabitants represented at best a mere 15% of those affected, most of whom were low-wage workers who, in some cases, ended up getting evicted from their homes thanks to those business-oriented tax breaks. Federal aid, hypothetically tied to building affordable housing and the creation of living-wage jobs ended up as just that: hypothetical.

Naturally, these mechanisms proved lucrative. More than that they are the means by which elites use disasters as opportunities to turn wrecked cities or regions into money-making centers and playlands for what in the nineteenth century was called “the upper tendom” and what we now call “the 1%.”

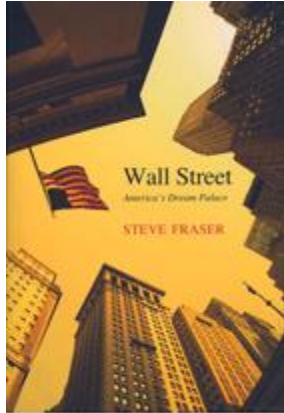
Indeed, the original “upper tendom” faced its own “natural” disasters during the Gilded Age. Then, too, such catastrophes exposed the class and racial anatomy of America to public view. Then, too, one man’s disaster was another’s main chance. Whether you focus on the cause of the calamity, the way people reacted to it, or the means and purposes that drove the reclamation afterwards, disasters and capitalism metabolized together long before “**disaster capitalism**” became the nom de jour.

Fire

Mrs. O’Leary’s infamously rambunctious cow did not kick a lantern into a batch of hay and start the Chicago fire of

1871. To this day, however, many probably still believe the story, even though the journalist who first reported it admitted a mere 20 years later that he' d made it up.

It was a story that stuck because it **meshed with** the ethnic and social fears and prejudices of bourgeois Chicago. Irish and German immigrants then filled up the congested warrens of that Midwestern center of industry and commerce. Their customs, religions, languages, political beliefs, and proletarian status were alien and alarming -- especially because that was the year of the Paris Commune, when proletarians took over the French national capital for two months. It was an event that scared the daylights out of the "upper tendom" and broad stretches of the middle classes as well in cities and towns throughout the U.S.



Buy the book.

Chicago' s papers were full of stories about "petroleuses," "amazon-like women" with "long flaming hair" coursing through the streets of Paris hurling the equivalent of Molotov cocktails at the French National Guard. Could it happen here? That was the question. Impoverished immigrant workers were already raising a ruckus in mines and on railroads. Perhaps as in France, so in Chicago they would become conspirators and incendiaries. Perhaps the great fire that gutted the city was no accident. Even if it was, weren' t there those prepared to make malevolent use of it?

Rumors of secret societies, revolutionary arsonists, and mass assaults on property circulated widely by word of mouth and through the Chicago media. So Mrs. O' Leary proved an especially apt scapegoat for the conflagration, fitting perfectly the temper of the time. She was, after all, "low

class” Irish at a moment when her immigrant countrymen were still despised as rustic potato eaters, bestial and good for nothing but back-breaking labor. It was also known that they were all too Catholic, notoriously fond of alcohol, and quite capable of terrorizing British landlords back home.

Less talked about was the likelier cause of the fire: namely, the unimaginably congested neighborhoods of the poor, made entirely out of wood -- houses, signs, and sidewalks, too. These had for years been the sites of frequent fires (two a day in 1870). Such frail structures became kindling for the flames that would in 1871 end up leveling downtown banks, businesses, and the homes of the rich.

These fears leaped with the flames that were burning up the city, killing 3,000 and leaving 100,000 homeless, and in the days and weeks that followed they hardly subsided. Immigrant, poor, and proletarian, Chicago’s working class was held in deep moral suspicion. Believing is often seeing, so when an upper-class eyewitness looked here’s what he saw: “Vice and crime had got the first scorching. The district where the fire got firm foothold was the Alsatia of Chicago. Fleeing before it was a crowd of blear-eyed, drunken and diseased wretches, male and female, half naked, ghastly with painted cheeks cursing, uttering ribald jests.”

Relief agencies, mainly privately run, were charged with aiding only the “worthy,” and they were “deserving” of help only after close inspection of their work habits, family arrangements, home economics, drinking customs, and so on. Civil War General Phillip Sheridan established martial law and was quick to fire on suspected looters, while enforcing a curfew to keep the “twilight population” in check.

At the same time, Chicago’s business elite, its civic leaders, and a remarkable roster of first-rate architects went about [reshaping downtown Chicago](#) into a modern hub of commerce and culture that they hoped would rival New York. Real-estate speculators made a fortune, although none were known to have been shot for looting. For some, in other words, the fire functioned as a fortuitous slum

clearance/urban renewal program on speed.

Angry working people marched against new restrictions on cheaper building materials, seeing them as discriminatory against labor and immigrants, as attempts to force them out of their city. They paraded to the Common Council, where they threw bricks through the windows while it dutifully passed the ordinances. For their efforts, the protesters were denounced as the “scum of the community,” “mongrel firebugs,” and likened to the Parisian communards, intent on establishing a “reign of terror.”

The fire was out but only for the time being. The fires of social insurrection were still smoldering and would flame up again and again in the streets of Chicago throughout the rest of the century.

Flood

An unnatural disaster! With a “roar like thunder,” a **wall of water** 60 feet high from Lake Conemaugh, believed then to be the largest artificial body of water in the world, came racing down a canyon near Johnstown, Pennsylvania, at 40 miles an hour. Everything in its path was swept away, starting with Woodvale, a company town run by the Cambria Iron Works. Johnstown itself was next as the tidal wave rushed on relentlessly drowning and destroying bridges, oil tankers, and factories. It tossed locomotives, railroad cars, and even houses into the air. It ended the lives of more than 2,200 people. Seven hundred and seventy-seven were never identified and are buried in the “Plot of the Unknown.” Johnstown has been memorialized ever since in song and story.

Was it fate as well as an especially rainy spring that did the trick in 1889? At the top of the canyon, members of the South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club, men like iron and steel magnates Andrew Carnegie, Henry Clay Frick, and Andrew Mellon, as well as the crème de la crème of Pittsburgh high society (the city was only 60 miles away) **had long enjoyed** the pleasures of that man-made lake. They had gone fishing, paddle boating, and sailing there for years. And for years, engineers kept informing the iron and steel barons that the earthen dam holding back its waters was defective. The spillway was both too small and clogged with

fencing materials meant to keep the expensive sports fish stocked in the lake from escaping into a nearby river. Auxiliary discharge pipes had decayed and leaks had been routinely noticed at the base of the dam even when the weather was especially dry.

The club's sportsmen did nothing. In fact, they ordered several feet shaved off the top of the dam to make way for a road so members could get to their "cottages" faster from the nearby railroad station. After the horror, there were lawsuits aplenty, but no one was ever held responsible for what quickly became a legendary tragedy. In 1989, on the centennial of the disaster, an article in the Journal of Civil Engineering **confirmed** that the actions of the South Fork Club were the proximate cause of this "natural disaster."

All was not lost, however. Some years after Johnstown was rebuilt, Andrew Carnegie donated one of his libraries for which he would become **so widely celebrated**.

Earthquake

Bubonic plague returned to San Francisco when the earthquake of 1906 sent **hordes of rats** racing through the rubble, chasing through the raw sewage spilling into the streets as the city's sewer pipes crumpled. Anyone was potentially susceptible. In one way the earthquake had been an **equal-opportunity destroyer**. Chinatown, with its masses of poor living in squalid wooden shacks, was razed to the ground by the quake and subsequent fire. Other working class precincts were similarly leveled and burnt. But so, too, was Nob Hill, where the city's gilded elite lived.

A mythic memory of communal suffering, self-sacrifice, and mutual aid emerged in the immediate aftermath of the San Francisco disaster, as it still does in the wake of many similar collective traumas. After 9/11, as after Superstorm Sandy, stories of how people from all walks of life banded together to help one another were commonplace. This was even true in Chicago after the fire, notwithstanding the white-hot hostilities between the classes and the masses. These are not fables, but moving accounts drawn from real life. They offer a kind of hope in disaster and, consoling as they are meant to be, linger on, sometimes forever. Meanwhile,

interred and resting in peace are often the disaster's darker doings.

Looking back on earthquake-ravaged San Francisco, a well-off refugee remembered that the calamity "did not discriminate between tavern and tabernacle, bank and brothel." Yet the wife of the president of Levi-Strauss and Co. drove up to one of the relief centers in her limousine (in those early days cars were still mainly luxury machines and she owned one of the handful of limos in the city). She was, of course, ushered right to the head of its endless line.

Even in these immediate post-quake reports, one could detect other motivations at work. So, for example, while San Francisco was ravaged, the death toll was calculated at only about 375 people. For a savage firestorm coursing through the most densely packed of neighborhoods, that low figure surprised people and left some wondering. The answer turned out to be this: the city fathers were determined to cite a low number so as not to discourage San Francisco's rebuilding and the outside investments that would require. For many years, the figure was nonetheless accepted as accurate. Recently, however, through the [diligent efforts](#) of researchers, we know that the numbers of dead were probably 10 times higher. News of the bubonic plague was suppressed for similar reasons.

Calculations of that kind informed many aspects of the tragedy. While sitting atop the San Andreas Fault is not ideal, should the underlying tectonic plates move a bit, not much was said about other contributory causes. Minor earthquakes had erupted for decades and these had been set off, at least in part, due to the hydraulic mining that accompanied the California gold rush in its later years.

The operation to relieve the distress of hundreds of thousands of homeless people after the quake was tainted by class and ethnic biases not unlike those in Chicago. Relief camps segregated refugees by class as well as race and gender. Firefighters pooled water and equipment to save the homes of the wealthy first. In working class districts, fire-fighting focused on commercial properties like a Folger's Coffee warehouse and freight sheds, not on saving homes. Seventeen hundred troops under General Frederick

Funston guarded richer precincts because, as he explained, “San Francisco had its class of people no doubt who would take advantage of any opportunity to plunder the banks and rich jewelry…” Chinatown did not die an entirely natural death either. It was dynamited to create firebreaks and so prevent the fires already raging there from spreading to tonier neighborhoods.

Two years after the event, poor people were still living in “relief cottages, ” tents, and other makeshift accommodations which, at rental rates of six dollars a month, many couldn’ t afford. To get relief required a letter from a clergyman testifying to one’ s moral worthiness. Working class women took to the streets to protest.

Meanwhile, former residents of Nob Hill had moved into equally luxurious digs elsewhere in the city. However, they did have a problem in those early months. There was a crying lack of domestic help. As the San Francisco Chronicle reported, “Everyone had wondered where the cooks had gone. They had been lost since the fire.” So working women, who were bending all their efforts to restoring their devastated families by making use of what relief was available, were chastised for not returning to the kitchens of the elect. One paper claimed that the women “were loafing… when families needed help,” or as a Red Cross matron observed, “Women [domestics] prefer to live… in relief camps.”

Help was, however, on the way. Special rehabilitation funds were reserved for single women so they could resume their lives of domestic service.

Being solicitous about the needs of the rich could reach heights of absurdity. It was recommended, for instance, that special philanthropic pawn shops be established for the upper classes where “people who saved their jewels could be rehabilitated by having such a place to go where they would not have to pay too much interest.”

If rehabilitation and recovery was on the civic mind, certain minds counted more than others. Everybody knew that the city’ s wood-frame buildings could not stand up to the pressures of another earthquake, which -- they also knew --

was a reasonable future possibility. So new building codes were adopted calling for the use of reinforced concrete and steel in structures over six stories high. They lasted a year. Pressures from the business community and builders **caused the city** to relax those rules, except in the new downtown which was urgently readying itself for the Panama Pacific International Exposition of 1915, where the city's boosters hoped to eradicate the last pungent odors of the calamity.

A \$500 "bonus plan" to help rebuild homes favored the native-born and two-parent households. Housing rehabilitation began with the wealthy and worked its way very slowly to the poor. There were lots of jobs for "earthquake mechanics," but at wages that could never keep up with escalating rents driven by real-estate speculators.

Insurance companies had by then rewritten their home-owner policies to exempt earthquakes from coverage. Fire was covered, however, and it's clear that people deliberately set fire to their own homes, already ruined by the tremors, since without insurance money there was no way they could recover and rebuild. Not surprisingly, pay-offs were highest for the wealthy. The insurance companies worked at delaying payments to the hardest hit, the poor. This fit with the mood of the moment -- that those working class shacks were "no loss to the city."

Neither was Chinatown. San Francisco's upper crust, as well as large portions of its white middle and working classes, had never been fond of the Chinese in their midst, even though they depended on their labors. The quake struck the city's burghers as an opportunity to funnel them out of the center of the city -- the old Chinatown had largely been destroyed -- to some enclave on its outskirts. ("Fire has reclaimed civilization and cleanliness from the Chinese ghetto.") Their plans were, however, successfully thwarted by the concerted resistance of the Chinese community.

Resistance notwithstanding, Chicago and San Francisco emerged from their trials by fire as bustling centers of capitalist enterprise. Disaster capitalism has a long history. One of the last remaining "relief cottages" built by Funston's army at the cost of \$100 and rented for \$2 was

just recently sold for \$600,000.

Recently, when the Republican majority in Congress temporarily blocked funds for Sandy relief and rehabilitation efforts, it was a chilling reminder that no matter how universal a calamity is, we live in times when the commonwealth regularly takes a backseat to wealth. Appeals to fellowship, to mutual assistance and shared sacrifice seem to give way with scandalous speed to the commanding imperatives of a warped economy and political plutocracy.

More Sandys are surely [headed our way](#), more climate-driven disasters of all sorts than we can now fully imagine. And rest assured, they will be no more “natural” than the Chicago fire, the Johnstown flood, or the San Francisco earthquake. More than fire itself what we need to deal with now is the power of the finance, insurance, and real estate — or FIRE — sector whose leading corporations now effectively run our economy. Without doing that, the “nature” these interests have helped create will punish us all while providing a ghoulish boondoggle for a few.

Steve Fraser is editor-at-large of New Labor Forum, a co-founder of the American Empire Project, and author most recently of [Wall Street: America's Dream Palace](#). A version of this piece will appear in the spring issue of [New Labor Forum](#).

Follow TomDispatch on Twitter and join us on [Facebook](#). Check out the newest Dispatch book, Nick Turse's [The Changing Face of Empire: Special Ops, Drones, Proxy Fighters, Secret Bases, and Cyberwarfare](#).

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296 readings

APRIL 9 RALLIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY TO STOP MONSANTO'S GM ALFALFA



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 03 April 2013 09:52

APRIL 9, 12 NOON TO 1PM

AT 816 GOVERNMENT ST VICTORIA, SEE BELOW FOR OTHER RALLIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Monsanto's GM alfalfa is poised to be released in Ontario. It will only be a matter of time before it is released across Canada. It must be stopped. The National Farmers Union-Ontario has called for consumers to support farmers in a Day of Action to Stop GM Alfalfa. This Day of Action will be across the country on April 9 Ontario farmers have organized protest rallies in 12 communities, in Ontario including in Ottawa where a final rubber-stamp to release Roundup Ready alfalfa is expected any day. On There are also 11 rallies confirmed in support of Ontario farmers happening in towns in BC, Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan (at the office of the Minister of Agriculture), Quebec, and Nova Scotia.

Monsanto's **GM alfalfa** could be registered for use in eastern Canada this April. GM roundup ready alfalfa varieties have just been cleared for the last step before they hit the market – all they need now is a final registration rubber-stamp by the Canadian food inspection agency. the Canadian seed trade association and its corporate members including Monsanto, pioneer and forage genetics international are also actively trying to get support for the release of GM alfalfa.

For more information on rally in Victoria , please contact Joan Russow at DrjRussow@gmail.com

or for more information see Canadian Biotechnology Action Network Report

<http://www.cban.ca/Press/Press-Releases/New-Report-Warns-of-Inevitable-Contamination-if-GM-Alfalfa-Released-in-Ontario>

BACKGROUND

Tuesday April 2, 2013. Ottawa. Today, the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network released a **new report** documenting the means by which **genetically modified (GM) alfalfa** will contaminate non-GM alfalfa and hay crops , if GM alfalfa is released

"We can clearly see how farmers will pay the heavy costs of this inevitable contamination," said Ontario organic sheep and vegetable farmer Ann Slater, member of the National Farmers Union, "The only way to stop contamination from GM alfalfa is to keep it off the market."

Alfalfa is an important crop for dairy farming in Ontario as well as for livestock farmers and vegetable and field crop producers. Some Ontario farmers also save alfalfa seed.

The report details the role of seeds, pollen, and volunteer/feral plants in the predicted contamination of non-GM alfalfa from GM alfalfa. If released, GM alfalfa would be the first GM perennial crop introduced in Canada. "While the conditions for contamination in Eastern Canada differ from those in Western Canada where alfalfa seed is produced, contamination in Ontario is assured, as are the economic costs to farmers," said Lucy Sharratt of the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network.

"Our report documents the many means by which farmers can expect to see contamination from GM alfalfa. Contamination is assured, the only question is how long it will take and which will be the first or primary means of gene escape," said Taarini Chopra, also with the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network.

"This report puts an end to discussions about coexistence with GM alfalfa, its just not possible." said Phillip Woodhouse, President of the Ontario Grey County NFU local 344 who also attended an October 2012 meeting of the Canadian Seed Trade Association where the industry attempted to construct a coexistence plan to pave the way for GM alfalfa. "Forage Genetics International appears willing to sacrifice the livelihoods of Ontario farmers to get their product on the market somewhere in Canada."

"No farmer can shield themselves from this genetic pollution. Does anyone really believe that introducing GM alfalfa into Eastern Canada will protect Prairie farmers from this contamination?" added Woodhouse.

The National Farmers Union-Ontario has called for consumers to support farmers in a **Day of Action to Stop GM Alfalfa on April 9**. Ontario farmers have organized protest rallies in 12 communities, outside of constituency offices of federal Members of Parliament as well as outside the Variety Registration office of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency in Ottawa where a final rubber-stamp to release Roundup Ready alfalfa is expected any day. There are also 11 rallies confirmed in support of Ontario farmers happening in towns in BC, Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan (at the office of the Minister of Agriculture), Quebec, and Nova Scotia.

For more information: Ann Slater, National Farmers Union, **519-349-2448**; Lucy Sharratt, Canadian Biotechnology Action Network 613 241 2267 ext 25, Phillip Woodhouse, National Farmers Union, 519 599 5041.

Details on the April 9 Day of Action to Stop GM Alfalfa, including a list of actions, can be found at www.cban.ca/april9

The report "The Inevitability of Contamination from GM Alfalfa Release in Ontario" can be found at www.cban.ca/alfalfaONreport

Click here for the summary of the report.

RALLIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Check back for additional action locations **or subscribe to the CBAN News and Action Listserve.**

P	Town	Location	Host	Contact
ON	Belleville	Constituency Office of Daryl Kramp, MP for Prince Edward Hastings, 1 Millennium Parkway.	Hosted by NFU Northumberland/Hastings/ Prince Edward Local 334.	Contact: John Della Bosca at 613-471-1234, johndb@xplornet.ca
ON	Goderich	Constituency Office of Ben Lobb, 30 Victoria St. North	Hosted by NFU Locals Bruce 320 and Huron 335.	Contact: Linda Baumberger 519-832-2953
ON	Guelph	1 Stone Rd West. (Stone Rd Complex. building with blue windows all around it) March to Monsanto. Street food cooked by local restaurant Artisanale! Come early to park! Click here for important details on this action.	Hosted by NFU Waterloo/Wellington Local 340, Canadian Biotechnology Action Network, Council of Canadians Guelph Chapter, Wellington Coalition for Social Justice, OPIRG-Guelph	Contact: Donna Jennison halojen@rogers.com
ON	Hawkesbury	Constituency Office of Pierre Lemieux, MP for Glengarry Prescott-	Hosted by NFU Stormont/Dundas/ Glengarry/Ottawa/Prescott -	Contact: Les Gills 613-528-4865

		Russell, 136 Main St. E.,	Russell Local 362.	
O N	Kingston	To be announced	Hosted by NFU Local 316 – Frontenac, Lennox-Addington	Contact: Dianne Dowling 613-546-0869 or dowling@kos.net
O N	Kitchener-Waterloo	Constituency Office of Peter Braid. 22 King St. South, Waterloo	Hosted by Canadian Biotechnology Action Network.	Contact: Taarini Chopra campaigns@cban.ca 226-606-8240
O N	Lambton County	Request to meet with Pat Davidson, MP for Sarnia Lambton	Hosted by NFU Lambton Local 328	Contact: Tammy Van Troost 519-864-0939 bearcreekorganics@ebtech.net
O N	London	Office of Ed Holder, MP for London West, 200-390 Commissioners Rd West	NFU Middlesex Local 312	Malorie malorie100@hotmail.com
O N	Midland	Request to meet with Bruce Stanton MP for Simcoe Dufferin.	Hosted by NFU Simcoe/Dufferin Local 347.	Contact Chris Litster, 705-534-7626.
O N	Orangeville	Constituency Office of David Tilson, MP for Dufferin Caldeon, 299 Broadway St., Orangeville.	Hosted by NFU Simcoe/ Dufferin Local 347.	Contact Michelle at 519-941-1099 or michelle@wholevillage.org
O N	Ottawa	Office of Variety Registration, Canadian Food Inspection Agency, 59 Camelot Drive (Nepean) off Merivale Rd near West Hunt Club	Hosted by NFU Local 362 – Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry, Ottawa, Prescott-Russell; 310 – Lanark	Contact: Lucy Sharratt info@cban.ca 613 241 2267 ext 25
O N	Owen Sound	Office of Larry Miller, MP for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, 1131 2nd Avenue East.	Hosted by NFU Grey County Local 344.	Contact: Philip Woodhouse, 519 599 5041, pwoodhouse9@gmail.com
O N	Stratford	Constituency Office of Gary Schellenberger, MP	Hosted by NFU Perth/Oxford	Contact: Ann Slater, aslater@quadro.net

		for Perth Wellington. 544 Huron St., Stratford.	Local 341.	t 519-349-2448
ON	Toronto	Outside St Lawrence Market (on the sidewalk). 95 Front St E.	Hosted by The Big Carrot Natural Food Market, No More GMOs Toronto, Kids Right to Know March, Millions Against Monsanto Toronto	Contact: info@ nomoregmos.ca
NS	Wolfville	Constituency Office of Scott Brison, MP for Kings-Hants. 24 Harbourside Drive, Suite 101A. Come and sign the petition!		Contact: Holly Hollystewart @gmail.com
PQ	Montreal	Devant les bureaux d'agriculture Canada. 2001 University.	Hosted by Vigilance OGM	contact@infoogm.qc.ca
PQ	Lévis (Québec)	Devant les bureaux du député et ministre conservateur Steven Blaney 115, route du Président Kennedy, Bureau 101 (bureau principal)	Hosted by Vigilance OGM	contact@infoogm.qc.ca
SK	North Battleford	Constituency Office of Gerry Ritz, MP for Battlefords— Lloydminster and Minister of Agriculture. 1322 100th Street, North Battleford.	Hosted by NFU Local 628.	Contact: Glenn Tait, gttait@sasktel.net ; 306 481 4449
AB	Camrose	Constituency Office of Kevin Sorenson (MP for Crowfoot) 4945 - 50 Street Camrose. We will be meeting at The University of Alberta Augustana Campus (4901 46 Ave,	* There will also be a Film Night April 4 at the Augustana Campus at 7pm where anyone interested can watch a	Contact: Takota Coen takota_coen@live.com 780-781-5929

		Camrose at 10 AM to prepare for the rally. We will walk from the campus to our MP's office at 12 PM.	documentary about GMO's. The movie night will be followed by a discussion about what people can do to create change.	
AB	Edmonton	Constituency Office of Laurie Hawn, MP for Edmonton-Central. 11156 - 142 ST NW Edmonton		Contact: Dana 780-995-9234
AB	Calgary	Constituency Office of Stephen Harper - 1600 - 90th Avenue SW, Suite A-203		
BC	Duncan	Charles Hoey Park in downtown Duncan. Jean Crowder, the MP for Nanaimo-Cowichan	National Farmers Union and the Cowichan Green Community	Contact: Cowichan Green Community: 250-748-8506 or
BC	Nelson	Outside the Kootenay Co-op! 295 Baker Street. Come and sign the petition!		
BC	Vernon	Constituency Office of Colin Mayes. 3105 29 St. Vernon		Contact: Kelsi Evans kelsievs@hotmail.ca
BC	Victoria	816 Government Street		Contact Joan Russow DrjRussow@gmail.com

Check back for additional action locations [or subscribe to the CBAN News and Action Listserve.](#)

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O	Belleville	Constituency Office of	Hosted by NFU	Contact: John Della Bosca

N		Daryl Kramp, MP for Prince Edward Hastings, 1 Millennium Parkway.	Northumberland/Hastings/ Prince Edward Local 334.	at 613-471-1234, johndb@explornet.ca
O N	Goderich	Constituency Office of Ben Lobb, 30 Victoria St. North	Hosted by NFU Locals Bruce 320 and Huron 335.	Contact: Linda Baumberger 519-832-2953
O N	Guelph	1 Stone Rd West. (Stone Rd Complex. building with blue windows all around it) March to Monsanto. Street food cooked by local restaurant Artisanale! Come early to park! Click here for important details on this action.	Hosted by NFU Waterloo/Wellington Local 340, Canadian Biotechnology Action Network, Council of Canadians - Guelph Chapter, Wellington Coalition for Social Justice, OPIRG-Guelph	Contact: Donna Jennison halojen@rogers.com
O N	Hawkesbury	Constituency Office of Pierre Lemieux, MP for Glengarry Prescott-Russell, 136 Main St. E.,	Hosted by NFU Stormont/Dundas / Glengarry/Ottawa/Prescott - Russell Local 362.	Contact: Les Gills 613-528-4865
O N	Kingston	To be announced	Hosted by NFU Local 316 - Frontenac, Lennox-Addington	Contact: Dianne Dowling 613-546-0869 or dowling@kos.net
O N	Kitchener-Waterloo	Constituency Office of Peter Braid. 22 King St. South, Waterloo	Hosted by Canadian Biotechnology Action Network.	Contact: Taarini Chopra campaigns@cbn.ca 226-606-8240
O N	Lambton County	Request to meet with Pat Davidson, MP for Sarnia Lambton	Hosted by NFU Lambton Local 328	Contact: Tammy Van Troost 519-864-0939 bearcreekorganics@ebtech.net

ON	London	Office of Ed Holder, MP for London West, 200-390 Commissioners Rd West	NFU Middlesex Local 312	Malorie malorie100@hotmail.com
ON	Midland	Request to meet with Bruce Stanton MP for Simcoe Dufferin.	Hosted by NFU Simcoe/Dufferin Local 347.	Contact Chris Litster, 705-534-7626.
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ON	Ottawa	Office of Variety Registration, Canadian Food Inspection Agency, 59 Camelot Drive (Nepean) off Merivale Rd near West Hunt Club	Hosted by NFU Local 362 – Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry, Ottawa, Prescott-Russell; 310 – Lanark	Contact: Lucy Sharratt info@cban.ca 613 241 2267 ext 25
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ON	Stratford	Constituency Office of Gary Schellenberger, MP for Perth Wellington. 544 Huron St., Stratford.	Hosted by NFU Perth/Oxford Local 341.	Contact: Ann Slater, aslater@quadro.net 519-349-2448
ON	Toronto	Outside St Lawrence Market (on the sidewalk). 95 Front St E.	Hosted by The Big Carrot Natural Food Market, No More GMOs Toronto, Kids Right to Know March, Millions Against Monsanto Toronto	Contact: info@nomoregmos.ca
NS	Wolfville	Constituency Office of Scott Brison, MP for Kings-Hants. 24		Contact: Holly Hollystewart @gmail.com

		Harbourside Drive, Suite 101A. Come and sign the petition!		
PQ	Montreal	Devant les bureaux d'agriculture Canada. 2001 University.	Hosted by Vigilance OGM	contact@infoogm.qc.ca
PQ	Lévis (Québec)	Devant les bureaux du député et ministre conservateur Steven Blaney 115, route du Président Kennedy, Bureau 101 (bureau principal)	Hosted by Vigilance OGM	contact@infoogm.qc.ca
SK	North Battleford	Constituency Office of Gerry Ritz, MP for Battlefords—Lloydminster and Minister of Agriculture. 1322 100th Street, North Battleford.	Hosted by NFU Local 628.	Contact: Glenn Tait, gttait@sasktel.net ; 306 481 4449
AB	Camrose	Constituency Office of Kevin Sorenson (MP for Crowfoot) 4945 - 50 Street Camrose. We will be meeting at The University of Alberta Augustana Campus (4901 46 Ave, Camrose at 10 AM to prepare for the rally. We will walk from the campus to our MP's office at 12 PM.	* There will also be a Film Night April 4 at the Augustana Campus at 7pm where anyone interested can watch a documentary about GMO's. The movie night will be followed by a discussion about what people can do to create change.	Contact: Takota Coen takota_coen@live.com 780-781-5929
AB	Edmonton	Constituency Office of Laurie Hawn, MP for Edmonton-Central. 11156 - 142 ST NW Edmonton		Contact: Dana 780-995-9234
AB	Calgary	Constituency Office of		

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BC	Vernon	Constituency Office of Colin Mayes. 3105 29 St. Vernon		Contact: Kelsi Evans kelsievans@hotmail.ca
BC	Victoria	816 Government Street		Contact Joan Russow DrjRussow@gmail.com

What will the Day of Action Include? Rallies outside local MP offices across Ontario and in other provinces. The day can also include meetings with MPs in their constituency offices. Bring your banners. Bring your voices. Together we can stop the release of GM alfalfa in Canada.

Why is Stopping GM Alfalfa Urgent? Monsanto's **GM alfalfa** could be registered for use in Eastern Canada this April. GM Roundup Ready alfalfa varieties have just been cleared for the last step before they hit the market – all they need now is a final registration rubber-stamp by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. The Canadian Seed Trade Association and its corporate members including Monsanto, Pioneer and Forage Genetics International are also actively trying to get support for the release of GM alfalfa.

Because alfalfa is a perennial plant that is pollinated by bees, genetically modified alfalfa will inevitably cross-pollinate with non-GM and organic alfalfa, threatening the livelihoods of family farmers across Canada. Prairie farmers have already rejected GM alfalfa for these reasons so now the industry is trying to introduce GM alfalfa in Eastern Canada.

This call for action was issued by the [National Farmers Union-Ontario](#).

For details please contact Lucy Sharratt at the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN) 613 241 2267 ext. 25 coordinator@cban.ca

More information:

Why is GM Alfalfa Such a Huge Threat? GM contamination is inevitable because alfalfa is a perennial crop pollinated by insects. In Ontario, weeds are becoming resistant to glyphosate (the active ingredient in Monsanto's herbicide Roundup): another glyphosate tolerant crop like Roundup Ready alfalfa would increase these weeds. Alfalfa is almost always grown in a mix with grasses and establishes readily without the use of herbicides. Farmers don't want or need Roundup Ready alfalfa. If genetically modified (GM, also called genetically engineered or GE) alfalfa is released in Eastern Canada, it will have negative impacts on a wide range of farmers and farming systems, both conventional and organic. [Click here for more information on GM alfalfa.](#)

Why is Alfalfa Important? Alfalfa (commonly harvested as hay) is a high-protein forage fed to animals like dairy cows, beef cattle, lambs, poultry and pigs. It's also used to build nutrients and organic matter in the soil, making it particularly important for organic farming. If it's introduced, GM alfalfa will ruin export markets for alfalfa products, contaminate family farms, make it more difficult for farmers to control weeds, and threaten the future of organic food and farming in Canada.

How Can I Organize an Action in My Community? The National Farmers Union and the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network have produced an action kit with details on how to make your action successful. We have posters, flyers, information on GM alfalfa and other materials to help you. Please also feel free to contact CBAN for direct support or to discuss ideas – call Lucy Sharratt, Coordinator, Canadian Biotechnology Action Network at 613 241 2267 ext 25 or email Lucy at coordinator@cban.ca

What Else Can I Do to Help?

1. Come out on April 9! Bring your friends and family!
2. Help spread the word about April 9 to groups in your community, ask them to get involved.
3. Help publicize the action in your community by putting up posters, handing out flyers, and posting through email and facebook.
4. Contact media in your community to tell them about the Day of Action and encourage them to cover the rallies.
5. Collect signatures on the petition to stop GM alfalfa and bring them to your MP on April 9. See <http://www.cban.ca/alfalfapetition>
6. Be a part of the Day of Action even if there is not a rally in your community! Check here for details on how you can participate on and before April 9.
7. Order GM Alfalfa action postcards for distribution in your community by emailing info@cban.ca

The following resolution was passed on March 2, 2013 at the NFU Region 3

Convention/NFU-Ontario AGM: *"Be it resolved that the National Farmers Union – Ontario call on farm organizations in Ontario and across Canada, other civil society organizations and concerned consumers to join NFU-O members in a day of action against the release of GM alfalfa to be held at MP's constituency offices on April 9, 2013."*

This call to action was issued by the National Farmers Union-Ontario, March 9 2013.

Last Updated on Wednesday, 03 April 2013

Last Updated on Friday, 05 April 2013 17:07

124 readings

The Tar Sands Disaster



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 02 April 2013 19:01

By THOMAS HOMER-DIXON New York Times

http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/01/opinion/the-tar-sands-disaster.html?_r=0

Published: March 31, 2013 WATERLOO, Ontario



Rick Froberg

IF President Obama blocks the Keystone XL pipeline once and for all, he'll do Canada a favor.

Canada's tar sands formations, landlocked in northern Alberta, are a giant reserve of carbon-

saturated energy — a mixture of sand, clay and a viscous low-grade petroleum called bitumen. Pipelines are the best way to get this resource to market, but existing pipelines to the United States are almost full. So tar sands companies, and the Alberta and Canadian governments, are desperately searching for export routes via new pipelines.

Canadians don't universally support construction of the pipeline. A poll by Nanos Research in February 2012 found that nearly 42 percent of Canadians were opposed. Many of us, in fact, want to see the tar sands industry wound down and eventually stopped, even though it pumps tens of billions of dollars annually into our economy.

The most obvious reason is that tar sands production is one of the world's most environmentally damaging activities. It wrecks vast areas of boreal forest through surface mining and subsurface production. It sucks up huge quantities of water from local rivers, turns it into toxic waste and dumps the contaminated water into tailing ponds that now cover nearly 70 square miles.

Also, bitumen is junk energy. A joule, or unit of energy, invested in extracting and processing bitumen returns only four to six joules in the form of crude oil. In contrast, conventional oil production in North America returns about 15 joules. Because almost all of the input energy in tar sands production comes from fossil fuels, the process generates significantly more carbon dioxide than conventional oil production.

There is a less obvious but no less important reason many Canadians want the industry stopped: it is relentlessly twisting our society into something we don't like. Canada is beginning to exhibit the economic and political characteristics of a petro-state.

Countries with huge reserves of valuable natural resources often suffer from economic imbalances and boom-bust cycles. They also tend to have low-innovation economies, because lucrative resource extraction makes them fat and happy, at least when resource prices are high.

Canada is true to type. When demand for tar sands energy was strong in recent years, investment in Alberta surged. But that demand also lifted the Canadian dollar, which hurt export-oriented manufacturing in Ontario, Canada's industrial heartland. Then, as the export price of Canadian heavy crude softened in late 2012 and early 2013, the country's economy stalled.

Canada's record on technical innovation, except in resource extraction, is notoriously poor. Capital and talent flow to the tar sands, while investments in manufacturing productivity and high technology elsewhere languish.

But more alarming is the way the tar sands industry is undermining Canadian democracy. By suggesting that anyone who questions the industry is unpatriotic, tar sands interest groups have made the industry the third rail of Canadian politics.

The current Conservative government holds a large majority of seats in Parliament but was elected in 2011 with only 40 percent of the vote, because three other parties split the center and left vote. The Conservative base is Alberta, the province from which Prime Minister Stephen Harper and many of his allies hail. As a result, Alberta has extraordinary clout in federal politics, and tar sands influence reaches deep into the federal cabinet.

Both the cabinet and the Conservative parliamentary caucus are heavily populated by politicians who deny mainstream climate science. The Conservatives have slashed financing for climate science, closed facilities that do research on climate change, told federal government climate scientists not to speak publicly about their work without approval and tried, unsuccessfully, to portray the tar sands industry as environmentally benign.

The federal minister of natural resources, Joe Oliver, has attacked "environmental and other

radical groups” working to stop tar sands exports. He has focused particular ire on groups getting money from outside Canada, implying that they’re acting as a fifth column for left-wing foreign interests. At a time of widespread federal budget cuts, the Conservatives have given Canada’s tax agency extra resources to audit registered charities. It’s widely assumed that environmental groups opposing the tar sands are a main target.

This coercive climate prevents Canadians from having an open conversation about the tar sands. Instead, our nation behaves like a gambler deep in the hole, repeatedly doubling down on our commitment to the industry.

President Obama rejected the pipeline last year but now must decide whether to approve a new proposal from TransCanada, the pipeline company. Saying no won’t stop tar sands development by itself, because producers are busy looking for other export routes — west across the Rockies to the Pacific Coast, east to Quebec, or south by rail to the United States. Each alternative faces political, technical or economic challenges as opponents fight to make the industry unviable.

Mr. Obama must do what’s best for America. But stopping Keystone XL would be a major step toward stopping large-scale environmental destruction, the distortion of Canada’s economy and the erosion of its democracy.

Thomas Homer-Dixon, who **teaches** global governance at the Balsillie School of International Affairs, is the author of “The Upside of Down: Catastrophe, Creativity and the Renewal of Civilization.”

A version of this op-ed appeared in print on April 1, 2013, on page A19 of the New York edition with the headline: The Tar Sands Disaster.

Last Updated on Tuesday, 02 April 2013 20:38

[Are cars the new tobacco?](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 12 May 2013 20:29

By **1** [Margaret J. Douglas](#), Consultant in Public Health¹, **2** [Stephen J. Watkins](#), Director of Public Health, **3** [Dermot R. Gorman](#), Consultant in Public Health¹ and **4** [Martin Higgins](#), Senior Researcher in Public Health *Journal of Public Health* <http://jpubhealth.oxfordjournals.org/content/33/2/160.full>

Author Affiliations

¹*NHS Lothian, Waverley Gate, 2–4 Waterloo Place, Edinburgh EH1 3EG, UK*

²Stockport PCT, 8th Floor, Heaton Lane, Stockport SK4 1BS, UK

2.

1. Address correspondence to Margaret J. Douglas, E-mail:

margaret.j.douglas@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

Private cars cause significant health harm. The impacts include physical inactivity, obesity, death and injury from crashes, cardio-respiratory disease from air pollution, noise, community severance and climate change. The car lobby resists measures that would restrict car use, using tactics similar to the tobacco industry. Decisions about location and design of neighbourhoods have created environments that reinforce and reflect car dependence. Car ownership and use has greatly increased in recent decades and there is little public support for measures that would reduce

No expanded doc

2530 readings

Nuclear Terror in the Middle East Lethality Beyond the Pale



Peace News

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 12 May 2013 16:58

By **Nick Turse** <http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175698/>

In those first minutes, they' ll be stunned. Eyes fixed in a thousand-yard stare, nerve endings numbed. They' ll just stand there. Soon, you' ll notice that they are holding their arms out at a 45-degree angle. Your eyes will be drawn to their hands and you' ll think you mind is playing tricks. But it won' t be. Their fingers will start to resemble stalactites, seeming to melt toward the ground. And it won' t be long until the screaming begins. Shrieking. Moaning. Tens of thousands of victims at once. They' ll be standing amid a sea of shattered concrete and glass, a wasteland punctuated by the shells of buildings, orphaned walls, stairways leading nowhere.

This could be Tehran, or what' s left of it, just after an Israeli nuclear strike.

Iranian cities -- owing to geography, climate, building construction, and population densities -- are particularly vulnerable to nuclear attack, according to a [new study](#), "Nuclear War Between Israel and Iran: Lethality Beyond the Pale," published in the journal *Conflict & Health* by researchers from the University of Georgia and Harvard University. It is the first publicly released scientific assessment of what a nuclear attack in the Middle East might actually mean for people in the region.

Its scenarios are staggering. An Israeli attack on the Iranian capital of Tehran using five 500-kiloton weapons would, the study estimates, kill seven million people -- 86% of the population -- and leave close to 800,000 wounded. A strike with five 250-kiloton weapons would kill an estimated 5.6 million and injure 1.6 million, according to predictions made using an advanced software package designed to calculate mass casualties from a nuclear detonation.

Estimates of the civilian toll in other Iranian cities are even more horrendous. A nuclear assault on the city of Arak, the site of a [heavy water plant](#) central to Iran's nuclear program, would potentially kill 93% of its 424,000 residents. Three 100-kiloton nuclear weapons hitting the Persian Gulf [port](#) of Bandar Abbas would slaughter an estimated 94% of its 468,000 citizens, leaving just 1% of the population uninjured. A multi-weapon strike on Kermanshah, [a Kurdish city](#) with a population of 752,000, would result in an almost unfathomable 99.9% casualty rate.

Cham Dallas, the director of the Institute for Health Management and Mass Destruction Defense at the University of Georgia and lead author of the study, says that the projections are the most catastrophic he's seen in more than [30 years](#) analyzing weapons of mass destruction and their potential effects. "The fatality rates are the highest of any nuke simulation I've ever done," he told me by phone from the nuclear disaster zone in Fukushima, Japan, where he was doing research. "It's the perfect storm for high fatality rates."

Israel has never confirmed or denied possessing nuclear weapons, but is widely [known](#) to have up to [several hundred](#) nuclear warheads in its arsenal. Iran has no nuclear weapons and its leaders claim that its nuclear program is for peaceful civilian purposes only. Published reports [suggest](#) that American intelligence agencies and Israel's intelligence service are in agreement: Iran suspended its nuclear weapons development program in 2003.

Dallas and his colleagues nonetheless ran simulations for potential Iranian nuclear strikes on the Israeli cities of Beer Sheva, Haifa, and Tel Aviv using much smaller 15-kiloton weapons, similar in strength to those [dropped](#) by the United States on the Japanese cities of [Hiroshima](#) and Nagasaki in August 1945. Their analyses suggest that, in Beer Shiva, half of the population of 209,000 would be killed and one-sixth injured. Haifa would see similar casualty ratios, including 40,000 trauma victims. A strike

on Tel Aviv with two 15-kiloton weapons would potentially slaughter 17% of the population -- nearly 230,000 people. Close to 150,000 residents would likely be injured.

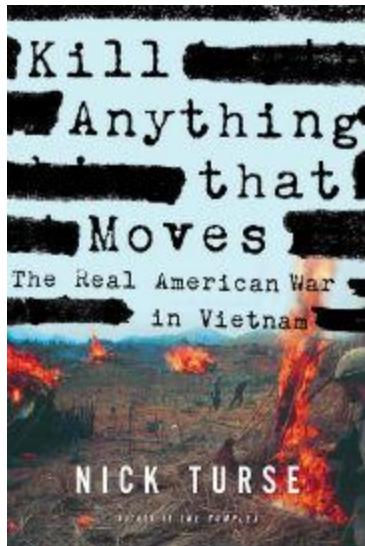
These forecasts, like those for Iranian cities, are difficult even for experts to assess.

“Obviously, accurate predictions of casualty and fatality estimates are next to impossible to obtain,” says Dr. [Glen Reeves](#), a longtime consultant on the [medical effects of radiation](#) for the Defense Department’s Defense Threat Reduction Agency, who was not involved in the research. “I think their estimates are probably high but not impossibly so.”

According to [Paul Carroll](#) of the Ploughshares Fund, a San Francisco-based foundation that advocates for nuclear disarmament, “the results would be catastrophic” if major Iranian cities were attacked with modern nuclear weapons.

“I don’t see 75% [fatality rates as] being out of the question,” says Carroll, after factoring in the longer-term effects of radiation sickness, burns, and a devastated medical infrastructure.

According to Dallas and his colleagues, the marked disparity between estimated fatalities in Israel and Iran can be explained by a number of factors. As a start, Israel is presumed to have extremely [powerful](#) nuclear weapons and sophisticated delivery capabilities including long-range Jericho missiles, land-based cruise missiles, submarine-launched missiles, and advanced aircraft with precision targeting technology.



Buy the book

The nature of Iranian cities also makes them exceptionally vulnerable to nuclear attack, according to the Conflict & Health study. Tehran, for instance, is home to 50% of Iran's industry, 30% of its public sector workers, and 50 colleges and universities. As a result, 12 million people live in or near the capital, most of them clustered in its core. Like most Iranian cities, Tehran has little urban sprawl, meaning residents tend to live and work in areas that would be subject to maximum devastation and would suffer high percentages of fatalities due to trauma as well as thermal burns caused by the flash of heat from an explosion.

Iran's topography, specifically mountains around cities, would obstruct the dissipation of the blast and heat from a nuclear explosion, intensifying the effects. Climatic conditions, especially high concentrations of airborne dust, would likely exacerbate thermal and radiation casualties as well as wound infections.

Nuclear Horror: Then and Now

The first nuclear attack on a civilian population center, the U.S. strike on Hiroshima, left that city "uniformly and extensively devastated," according to a study carried out in the wake of the attacks by the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey. "Practically the entire

densely or moderately built-up portion of the city was leveled by blast and swept by fire... The surprise, the collapse of many buildings, and the conflagration contributed to an unprecedented casualty rate.” At the time, local health authorities reported that 60% of immediate deaths were due to flash or flame burns and medical investigators estimated that 15%-20% of the deaths were caused by radiation.

Witnesses “stated that people who were in the open directly under the explosion of the bomb were so severely burned that the skin was charred dark brown or black and that they died within a few minutes or hours,” according to the [1946 report](#). “Among the survivors, the burned areas of the skin showed evidence of burns almost immediately after the explosion. At first there was marked redness, and other evidence of thermal burns appeared within the next few minutes or hours.”

Many [victims](#) kept their arms [outstretched](#) because it was too [painful](#) to allow them to hang at their sides and rub against their bodies. One survivor [recalled](#) seeing victims “with both arms so severely burned that all the skin was hanging from their arms down to their [nails](#), and others having faces [swollen](#) like bread, losing their eyesight. It was like ghosts walking in procession... Some jumped into a river because of their serious burns. The river was filled with the wounded and blood.”

The number of fatalities at Hiroshima has been [estimated](#) at [140,000](#). A nuclear attack on Nagasaki three days later is thought to have killed 70,000. Today, according to Dallas, 15-kiloton nuclear weapons of the type used on Japan are referred to by experts as “firecracker nukes” due to their relative weakness.

In addition to killing more than 5.5 million people, a strike on Tehran involving five 250-kiloton weapons -- each of them 16 times more powerful than the [bomb](#) dropped on Hiroshima -- would result in an estimated 803,000 third-degree burn victims, with close to 300,000 others suffering second degree burns, and 750,000 to 880,000 people severely exposed to radiation. “Those people with thermal burns over most of their bodies we can’t help,” says Dallas. “Most

of these people are not going to survive... there is no saving them. They'll be in intense agony." As you move out further from the site of the blast, he says, "it actually gets worse. As the damage decreases, the pain increases, because you're not numb."

In a best case scenario, there would be 1,000 critically injured victims for every surviving doctor but "it will probably be worse," according to Dallas. Whatever remains of Tehran's healthcare system will be inundated with an estimated 1.5 million trauma sufferers. In a feat of understatement, the researchers report that survivors "presenting with combined injuries including either thermal burns or radiation poisoning are unlikely to have favorable outcomes."

Iranian government officials did not respond to a request for information about how Tehran would cope in the event of a nuclear attack. When asked if the U.S. military could provide humanitarian aid to Iran after such a strike, a spokesman for Central Command, whose area of responsibility includes the Middle East, was circumspect. "U.S. Central Command plans for a wide range of contingencies to be prepared to provide options to the Secretary of Defense and the President," he told this reporter. But [Frederick Burkle](#), a senior fellow at the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative and Harvard University's School of Public Health, as well as a coauthor of the just-published article, is emphatic that the U.S. military could not cope with the scale of the problem. "I must also say that no country or international body is prepared to offer the assistance that would be needed," he told me.

Dallas and his team spent five years working on their study. Their predictions were generated using a declassified version of a software package developed for the Defense Department's Defense Threat Reduction Agency, as well as other complementary software applications. According to Glen Reeves, the software used fails to account for many of the vagaries and irregularities of an urban environment. These, he says, would mitigate some of the harmful effects. Examples would be buildings or cars providing protection from flash burns. He notes, however, that built-up areas can

also exacerbate the number of deaths and injuries. Blast effects far weaker than what would be necessary to injure the lungs can, for instance, topple a house. “Your office building can collapse... before your eardrums pop!” notes Reeves.

The new study provides the only available scientific predictions to date about what a nuclear attack in the Middle East might actually mean. Dallas, who was previously the director of the Center for Mass Destruction Defense at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is quick to point out that the study received no U.S. government funding or oversight. “No one wanted this research to happen,” he adds.

Rattling Sabers and Nuclear Denial

Frederick Burkle points out that, today, discussions about nuclear weapons in the Middle East almost exclusively center on whether or not Iran will produce an atomic bomb instead of “focusing on ensuring that there are options for them to embrace an alternate sense of security.” He warns that the repercussions may be grave. “The longer this goes on the more we empower that singular thinking both within Iran and Israel.”

Even if Iran were someday to build several small nuclear weapons, their utility would be limited. After all, **analysts** note that Israel would be capable of launching a post-attack response which would simply devastate Iran. Right now, Israel is the **only** nuclear-armed state in the Middle East. Yet a preemptive Israeli nuclear strike against Iran also seems an **unlikely** prospect to most experts.

“Currently, there is little chance of a true nuclear war between the two nations,” according to Paul Carroll of the Ploughshares Fund. Israel, he points out, would be unlikely to use nuclear weapons unless its very survival were at stake. “However, Israel’s rhetoric about red lines and the threat of a nuclear Iran are something we need to worry about,” he told me recently by email. “A military strike to defeat Iran’s nuclear capacity would A) not work B) ensure that Iran WOULD then pursue a bomb (something they have not clearly decided to do yet) and C) risk a regional

war. ”

Cham Dallas sees the threat in even starker terms. “The Iranians and the Israelis are both committed to conflict,” he told me. He isn’ t alone in voicing concern. “What will we do if Israel threatens Tehran with nuclear obliteration?... A nuclear battle in the Middle East, one-sided or not, would be the most destabilizing military event since Pearl Harbor,” wrote Pulitzer Prize-winning national security reporter Tim Weiner in a [recent op-ed](#) for Bloomberg News. “Our military commanders know a thousand ways in which a war could start between Israel and Iran... No one has ever fought a nuclear war, however. No one knows how to end one. ”

The Middle East is hardly the only site of potential nuclear catastrophe. Today, [according](#) to the Ploughshares Fund, there are an estimated 17,300 nuclear weapons in the world. Russia reportedly has the most with 8,500; North Korea, the fewest with less than 10. Donald Cook, the administrator for defense programs at the U.S. National Nuclear Security Administration, recently confirmed that the United States [possesses](#) around 4,700 nuclear warheads. Other nuclear powers include rivals India and Pakistan, which stood on the [brink](#) of [nuclear war](#) in 2002. (Just this year, Indian government officials [warned](#) residents of Kashmir, the divided territory claimed by both nations, to prepare for a possible nuclear war.) Recently, India and nuclear-armed neighbor China, which went to [war](#) with each other in the 1960s, again found themselves on the [verge of a crisis](#) due to a border dispute in a remote area of the [Himalayas](#).

In a world awash in nuclear weapons, saber-rattling, brinkmanship, erratic behavior, miscalculations, technological errors, or errors in judgment could lead to a nuclear detonation and suffering on an almost unimaginable scale, perhaps nowhere more so than in Iran. “Not only would the immediate impacts be devastating, but the lingering effects and our ability to deal with them would be far more difficult than a 9/11 or earthquake/tsunami event,” notes Paul Carroll. Radiation could turn areas of a country into no-go zones; healthcare infrastructure would be

crippled or totally destroyed; and depending on climatic conditions and the prevailing winds, whole regions might have their agriculture poisoned. “One large bomb could do this, let alone a handful, say, in a South Asian conflict,” he told me.

“I do believe that the longer we have these weapons and the more there are, the greater the chances that we will experience either an intentional attack (state-based or terrorist) or an accident,” Carroll wrote in his email.

“In many ways, we’ve been lucky since 1945. There have been some very close calls. But our luck won’t hold forever.”

Cham Dallas says there is an urgent need to grapple with the prospect of nuclear attacks, not later, but now. “There are going to be other big public health issues in the twenty-first century, but in the first third, this is it. It’s a freight train coming down the tracks,” he told me. “People don’t want to face this. They’re in denial.”

Nick Turse is the managing editor of TomDispatch.com and a fellow at the Nation Institute. An award-winning journalist, his work has appeared in the [Los Angeles Times](http://LosAngelesTimes.com), [the Nation](http://theNation.com), and [regularly](http://TomDispatch.com) at TomDispatch. He is the author most recently of the New York Times bestseller [Kill Anything that Moves: The Real American War in Vietnam](http://KillAnythingThatMoves.com) (The American Empire Project, Metropolitan Books). You can catch his conversation with Bill Moyers about that book by [clicking here](#). His website is NickTurse.com. You can follow him on Tumblr and on [Facebook](http://Facebook.com).

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PEJ Comment


C\n\da \nd the US have not supported the UN Declaraton on a Nuclear-free Middle East Israel has nort ratified the NPT

[27% of Spaniards are out of work. Yet in one town everyone has a job](#) 

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 12 May 2013 15:24

SPECIAL REPORT: MARINALEDA IS RUN ALONG THE LINES OF A COMMUNIST UTOPIA AND BOASTS COLLECTIVISED LANDS

By [Alasdair Fotheringham](#)  Marinaleda, Spain RThe Independent

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/27-of-spaniards-are-out-of-work-yet-in-one-town-everyone-has-a-job-8612920.html> Sunday 12 May 2013



1 / 1

Juan Manuel Sánchez Gordillo embraces an activist during a land occupation this month

AFP/Getty

Related articles

As Spanish unemployment reaches another record high, the residents of rural Marinaleda could be forgiven for feeling a little smug.

In the small village in deepest Andalusia, the joblessness remains firmly – and almost certainly uniquely within Spain – at zero. With one set of traffic lights, two bars (one jammed with football paraphernalia for the First Division side Seville) and one central avenue lined with of low terraced houses, Marinaleda looks like many villages in western Andalusia.

But huge wall murals depicting the destruction of tanks and weaponry, the binning of Nazi symbols, and a column of workers marching through the fields, are far from the usual graffiti found in such places. Nor do many villages name their sports hall after Che Guevara, or have oversized placards of doves of peace dotted on streets named after left-wing heroes such as Salvador Allende and Pablo Neruda.

Last Updated on Sunday, 12 May 2013 15:33

No expanded doc

[Christy Clark's Pipeline Facts](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 12 May 2013 15:02

Submitted by **The Common Sense Canadian**, Today <http://thetyee.ca/Video/2013/05/12/Clark-Pipeline-Facts/>

From [The Common Sense Canadian](#): "Christy Clark and the BC Liberals have made a lot of bold claims about their position on pipelines proposed for British Columbia." Here's a multimedia examination.

Last Updated on Sunday, 12 May 2013 15:10

[USDA Sticks It to Monsanto and Dow—At Least Temporarily](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 12 May 2013 14:57

—By [Tom Philpott](#) **Mother Jones**

| Sat May. 11, 2013 <http://www.motherjones.com/tom-philpott/2013/05/shocking-everyone-usda-sticks-it-monsanto-and-dow>



[Igor Stevanovic /Shutterstock](#)

Back in early 2012, the US Department of Agriculture seemed on the verge of approving new genetically modified crops from agrichemical giants Monsanto and Dow. The two agrichemical giants were pushing new corn and soy varieties that would respond to the [ever-expanding problem of herbicide-tolerant superweeds](#) by bringing more-toxic herbicides into the mix—and likely ramping up the resistance problem, as I explained at length in a [post](#) at the time.

Even some mainstream ag scientists were alarmed at the coming escalation in the war against weeds. Scientists at Penn State—not exactly a hotbed of alternative ag thinking—delivered a [damning analysis](#) of the novel crops, which would be engineered to withstand not only Monsanto's Roundup herbicide, but also the highly toxic old ones 2,4-D (Dow's version) and Dicamba (Monsanto's).

Last Updated on Sunday, 12 May 2013 15:01

No expanded doc

[Environmental Review to Delay Two Engineered Crops](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 11 May 2013 19:53

By [ANDREW POLLACK](#): New York Times May 10, 2013 http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/11/business/energy-environment/environmental-review-to-delay-two-engineered-crops.html?_r=1&Genetically+engineered+crops+that+could+sharply+increase+the+use+of+two+powerful+herbicides+are+now+unlikely+to+reach+the+market+until+at+least+2015+because+the+Department+of+Agriculture+has+decided+to+subject+the+crops+to+more+stringent+environmental+reviews+than+it+had+originally+intended.



H. Rick Banman/Northwest Herald, via Associated Press

Glyphosate, a herbicide, been sprayed on a field. Some weeds are now glyphosate-resistant.

The department said on Friday that it had made the decision after determining that approval of the crops "may significantly affect the quality of the human environment."

The crops in question are [Dow Chemical's corn and soybeans](#) that would be resistant to the herbicide 2,4-D and [Monsanto's](#) dicamba-resistant cotton and soybeans.

Last Updated on Saturday, 11 May 2013 20:00

No expanded doc

[Former Guatemala dictator Rios Montt convicted of genocide](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 11 May 2013 09:46

By Mike McDonald | Reuters –

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• [View Photo](#)

Reuters/Reuters - Former Guatemalan dictator Efraín Ríos Montt (C) attends the last session of his genocide trial at the Supreme Court of Justice in Guatemala City May 10, 2013. REUTERS/Jorge Dan Lopez

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Last Updated on Saturday, 11 May 2013 09:54

No expanded doc

452 readings

Harper's Conservatives promote military ties to Israel



Peace News

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 11 May 2013 07:36

By Yves engler May 10, 2013 · 11:32

While the Harper Conservative government has loudly proclaimed its close ties to Israel, most Canadians would be surprised to learn the Tories have decided to make the two countries blood brothers. In the international affairs equivalent of a Mafia initiation ceremony Canada has sworn undying loyalty and to be a faithful soldier in Israel's cause.

Think that's an exaggeration? Consider the following:

- Since Stephen Harper took office the two nations defence ministers and top generals have repeatedly visited each other's country. These visits have resulted in various accords and "the [two] countries have agreed to exchange secret defense information," according to a June 2012 CBC summary of government briefing notes.
- The week before last the head of Canadian Forces visited Israel to deepen "cooperation between the two militaries." Reportedly, Thomas Lawson met his Israeli counterpart, the Defense Minister and various other senior military officers. According to a Jerusalem Post summary, Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon called for Canada and Israel to "further increase their cooperation in the fight against terror in light of the upheaval in the Middle East and Iran's role in fueling the region's conflicts."
- In 2008 Canada and Israel signed a wide-ranging public security agreement and for the first time in its history in 2011 Israel named a defense attaché to Ottawa. Until at least the end of 2010 the Canadian embassy in Tel Aviv served as Israel's Contact Point Embassy to NATO, the military alliance of Western nations. The embassy served as the liaison between Israel and NATO, assisting with visits of NATO officials to Israel. According to internal government documents examined by The Dominion, Ottawa worked to strengthen Israel's partnership with the military alliance, helping its "pursuit of a Status of Forces Agreement, getting access to the NATO Maintenance Supply Agency, [redacted]."
- In February 2010 deputy foreign minister Peter Kent implied that Canada already considered Israel a member of NATO, which operates according to the principle that an attack on any member is considered an attack against all members. Reflecting the alliance's purported principle, Kent said "an attack on Israel would be considered an attack on Canada" and in July 2011 defence minister Peter MacKay reiterated this position privately. According to briefing notes uncovered by CBC he told Israel's top military commander, Gabi Ashkenazi that "a threat to Israel is a threat to Canada."
- At the same time as official military relations have intensified there has been an increase in weapons sharing and relations between Israeli and Canadian arms manufacturers. At a November 2011 press conference with his Israeli counterpart defense minister MacKay described the two countries' "growing relations in the defense sector." Among the more significant examples, the Canadian military bought the Israeli-made Heron drone for use in Afghanistan and Israel's Elisra Electronics Systems is working on upgrading a dozen Halifax-class warships.
- Despite the Israeli Defense Force's many human rights violations, many Canadian

companies sell weapons directly to Israel. According to a 2009 Coalition to Oppose the Arms Trade report, more than 140 Canadian weapons makers export products to Israel. Last year British Columbia-based MacDonald, Dettwiler and Associates won a \$90+ million contract to supply Israel Aerospace Industries with satellite technology. The December 2011 Washington Report on Middle East Affairs detailed some Canadian military exports to Israel. "Ottawa's Allen Vanguard Corporation provides 'counterterrorist' equipment and training. iMPath Networks of Ottawa and Halifax design solutions for real-time video surveillance and intrusion detection technology. Mecachrome Technologies, based in Montréal and Toronto, provides components for military aircraft. And MPB Technologies of Pointe Claire, Edmonton, Airdrie and Calgary manufacturers, among other things, communications equipment and robotics for [Israeli] military use. ... British Columbia-based 360 Surveillance sells technology for Israel's apartheid wall and checkpoints."

- Taxpayers often underwrite ties between Canadian and Israeli military companies. The multimillion dollar Canada-Israel Industrial Research and Development Foundation funds research projects (including many in the "security" field) between the two countries' corporations. (For details see Kole Kilibarda's Canadian and Israeli Defense -Industrial and Homeland Security Ties: An Analysis).

To the extent that the dominant media questions the Harper government's pro-Israel policies they focus on public pronouncements, UN votes and other diplomatic moves such as foreign minister John Baird's recent meeting with Israeli Justice Minister Tzipi Livni in occupied East Jerusalem (a rare occurrence designed to further legitimize Israel's illegal control over that part of the city). But, deepening Canadian security ties with Israel may be more significant than the Conservatives anti-Palestinian public statements and UN votes.

For instance, what role do growing ties between the two countries' military leadership play in the Conservatives extremely hostile position towards Iran? Or, is there a connection between the Canada Israel public security agreement and the RCMP's highly suspect recent claim that two operatives with "direction and guidance" from "al-Qaeda elements in Iran" planned to blow up a major Canadian bridge? Finally, what role do growing military ties play in spurring the Conservatives' anti-Palestinian diplomatic moves?

Though little discussed, the military is an important element of the Conservatives 'Israel no matter what' policy. In addition to the Jewish establishment, Christian Zionism and the role Israel plays as a Western outpost in the Middle East, the Conservatives militaristic tendencies lead them to support that country. Harper's government, for instance, is close to the Canadian military companies that sell to Israel and do business with that country's top-flight weapons industry. Additionally, Canadian military leaders appreciate the tactical information and expertise Israel's well-practiced military shares.

Like a wanna-be gangster looking up to a Mafia boss, the Harperites are impressed by the large role Israel's military plays in the country's affairs.

Ordinary Canadians should be concerned. Very concerned.

PEJ ADDITION

Something to add
since 2007, Canada has not voted in support of a nuclear Arms free Middle East. And at the NPT Conferences,
Canada has not joined in with other states in calling upon Israel to ratify the NPT treaty.

College Divestment Campaigns Creating Passionate Environmentalists



Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 10 May 2013 14:54

by [Elizabeth Shogren](#)

May 10, 2013 3:16 AM



Students associated with the group Brown Divest Coal protested in front of the Brown University president's office during a rally May 3. The group is demanding that the university stop investing in certain oil and coal companies.

Courtesy of Brown Divest Coal

At about 300 colleges across the country, young activists worried about climate change are borrowing a strategy that students successfully used in decades past. In the 1980s, students enraged about South Africa's racist Apartheid regime got their schools to drop stocks in companies that did business with that government. In the 1990s, students pressured their schools to divest Big Tobacco.

This time, the student activists are targeting a mainstay of the economy: large oil and coal companies.

Last Updated on Friday, 10 May 2013 20:07

No expanded doc

2587 readings

BC Election: Has Andrew Weaver allowed himself to be incorrectly referred to as a



“Nobel Laureate”?

Peace News

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 10 May 2013 07:41

BY Joan Russow Global Compliance Research Project.

The Nobel Peace Prize 2007 was awarded jointly to Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and Albert Arnold (Al) Gore Jr. "for their efforts to build up and disseminate greater knowledge about man-made climate change, and to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counteract such change. Can each of the thousands of IPCC members refer to himself or herself as a "Nobel Laureate" or as a member of the IPCC that was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

During the BC Election, I was puzzled when the media referred to Andrew Weaver as a Nobel Laureate; I knew that the IPCC was formed years ago and involves 1000s of scientists, and is described on the IPCC site as the following;

"The IPCC is a scientific body under the auspices of the United Nations (UN). It reviews and assesses the most recent scientific, technical and socio-economic information produced worldwide relevant to the understanding of climate change. It does not conduct any research nor does it monitor climate related data or parameters.

Thousands of scientists from all over the world contribute to the work of the IPCC on a voluntary basis. Review is an essential part of the IPCC process, to ensure an objective and complete assessment of current information. IPCC aims to reflect a range of views and expertise. The **Secretariat** coordinates all the IPCC work and liaises with Governments. It is supported by **WMO and UNEP** and hosted at WMO headquarters in Geneva." (IPCC WEBSITE)

The Nobel Institute stated the following protocol to use when a group receives the award:

"The correct way to refer to a member of an organisation which has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize is, indeed, to say that you are a member of..." (Nobel Laureate Institute)

I was not going to write about this but after seeing the bizarre Liberal Ad, in the Victoria Times Colonist, praising Jane Sterk, I began to worry that there was a

behind-the-scenes Liberal-Green Coalition. I had been worried about BC Green Party Deputy Leader, Andrew Weaver's connection with the Liberal Party because of the pro Liberal robot calls he had sent out in the last BC Election. <http://www.gorilla-radio.com/index.php?id=295>

During the 2013 Election, CFAX and the Globe have referred to Andrew Weaver as a "Nobel Laureate"

1. Andrew Weaver, the Nobel laureate climate scientist, said Wednesday that would be a mistake, forcing the province to rely on imports from coal-fired plants rather than building up the clean energy sector that the province has been seeking to develop under its Clean Energy Act. - **Globe and Mail**

- **The Globe and Mail - Clark's Hydro policy threatens to collapse ...** www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/clarks-hydro-policy

Andrew Weaver, the Nobel laureate climate scientist, said Wednesday that would be a mistake ... Get The Globe and Mail the way you want it. Experience Canada's deepest ...

-

- **andrew weaver | DeSmogBlog** www.desmogblog.com/tags/andrew-weaver

The Globe and Mail called him "Mr. Cool," although the accompanying feature ... Book Give-away Contest we have five signed copies of Nobel Laureate Dr. Andrew Weaver's new ...

-

- **COSSD News - Canadian Oilfield Service and Supply**

Directory www.cossd.com/article.aspx?id=15

Globe and Mail editorial re: Alberta's \$2.5-million oilsands marketing ... - Nobel laureate and author Andrew Weaver to the Edmonton Journal, Nov. 27, 2008

•

2. U-Vic Nobel laureate decides to entre politics <http://www.cfax1070.com/News/Top-Stories/U-Vic-Nobel-laureate-decides-to-entre-politics>

I noted, from a quick search of Google, that he has allowed himself to be presented as a Nobel Laureate for years.

3 Dr. Andrew Weaver

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE LAUREATE; CLIMATE CHANGE EXPERT; ACCLAIMED AUTHOR; FELLOW OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

4. **Nobel Laureate to speak at 2010 Graduate Research Symposium**

5. Nobel Peace Prize Laureate: Dr. Andrew Weaver's Unforgettable Climate Change Lesson in Taiwan billblog - **just take the next step**

6. Dr. Andrew Weaver. Nobel Laureate. Climate scientist. He came out with the tough facts right off the mark, beginning with, "The earth is definitely getting warmer." This month we're giving away FREE copies Nobel Laureate Dr. Andrew Weaver's new book **Keeping Our Cool: Canada in a Warming World.**

7. Day 1: Space Canada International Policy Forum

Keynote Speaker - Dan Fortin

"We are delighted to have Dan Fortin, president of IBM Canada, delivering the keynote address. Dan is responsible for the strategic direction and day-to-day operations of IBM's Canadian division. Dan leads a team of 20,000 professionals in providing industry-leading solutions to help IBM clients address today's most pressing business challenges."

"Dan will be followed by a full complement of outstanding speakers including: Dr. Andrew Weaver, Nobel Laureate, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change" <http://iaaweb.org/content/view/371/521/8> Graduate Life Center. The money will be used to assist **the assembly** in bringing Nobel laureate, Andrew Weaver to Virginia Tech as the **symposium keynote speaker**.

Ganesh Balasubramanian, a doctoral candidate studying engineering science and mechanics and chair for today's Graduate Student Assembly Research Symposium, said he had seen a substantial increase in submissions. The symposium received 272 submissions, up from 171 for the 2009 conference.

Balasubramanian said increased marketing, an increase in prize money and a keynote speech from **Nobel laureate Andrew Weaver increased the symposium's profile.**

10. A few days ago Dr. Andrew Weaver, Nobel laureate, announced he is going to run for the Greens in Oak Bay-Gordon Head against the less-than-formidable Ida Chong. <http://occasionaljustus.blogspot.ca/>

11. Presentations by Canada's foremost Climate Leaders:

Dr. Andrew Weaver – Author of Keeping our Cool, Professor at the UVic School of Earth and Ocean Sciences, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) member Nobel Laureate winner <http://www.greenparty.ca/node/12807>

Dan will be followed by a full complement of outstanding speakers including:

12. Speakers included climate scientist and Nobel laureate Dr. Andrew Weaver (who I first interviewed 12 years ago for an **article** published in Nature Canada), environmental campaigners, and politicians from the New Democrats and the Green <http://veloweb.ca/2011/09/26/climate-action-rally-in-victoria-part-of-international-move-towards-%e2%80%9cpost-carbon-future%e2%80%9d/>

13. One final note. For a fee, Weaver (who already earns a decent living as a civil servant) will speak to your group about climate change. Above his photograph on the **website** of the Lavin Agency speaker's bureau, we're advised that he is a "Co-winner of [the] Nobel Peace Prize." Michael Mann, an IPCC colleague of Weaver's, is currently the object of **much derision** after claiming in a court document that he, too, is similarly a Nobel laureate.

<http://www.thegwpf.org/donna-lamframboise-ipcc-lead-author-become-green-party-leader/>

14. Andrew Weaver, the Nobel laureate climate scientist, said Wednesday that would be a mistake, forcing the province to rely on imports from coal-fired plants rather than building up the clean energy sector that the province has been seeking to develop under its Clean Energy Act. Dr. Weaver, Canada Research Chair in climate modelling and analysis at the University of Victoria, told a news conference Wednesday that the existing self-sufficiency requirement creates an opportunity for B.C. to build a green-energy industry that trades on the province's international reputation as a climate-policy leader. - [Globe and Mail](#)

Last Updated on Friday, 27 December 2013 09:52

[Mexico:Ground Zero in the Fight for the Future of Maize](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 10 May 2013 05:37

By [Emilio Godoy](#)



Native varieties of maize, like these drying in San Cristóbal de las Casas, in the southern state of Chiapas, are key to preserving crop diversity. Credit: Mauricio Ramos/IPS

MEXICO CITY, May 8 2013 (IPS) - In the 2011 action-thriller “Unknown”, scientists are persecuted by the biotech industry because they plan the open release of a drought- and pest-resistant strain of maize that could help eradicate world hunger.

Last Updated on Friday, 10 May 2013 05:39

No expanded doc

[Climate catastrophes like the Alberta floods have the potential to shatter political careers](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 21 June 2013 18:31

by [Charlie Smith](#) on Jun 21, 2013 at 9:59 am

<http://www.straight.com/news/394046/climate-catastrophes-alberta-floods-have-potential-shatter-political-careers>



Prime Minister Stephen Harper has never paid a great deal of attention to climate change.

No single extreme weather event can be linked to climate change.

However, when there are a series of unusual catastrophes, it raises questions about the impact that carbon-dioxide emissions are having on the planet.

This year, two of those disasters have occurred in areas represented by North America's most intransigent climate-change-denying politicians.

Last Updated on Friday, 21 June 2013 18:38

No expanded doc

[BC Ombudsperson to launch "systemic investigation" into administration of environmental regulation program](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 21 June 2013 12:04

BY [Jenny Uechi](#) Vancouver observer

<http://www.vancouverobserver.com/news/bc-ombudsprson-investigate-administration-environmental-regulation-program>

Jun 20th, 2013

[BC Ombudsperson Kim Carter](#) announced yesterday that she has launched a systemic investigation into the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations administration of the [Riparian Areas regulation in British Columbia](#), which applies to the southeast coast of Vancouver Island, the Lower Mainland, Fraser Valley, Sunshine Coast, Thompson-Okanagan and Columbia-Shuswap regions.

No expanded doc

[CBC: From Canadian to Conservative Broadcasting Corporation](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 20 June 2013 21:00



By The Canadian Charger

<http://www.thecanadiancharger.com/page.php?id=5&a;=1527>

JUNE 19, 2013

Policies that would ultimately kill CBC funding altogether, converting CBC into a beggar broadcaster and eliminating services Canadians depend on, will be debated at the Conservative Party's convention in Calgary later this month.

In an effort to save the integrity of the CBC – and perhaps the CBC itself - Friends of Canadian Broadcasting (FCB) — an independent watchdog for Canadian programming, radio, TV and news media – is circulating a petition to expose and oppose the Conservative Party proposals.

No expanded doc

[Straightening Out Accounts on Deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 20 June 2013 13:31

By Fabiana Frayssinet

RIO DE JANEIRO, Jun 20 2013 (IPS)

The bold strategy implemented by the Brazilian government has achieved an 84 percent reduction in deforestation in the Amazon rainforest in the last eight years. But when the natural resources and pesticides used in agricultural production are taken into account, the environmental progress made is not so impressive.

Last Updated on Thursday, 20 June 2013 13:39

No expanded doc

[Skype's secret Project Chess reportedly helped NSA access customers' data](#)

Posted by Administrator

Thursday, 20 June 2013 12:48

Dominic Rushe in New York

guardian.co.uk, Thursday 20 June 2013 17:37



BST Prosecutors in Zhu Yufu's trial for subversion cited text messages that he sent using Skype. Photograph: Mario Tama/Getty Images

Scheme – set up before firm was purchased by Microsoft – allegedly eased access for US law enforcement agencies!

Skype, the web-based communications company, reportedly set up a secret programme to make it easier

for US surveillance agencies to access customers' information.

No expanded doc

[Revealed: the top secret rules that allow NSA to use US data without a warrant](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 20 June 2013 12:08

By lenn Greenwald and James Ball

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/jun/20/fisa-court-nsa-without->



[warrant](#)

The documents show that discretion as to who is actually targeted lies directly with the NSA's analysts. Photograph: Martin Rogers/Workbook Stock/Getty

Top secret documents submitted to the court that oversees surveillance by US intelligence agencies show the judges have signed off on broad orders which allow the NSA to make use of information "inadvertently" collected from domestic US communications without a warrant

Last Updated on Thursday, 20 June 2013 12:36

No expanded doc

['Stop the tar sands' protest to greet Harper's speech to the British Parliament](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 20 June 2013 08:00

By **rabble staff** <http://rabble.ca/news/2013/06/stop-tar-sands-protest-to-greet-harpers-speech-to-british-parliament#.Ubm6CBjWvf0.twitter> | June 13,

2013



•

Please support our coverage of democratic movements and [become a supporting member of rabble.ca](#).

An ad hoc coalition has come together to protest the appearance of Stephen Harper in London. The Prime Minister will be speaking to the British Parliament on Thursday, the first time a Canadian PM has done so since MacKenzie King in 1944.

Campaigners have, on numerous previous occasions, held protests against the tar sands outside Canada House on London's Trafalgar Square. But Thursday's action may boast the longest list of civil society endorsers. The following [statement](#) was signed by over 25 organizations.

Last Updated on Thursday, 20 June 2013 08:11

No expanded doc

2038 readings

We should praise Hawking's boycott of Israeli meeting



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 20 June 2013 07:53

by Jonathan Rosenhead

<http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg21829210.200-we-should-praise-hawkings-boycott-of-israeli-meeting.html#.UcMIPCdrbIV>

17 June 2013

Stephen Hawking's considered decision to support an academic boycott of Israeli institutions should not be derided, says a supporter of Palestinian universities

THEORETICAL physicist Stephen Hawking must be the most recognised contemporary scientist in the world. Many millions of people know what he looks and sounds like. And until last month he commanded universal respect for his intellectual achievements and strength of character against extraordinary odds.

However in recent weeks some media columnists have been writing "Stephen Hawking, the greatest scientist in the world...", and then going on to say how distressed, disappointed or disgusted they are with him.

What was his crime? He withdrew from this month's Israeli Presidential Conference. He did this in support of a Palestinian call to boycott Israeli universities, and events closely tied to the Israeli state, because of the country's treatment of the Palestinians.

Did we have Hawking wrong all this time? Or is it the boycott that should be reappraised?

Some Israelis have been busy reappraising him since his decision. **Steven Plaut** of the University of Haifa suggested giving him a free ticket on the Achille Lauro (older readers might recall the hijacking of the Italian cruise ship in 1985 by Palestine Liberation Front members, who shot dead a wheelchair-bound Jewish passenger). Web commentators have been portraying Hawking as a mentally enfeebled man, suborned by bullying pro-Palestine activists.

More moderate voices have limited themselves to suggesting that he should boycott his voice production system because it relies on a chip designed in Israel. There are many reasons to argue that it doesn't. It seems hard to have a grown-up conversation about the subject.

The background to Hawking's decision – which was both serious and measured – is this: he initially accepted the invitation to Israeli President Shimon Peres's conference because, as he has now said, it would "allow me to express my opinion on the prospects for a peace settlement" between Israel and the Palestinians.

Various groups and individuals wrote asking him to reconsider his participation. I was co-organiser of one such letter signed by 20 UK professorial scientists in 14 disciplines from 12 universities, joined by MIT philosopher Noam Chomsky. Hawking let us know that he wished to consult senior academics at Palestinian universities, which he did. In **his withdrawal letter to Peres** (obtained by British newspaper *The Guardian*) he said that they were "unanimous that I should respect the boycott". He also said that "had I attended, I would have stated my opinion that the policy of the present Israeli government is likely to lead to disaster".

If boycott is such an outrageous idea, how can it be that a man of Hawking's calibre, making up his mind after due deliberation, could decide that in the circumstances it was the least bad option?

It was in 2004 that leading Palestinian academic and civil society organisations called for an academic and cultural boycott of Israeli institutions. To be clear, I can do joint work with an Israeli professor without breaking the boycott – but I would not engage in any of the many academic activities that potentially involve institutional contacts. Nor would I have dealings

with entities closely associated with the Israeli state. No Israeli researcher is prevented from taking part in normal academic exchange. But there is a sharp message: that for Israel to continue on its current course has consequences.

It has been argued that there is no reason to target universities for the misdemeanours of the Israeli state. But after nearly 50 years, there is no part of Israeli society that is not implicated in the military occupation of Palestinian territories. For example, many universities are built on lands quasi-legally seized from Palestinians, most carry out research for the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) – Tel Aviv University recently boasted of 55 such contracts – and most universities have special courses or arrangements for IDF members.

History has many successful examples of boycott – for example the Montgomery bus boycott in reaction to racial segregation in Alabama, and the multifaceted boycott of apartheid South Africa. It is a method used by the many against the powerful few. If governments in the UK and other European countries and especially the US would take steps to exert pressure on the Israeli government over its outrageous treatment of the Palestinians, there would be no need for boycott.

An international BBC poll of 26,000 people across the world on how they view 16 different countries was published last month. **Only North Korea, Pakistan and Iran are viewed less positively than Israel.** Boycott is a tactic which populations can use when governments refuse to act.

Academic boycott is only one part of a worldwide campaign including divestment and sanctions asked for by Palestinian civil society. It stretches from consumer goods such as fruit and vegetables and cosmetics to touring Israeli cultural troupes supported by their Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There is a burgeoning sports boycott, which most recently campaigned against the decision of European football's governing body UEFA to stage its Under 21 tournament in Israel. UEFA's annual congress, in London last month, was the scene of vociferous protests.

In the case of South Africa, it was the sports boycott which captured the world's attention. But Israel's distinctively different culture makes academic boycott particularly effective, and the Israeli government has shown itself highly sensitive to it. Proof, if needed, was that demonstrators outside UEFA were clearly making the connection with Hawking. Their words say it all: "We urge UEFA to follow the brave example of world-renowned scientist Stephen Hawking."

Jonathan Rosenhead is emeritus professor of operational research at the London School of Economics and chairs the **British Committee for the Universities of Palestine**

[Pesticides Spark Broad Biodiversity](#)

[Loss](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 20 June 2013 07:45

By **[Sharon Oosthoek](#)** and **[Nature magazine](#)**

http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=pesticides-spark-broad-biodiversity-loss&utm_source=feedly

June 17, 2013

Agricultural chemicals affect invertebrates in streams and soil, even at "safe" levels



Pesticide use can reduce the biodiversity of insects such as the emperor dragonfly (*Anax imperator*). Image: Flickr/Svatoslav Vrabec

Agricultural pesticides have been linked to widespread invertebrate [biodiversity](#) loss in two new research papers.

Pesticide use has sharply reduced the regional biodiversity of stream invertebrates, such as mayflies and dragonflies, in Europe and Australia, finds a [study published today](#) in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

No expanded doc

[The Chimerica Dream Two Nations, Two Dreams, One Pacific](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 20 June 2013 07:17

By [Pepe Escobar](#) <http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175715/>

Sun Tzu, the ancient author of *The Art of War*, must be throwing a rice wine party in his heavenly tomb in the wake of the shirtsleeves California love-in

between President Obama and President Xi Jinping. "Know your enemy" was, it seems, the theme of the meeting. Beijing was very much aware of -- and had furiously protested -- Washington's deep plunge into China's computer networks over the past 15 years via a [secretive NSA](#) unit, the Office of Tailored Access Operations (with the apt acronym TAO). Yet Xi merrily allowed Obama to pontificate on hacking and cyber-theft as if China were alone on such a stage.

[Read more...](#)

MOUNT NEWTON, KNOWN AS LAU, WELNEW TO FIRST NATIONS, NEXT ON NAME-CHANGE LIST

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 19 June 2013 13:34

By [Judith Lavoie](#) / Times Colonist

May 26, 2013



About 600 First Nations people and their supporters marched to the top of Mount Doug for a renaming ceremony on Wednesday. They want the Saanich mountain to be known by its original name, Pkols. Photograph by: BRUCE STOTESBURY, Times Colonist

About 600 First Nations people and their supporters marched to the top of Mount Doug for a renaming ceremony on Wednesday. They want the Saanich mountain to be known by its original name, Pkols. Photograph by: BRUCE STOTESBURY, Times Colonist

Mount Newton is next on the list of Greater Victoria landmarks that First Nations want to see restored to their traditional names.

The Saanich, or Wsanec, tribes know the mountain as Lau, Welnew, which means place of refuge in the Sencoten language.

“There’s big support for that one in the Saanich Nation because we have always held that

mountain sacred,” said Tsawout hereditary chief Eric Pelkey, who spearheaded last week’s march up Mount Douglas to erect a sign bearing the traditional name Pkols.

No expanded doc

2508 readings

Back to Square None: Netanyahu, Abbas to Resume ‘Peace Process’ that Never Was



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 23 July 2013 13:39

By Ramzy Baroud

The political peddlers, think-tank experts and media professionals are all back in full force. They want us to believe that US Secretary of State John Kerry has done what others have failed to do. On his sixth trip to the Middle East during his post, and following intense shuttle diplomacy likened to that of Henry Kissinger, Kerry managed to create a modest common space between the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority (PA), thus securing their agreement to resume the so-called peace process.

The media is focusing a great deal on how the ‘breakthrough’ happened, not on why or whether or not it was really a ‘breakthrough’ in the first place. It is typical in these ‘breaking news’ dramas that the media inundates itself with excessive superfluous details, while paying little heed to the underlying logic behind the entire story.

For now, we know this: Kerry announced from Amman on July 19 that Palestinian and Israeli negotiators had put the groundwork in place to resume frozen peace talks. They have been frozen since 2010 because Israel refuses to stop illegal settlement construction in occupied Palestinian land. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu wants to continue slicing up the West Bank, fully control and isolate occupied East Jerusalem, build illegal settlements, erect walls and cut down trees, while wining and dining in some fancy Washington retreat, talking about peace and such.

But why would Kerry even bother poking a stick in Netanyahu’s beehive in the first place? One must consider the very tumultuous events that are currently shattering the Middle East region – a military coup in Egypt, a civil war in Syria, a return to major violence in Iraq, instability in Lebanon, and a sectarian divide that has turned a wide chasm into a bottomless abyss. Isn’t it better for the US to place its diplomatic energies elsewhere? Abbas and Netanyahu are struggling with their own problems, so why are they playing along in a game that will surely fail?

The answer is not simple and cannot be readily expressed through catch phrases and sound bites, although, some commentators are doing just that. Speaking on Israeli public radio, Chico Menashe, said the return to negotiations is like “a half-baked cake Kerry removed from

the stove. Kerry convinced the Israelis and Palestinians it was edible, and both sides agreed to eat it." Natan Sachs, a fellow at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institute, was quoted in the Jerusalem Post saying, both parties "basically agreed to disagree, and to talk about that."

And so the commentary teeters between cautious optimism, high hopes, cynicism and creative metaphors. In the final analysis, few truly understand this latest jumpstart of the 'peace process', the political risks it entails, and why the show is likely to go on for a while longer. Predictably, it will come to an abrupt ending followed by a protracted blame game. Knowing how mainstream western media operates, Palestinians will likely be the party responsible for the failure of the talks that are yet to start.

But here are some interesting points that must be considered firstly concerning the Americans. The Middle East region is in a constant influx, between revolutions, counter revolutions and war. Neither the US, nor its traditional allies are able to sway the outcomes in their favor. Neither money, nor arms, nor any political grand scheme is achieving much.

Since the US withdrawal from Iraq in 2010, the US has suffered many blows. Its status as the uncontended superpower is in shambles, and its allies have been caught in the wake of the so-called Arab Spring. Despite attempts at meddling, enticing some parties with money, and inciting violence against others, there are no tangible outcomes that promise to take the region back to an era of 'political stability', as in the same old status quo, that of political stagnation under US stewardship.

To repair its image, the US has to get reengaged in the Middle East. President Barack Obama's administration, besieged by a dysfunctional Congress at home, is barely relevant in the Middle East anymore, with Russia, France, Britain, Turkey, and even China making headway. Resuming the 'peace process' is necessary to give the US a chance to claim leadership in a leaderless region.

Second, concerning the Israelis, Netanyahu's rightwing-dominated coalition government might have looked as the ideal scenario for a rightwing politician who based his career on his love affair with armed settlers and his unmitigated detestation of the United Nations and international law, which he never thinks should apply to Israel. However, being firmly positioned in the rightwing circle has proven to be a public relations disaster.

Even his ever-supportive and malleable European allies are now turning against him. Europe can no longer be seen as an unconditional Israeli backer while pacifying its own populations, the majority of whom don't tolerate Israel's occupation, sieges and violent behavior. If Netanyahu has his domestic audiences to appease, EU countries do too. The writing on the wall became even clearer on July 16, when the Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported on the publication of an EU directive that paves the road for complete boycott of Israel's illegal Jewish settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The directive, which will become effective Jan 1, 2014, is binding. It forbids any EU funding or cooperating with any entity that operates in "the territories occupied by Israel since 1967 (which) comprise the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem." Although grossly belated, the EU move is truly unprecedented and deserving of the 'earthquake' depiction

made by a senior Israeli official. The EU directive was described by Economy Minister Naftali Bennett with palpable hysteria as an "economic terror attack."

Israel is in desperate need to remold its scruffy image which has resulted from too many bombs, damning evidence of war crimes, and arrogant speeches made by numerous politicians. Any 'peace process' at this time would indeed do Israel's image some good, although it will make no lasting difference.

Lastly, the Palestinian Authority, an entity that was created with Israeli consent, and funded by US-led donor countries, cannot operate outside the US political sphere. According to a reading of the just published annual report by the Palestinian Monetary Authority, as reported by Ma'an news agency, the West Bank economic indicators for 2012 were terrible, and prospects for the next two years are even worse. The PA has no political vision, and even if it did, it is too overwhelmed by economic dependency to act as a self-respecting political entity. The PA has to play the game, fully knowing that the game has been rigged from the very start.

All three parties know this very well, but they are willing to return to the negotiations table. Any table will do while they pause for photos, smile and shake hands over and over. By doing so, a media circus made of experts will resume, are ready with metaphors, clichés and sound bites, as long as they are crammed into 30 seconds or less.

- Ramzy Baroud (www.ramzybaroud.net) is an internationally-syndicated columnist and the editor of PalestineChronicle.com. His latest book is: My Father was A Freedom Fighter: Gaza's Untold Story (Pluto Press).

1086 readings

EFFORT TO RESUME E&N PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE GETS SUPPORT FROM B.C. MINISTER



PEJ Events

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 23 July 2013 11:51

BY ROB SHAW / TIMES COLONIST JULY 22, 2013

B.C.'s transportation minister says he'll try to persuade Via Rail to restart passenger train service on Vancouver Island's E&N; line, as the Island Corridor Foundation sets another make-or-break deadline for the stalled project next month.



The via rail dayliner en route to victoria from courtney in 2009. Photograph by: krista bryce, nanaimo daily news

Todd Stone said he will push the issue federally on behalf of Vancouver Island, after a meeting with Island Corridor officials at the legislature on Monday.

"I understand the holdup at this point is with Via Rail," Stone said.

"The folks this morning wanted to bring me up to speed on where that was at. They certainly weren't asking for much, certainly nothing new from the province. What they are hoping for is that I will, as the minister responsible, reach out to Via and perhaps have a conversation there."

Stone said he'll tackle the issue, noting that with more than \$15 million in federal and provincial funding committed, as well as \$3.2 million from regional districts, "it's time for Via Rail to come to the table" with service.

"If there is the ability to provide some encouragement, some moral suasion perhaps with our federal partners, including Via Rail, I'm absolutely prepared to do that," he said.

The \$18 million in funding is supposed to pay for track, bridge and trestle upgrades along the 223-kilometre Island E&N; line, which runs from Victoria to Courtenay.

But the money is contingent on the Island Corridor Foundation first negotiating a new passenger service deal with Via Rail.

Passenger service on the rail line was suspended in March 2011 due to poor track conditions and safety concerns.

Via has publicly said it won't restart trains if there's any alteration to the routes that would cost the Crown rail corporation additional money.

The Island Corridor Foundation made a service presentation to Via Rail in April and has been waiting for a response, executive director Graham Bruce said.

"We're not very pleased with that," Bruce said. "The length of time is far too long."

Negotiations will conclude in late August, with or without an agreement, Bruce said.

"I can only keep all the parties together for so long," he said.

Bruce said he's hopeful Stone will meet with the federal transportation minister to push Via Rail to sign the new deal.

Stone said he's cautious of the August deadline. "I understand the sense of urgency here," he said.

Juan de Fuca NDP MLA John Horgan, who has met with Stone and also urged federal rail support, brushed aside the deadline and questioned Bruce's leadership.

"I think Mr. Bruce has come forward with numerous deadlines over the past few years," said Horgan.

"I think the brinkmanship has to end, and a cooler head at the helm would be a better course of action. Someone the federal government is prepared to talk to."

Horgan said Bruce is "persona non grata in Tory circles" after a 2011 report by the federal lobbyist commissioner found that Bruce had lobbied on behalf of the Cowichan Tribes without being properly registered.

"That may well be restricting his ability to get action in Ottawa," Horgan said.

"Maybe it's time to look at someone else to do that work."

Island Corridor Foundation chairwoman Mary Ashley said the board doesn't share Horgan's concern and has confidence in Bruce's leadership.

rshaw@timescolonist.com

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Last Updated on Friday, 26 July 2013 22:50

[Don't Bank on Jobs From a 'Coal Rush'](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 23 July 2013 10:02

By [Torrance Coste](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/torrance-coste/vancouver-island-jobs-coal-rush_b_3596865.html) Wilderness Committee campaigner http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/torrance-coste/vancouver-island-jobs-coal-rush_b_3596865.html

07/16/2013 12:26 am

Last month, the Comox Valley Regional District, a municipal government on central Vancouver Island, received notice that two companies were seeking coal mining permits in the region. These permits don't necessarily mean the mines will be built, but they're part of a disturbing trend to resurrect coal mining on the Island -- a shift some locals are calling the new "Coal Rush."

Last Updated on Tuesday, 23 July 2013 10:05

No expanded doc

[Leaks found with 'robust' monitoring](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 23 July 2013 07:53

**By Mike Youds Daily News Staff
Reporter**

<http://www.kamloopsnews.ca/article/20130704/KAMLOOPS0101/130709961/-1/kamloops/leaks-found-with-robust-monitoring>

Kinder Morgan spokesman insists company wants to be transparent



A Kinder Morgan crews cleans up an oil spill near Merritt in mid-June in this file photo.

UPDATE FROM THE GROUND

Contact David cell 604-916-6081

Two spills in two weeks from the Trans Mountain pipeline west of Kamloops are not merely coincidence, a spokesman for Kinder Morgan Canada said Wednesday.

The source of the second leak was seepage from a small defect in the pipe, but the incident remains under investigation by the company and the National Energy Board.

Last Updated on Tuesday, 23 July 2013 09:28

No expanded doc

[Iraq Invades the United States And Other Headlines from an Upside Down History of the U.S. Military and the World](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 23 July 2013 07:28

By [Eduardo Galeano](http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175727/)

[The following passages are excerpted from Eduardo Galeano's new book, [Children of the Days: A Calendar of Human History](#) (Nation Books).]

The Day Mexico Invaded the United States (March 9)

On this early morning in 1916, Pancho Villa crossed the border with his horsemen, set fire to the city of Columbus, killed several soldiers, nabbed a few horses and guns, and the following day was back in Mexico to tell the tale.

This lightning incursion is the only invasion the United States has suffered since its wars to break free from England.

In contrast, the United States has invaded practically every country in the entire world.

Since 1947 its Department of War has been called the

Department of Defense, and its war budget the defense budget.

No expanded doc

[Monsanto Patent Granted on Severed Broccoli Variety](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 22 July 2013 19:41

By 21/07/2013 by Engineer net

European Patent Office grants patent to Seminis, a company owned by Monsanto, on a specific variety of broccoli that was developed using conventional breeding methods. European Patent Office grants patent to Seminis, a company owned by Monsanto, on a specific variety of broccoli that was developed using conventional breeding methods.



ENGINEERINGNET.EU - Monsanto, known for the controversial herbicide Roundup, has received a patent on 'severed' broccoli. Contrary to comments in the (social) media, the patent does not cover all conventionally bred broccoli, but a specific variety that was bred using conventional cross-breeding and selection methods, with the aim to make harvesting easier (with a longer stalk and less leaves). Contrary to comments in the (social) media, the patent does not cover all conventionally bred broccoli, but a specific variety that was bred using conventional cross-breeding and selection methods, with the aim to make harvesting easier (with a longer stalk and less leaves). The new patent covers the plants, the seeds, the 'severed broccoli head' and a 'plurality of broccoli plants .. The new patent covers the plants, the seeds, the 'severed broccoli head' and a 'Plurality of broccoli plants ... grown in a field of broccoli'. grown in a field or broccoli.

Last Updated on Monday, 22 July 2013 20:05

No expanded doc

[Anti-Fracking Activists Celebrate Cancellation of Gas Leases and Drilling Plans in NE Pennsylvania](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 22 July 2013 19:36

[AlterNet](#) / By [Alison Rose Levy](#)

<http://www.alternet.org/fracking/anti-fracking-activists-celebrate-cancellation-gas-leases-and-drilling-plans-ne?paging=off>

Unprecedented mass lease cancellation occurs near homes of some of fractivism's most effective mobilizers.



Photo Credit: Pincasso/ Shutterstock.com

July 19, 2013 |

Certain powerful images really stick with you when you watch *Gasland* or *Gasland 2*. First is the shot of the tap water on fire. Equally powerful are the images of the film's director Josh Fox on his porch strumming his banjo, in the woods on his property, walking by the local stream, and celebrating the pristine beauty of the nearby Delaware River. The film keeps returning to the land that Fox treasures, cluing us in on why he turned down a sizeable offer to lease for gas drilling, and what drove him forth with his camera on a fact-finding journey that culminated in the first *Gasland*, the film that ignited the fractivism movement.

No expanded doc

'Salmon Farming Kills' campaign ruled defamation on appeal

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 22 July 2013 11:38

by [Damien Gillis](#)

<http://thecanadian.org/item/2210-salmon-farming-kills-campaign-ruled-defamation-on-appeal>

Monday, 22 July 2013 11:38



[Anti-salmon farm activist Don Staniford \(photo: Darryl Dyck/CP\)](#)

The BC Court of Appeal came down today in favour of Norwegian-owned aquaculture giant Mainstream-Cermaq in the matter of a controversial campaign targeting the industry. British activist Don Staniford, who devised the "Salmon Farming Kills" slogan and series of graphics and web postings - modeled on cigarette packages and containing various warnings about the hazards of open net pen fish farms - had successfully defended a defamation suit brought in the BC Supreme Court last year by a Canadian subsidiary of Norwegian government-owned Cermaq.

Last Updated on Monday, 22 July 2013 11:43

No expanded doc

The US Government Is Metamorphosing Into the Borg

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 21 July 2013 17:11

By [Subhankar Banerjee](#), July 22, 2013

“Any intelligent fool can make things bigger, more complex, and more violent. It takes a touch of genius—and a lot of courage—to move in the opposite direction.”

—E. F. Schumacher

When I moved to Seattle in 1996, I had thought I knew how to order a cup of coffee: “I’ll have a cup of coffee please.” Soon I realized that it was more complicated: “I’ll have a Venti soy dolce latte, topped with sprinkled cinnamon and caramel drawing on whip cream, with coffee on the side please.” Referring to the US government is increasingly becoming as challenging as ordering coffee in Seattle: “Petro–imperial, coal–fired, plutocratic, oligarchic, inverted totalitarian, fascist, propagandist Big Brother, with democracy on the side.” Things are beginning to simplify though. Soon you’ll be able to refer to the US government with one single word—the **Borg**.

Last Updated on Monday, 22 July 2013 09:09

No expanded doc

[Monsanto to withdraw EU approval requests for new GMO crops](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 21 July 2013 16:40

By Charlie Dunmore

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/17/us-eu-monsanto-gmos-idUSBRE96G16R20130717BRUSSELS> | Wed Jul 17, 2013 4:45pm EDT

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - Monsanto Co said on Wednesday it will withdraw all pending approval requests to grow new types of genetically modified crops in the European Union, due to the lack of commercial prospects for cultivation there.

"We will be withdrawing the approvals in the coming months," Monsanto's President and Managing Director for Europe, Jose Manuel Madero, told Reuters by telephone.

[Read more...](#)

[Canadians need answers on Cold Lake oil spill](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 20 July 2013 17:27

By [Emma Pullman](#)

Rabble

<http://rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/emmapullman/2013/07/canadians-need-answers-on-cold-lake-oil-spill>

| July 5, 2013



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Emma Pullman is a Vancouver-based researcher, writer and campaigner. She is a campaigner with for [Leadnow.ca](#) and campaigns consultant for SumOfUs. Emma will spend the next two weeks in Fort Chipewyan, Anzac, Fort McKay and Beaver Lake meeting with First Nations elders and local residents about the impact of the tar sands on their lands and communities. This series will recount her findings and reflections until her trip concludes when she joins Aboriginal communities from across Turtle Island in Fort McMurray for the [Healing Walk against the tar sands on July 5-6](#). Read parts [one](#), [two](#) and [three](#) of the series on rabble.ca.

"We don't know what the hell is going on under the ground".

[Read more...](#)

[Standing Against GMOs By Nnimmo Bassey](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 27 July 2013 07:44

By Nnimmo Bassey <http://saharareporters.com/article/standing-against-gmos-nnimmo-bassey> July 23, 2013 - 12:17

Posted by siteadmin



caption: Nnimmo Bassey

Nature has the right responses to changing climate and holds the ace to the survival of species on the planet. Humans simply have to be humble enough to accept that we do not understand everything about the intricacies of natural processes. The time has indeed come when the world has to accept that working with nature is immeasurably more beneficial than working against her. Agricultural genetic engineering (GE) over the past few decades has strived to upturn nature and box her for profit, but as it has consistently turned out, nature continues to trump the manipulators.

Last Updated on Saturday, 27 July 2013 08:57

[Read more...](#)

2710 readings

[Pooping Canada geese may have spread GM wheat seeds](#)

Earth News



Posted by Joan Russow
Friday, 26 July 2013 10:00

By Tom Spears,
OTTAWA CITIZEN July 23, 2013



AGRICULTURE CANADA PLANTED GM WHEAT IN OTTAWA, BUT NEVER THOUGHT WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN IF CANADA GEESSE FLEW OFF WITH THE SEEDS. - PHOTOGRAPH BY: PAT MCGRATH , OTTAWA CITIZEN

OTTAWA — Canada geese may have spread viable seeds of genetically modified wheat grown at the Central Experimental Farm, documents from Agriculture Canada show. The odds aren't high, the department says. But the geese ate the experimental wheat last summer at the Experimental Farm. Geese are voracious eaters and leave droppings every few minutes.

The fear is that these geese may have left poop with living GM wheat seeds that could allow GM wheat to spread outside the controlled field, or even away from the farm itself.

The issue blew up on a Friday night in 2012, taking the department by surprise.

Now the Citizen has obtained internal emails, with many of the relevant details blacked out, showing the rush by federal bureaucrats to find out whether the GM seeds had flown the coop, potentially to other farms.

GM wheat is not approved in Canada. Many growers, including the Canadian Wheat Board, strongly oppose it, saying that growing GM wheat will make all Canadian wheat harder to sell in Europe and Asia.

And the last thing any grower wants is to have ordinary wheat crops accidentally mixed with the GM varieties.

This happened last month in Oregon, where a farmer discovered transgenic wheat growing on his land. He had never planted any and the source remains unknown, but Japan and South Korea briefly banned U.S. wheat imports.

Many species of plants are commonly spread when birds eat berries or nuts and then drop the seeds in their feces.

The issue seems to have come out of left field for the Experimental Farm.

On Aug. 24, 2012, an Agriculture Canada staffer wrote, in an email to her colleagues, that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) had just informed her of an incident involving an Agriculture Canada wheat researcher.

The CFIA regulates trials of experimental GM crops. Its records show that in 2012, Agriculture Canada had two permits to run "confined research field trials" of experimental wheat in Ottawa. These are outdoor trials where strict controls are intended to minimize the chance of DNA introduced by humans from escaping to the environment.

These trials are reserved for GM crops; crops where the DNA is altered through human-induced mutations (often with chemicals or radiation); or conventionally-bred crops that are so genetically different from those in the environment that they can't be allowed to mix. CFIA refused to answer questions about the incident Tuesday.

Agriculture Canada emails show the department had to scurry to find out whether GM wheat seeds "will survive in the goose 'poop'."

On the following Monday, Agriculture Canada produced a list of "talking points" designed to make the problem look minor if the public found out.

This list concludes that "the dispersal of viable seed by urban and suburban populations of Canada Geese is minimal," and adds that the seeds are spring wheat which "would be killed by the winter frost."

The experimental wheat was surrounded by rows of ordinary wheat in the field, a standard technique in GM tests to keep the genetically modified DNA from spreading beyond the field.

The geese ate both kinds, meaning only some of the seeds they spread were genetically modified, the talking points note.

"So in reality, only a small population of the geese probably fed on very little material resulting in much dilution ..." The rest of the talking point is blacked out.

An Agriculture Canada spokesman echoed those talking points Tuesday, confirming that the wheat was an experimental variety designed to resist fungus, and adding that "the latest research indicates that there is minimal risk of dispersal of viable seeds through Canada geese droppings. Additionally, since the seeds were a spring wheat cultivar, even if the seeds were to survive a goose's digestive system, they would be killed by winter frost."

The experimental wheat contains a collection of genetic material called GLK1 which can help a variety of plants resist fusarium, a destructive fungus that affects many grains.

Last year Canada geese destroyed some \$250,000 worth of experimental crops at the Farm. This year the Farm hired a company that uses border collies to stalk the geese and eventually drive them away.

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Last Updated on Friday, 26 July 2013 22:34

3032 readings

SAVE CANADA BY DENOUNCING HARPER'S TRANSGRESSIONS



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 25 July 2013 14:59

DENUNCIATION OF THE HARPER GOVERNMENT

by Joan Russow Global Compliance Research Project JULY 25, 2013

Please see 2015 update

https://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10026:election-2015a-long-list-of-the-transgressions-of-the-harper-government&catid=75:cjustice-news&Itemid=218

Since 2006, the Harper government has caused Canada to be perceived as an international Pariah. On Canada Day we have the opportunity to denounce the Harper government for years of transgressions; Here is a beginning list.

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR INTIMIDATING THE CBC; THE CBC REFUSED TO BROADCAST THE FOLLOWING AD. PRODUCED BY THE FRIENDS OF CBC



The Man Behind the Desk

ESCLATING THE DEMOCRATIC DEFICIT

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT CAME TO POWER, FOR INCREASINGLY ABUSING ITS CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS AND CAUSING CANADA TO BECOME AN AUTOCRACY WITH FEW CHECKS AND BALANCES

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR USING FRAUDULENT MEANS FOR ACCEDING TO POWER: FROM THEIR 2006 IN-AND OUT FUNDING SCHEME TO THEIR USE, IN 2011, OF ROBO CALLS

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR DISSOLVING PARLIAMENT TO EVADE THE INVESTIGATION INTO HIS IN-AND OUT SCHEME, FOR PROROGUING PARLIAMENT TO AVOID AN INVESTIGATION INTO CANADIAN COMPLICITY IN TORTURING AFGHANI REFUGEES, AND FOR PROROGUING PARLIAMENT TO PREVENT THE OPPOSITION FROM FORMING A COALITION

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR USING OMNIBUS BILLS WHICH HAVE PREVENTED IN DEPTH, MEANINGFUL DEBATE ON KEY ISSUES

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR SHOWING CONTEMPT OF PARLIAMENT AND FOR PARLIAMENTARY INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

WE DENOUNCE

FOR MUZZLING FEDERAL SCIENTISTS, BY PREVENTING THE PRESENTING OF THEIR RESULTS WHICH WERE PAID FOR BY TAXPAYERS

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR MARGINALIZING OF OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL SCIENCE ADVISOR, CUTTING OF FUNDING FOR SCIENCE

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR, CUTTING OFF FUNDING FOR SCIENCE AND CLOSING LABS WHOSE RESULTS THREATEN CORPORATE INTERESTS

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR SCRAPPING THE MANDATORY LONG-FORM CENSUS DESPITE BEING TOLD BY STATISTICS CANADA OFFICIALS THAT IMPORTANT DATA WOULD LIKELY BE LOST OR IMPAIRED AS A RESULT.GOOD DATA IS ESSENTIAL FOR DEVELOPING GOOD POLICY

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR MPEDING ACCESS TO INFORMATION, FOR DENYING AND DELAYING REQUESTS. FOR SUPPRESSING RESEARCH, AND FOR INTIMIDATING LIBRARIANS AND ARCHIVISTS

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR EMBARKING UPON INCREASED INTRUSIVE SURVEILLANCE OF CANADIAN CITIZEN AND FOR SHARING "INTELLIGENCE" WITH OTHER STATES

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER CGOVERNMENT FOR REFRAMING CANADA AND CANADIAN HISTORY AT THE 2013 CONGRESS, HISTORIANS AND POLITICAL SCIENTISTS EXPRESSED THEIR CONCERN ABOUT HOW THE HARPER GOVERNMENT WAS REFRAMING CANADA AS A MILITARISTIC NATION, ALSO CONCERN WAS EXPRESSED ABOUT HOW THE CITIZENSHIP TEST WAS BEING REFRAMED AS WELL

FOSTERING MILITARISM

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR INCREASING INTEGRATION WITH THE UNITED STATES

CANADA, UNDER HARPER GOVERNMENTS, HAS INCREASINGLY CLOSE MILITARY INTEGRATION WITH US POLICY, AND ENTERED INTO AN AGREEMENT, CUTELY CALLED "SHIPRIDER PROGRAM"; THIS PROGRAM IS DESIGNED TO INCREASE BORDER SECURITY BY ALLOWING THE RCMP AND THE U.S. COAST GUARD TO TEAM UP AND RIDE IN EACH OTHERS VESSELS DURING BORDER PATROLS. THE HARPER GOVERNMENT HAS AGREED TO AN ENHANCED ROLE FOR NORAD. HARPER IS TO GO ANYWHERE, ANY PLACE AND AT ANY TIME AT THE BEHEST OF THE US POLICY OF PREVENTIVE/PRE-EMPTIVE AGGRESSION.

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR USING OF THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT DOCTRINE TO JUSTIFY THE INVASION OF LIBYA

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR ABANDONING CANADA'S LONG STANDING ROLE OF A SANCTUARY FOR THOSE OPPOSED TO WAR AND REJECTED us WAR RESISTERS

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR THE TRIPPLING OF THE MILITARY BUDGET; IT HAS INCREASED 3 FOLD SINCE 2000; THE CURRENT BUDGET IS 30 BILLION. PLUS THE FAR REACHING EXPENSES OF THE "CANADA FIRST" PROGRAMME

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR ENGAGING IN MILITARY EXERCISES SUCH AS NATO'S EXERCISE TRIDENT FURY, AND NORTHCOM'S EXERCISE THE INCREASED NORTHWEST TRAINING RANGE COMPLEX

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR PERMITTING THE INFAMOUS CHILEAN TORTURE SHIP THE ESMERALDA TO BERTH IN THE GREATER VICTORIA HARBOUR. IN 1973,

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR PERMITTING THE CONTINUED BERTHING AND CIRCULATING OF NUCLEAR POWERED AND NUCLEAR ARMS CAPABLE VESSELS IN THE GREATER VICTORIA HARBOUR

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR CONTINUING TO HOST AND EXPANDING CANSEC-THE INTERNATIONAL ARMS TRADE FAIR

**"CANADA'S LARGEST WEAPONS BAZAAR. THOUSANDS OF BUYERS, SELLERS, USERS AND PROMOTERS OF THE LATEST TECHNOLOGIES FOR WAR AND REPRESSION WILL BE RUBBING SHOULDERS AT THIS HUGE, PRIVATE EVENT. CLOAKING THEMSELVES BEHIND A WALL OF DECEPTIVE EUPHEMISMS, LIKE "DEFENCE" AND "SECURITY," HUNDREDS OF HIGHLY-PROFITABLE CANADIAN CORPORATIONS WILL SHOWCASE THEIR DEADLY WARES".
(COALITION AGAINST THE ARMS TRADE)**

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR IGNORING THE BUDGET OFFICER ASSESSMENT OF THE COST OF THE F-35 JOINT STRIKE FIGHTER (JSF) AND FOR FAILING TO BE TRANSPARENT WITH THE OPPOSITION

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR FUNDING, UNDER THE WESTERN DIVERSIFICATION PROGRAM, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA, A PROGRAM TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH AND PRODUCE DRONES

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR REVERSING CANADA'S LONGSTANDING SUPPORT FOR NUCLEAR ARMS FREE MIDDLE EAST

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT DISMISSING THE ISRAELI ATTACK ON LEBANON AS A BEING "A MEASURED" RESPONSE". IN ADDITION, CANADA WAS ONE A FEW COUNTRIES THAT DID NOT CONDEMN THE DEADLY ISRAELI ATTACK IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS, ON THE HUMANITARIAN FLOTILLA.

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR SUPPORTING THE MURDEROUS ATTACK BY ISRAEL ON GAZA IN GAZA IN 2008-9, AN ATTACK WHICH KILLED OVER 1400 PALESTINIANS, MOSTLY CIVILIANS, AND WHICH WAS DENOUNCED IN THE GOLDSTONE REPORT TO THE UN AS VIOLATIONS AGAINST INTERNATIONAL LAW

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR FAILING TO CONDEMN THE ILLEGAL BLOCKADE OF GAZA BY ISRAEL, A VIOLATION ON INTERNATIONAL LAW AGAINST COLLECTIVE PUNISHMENT.

DESTROYING THE ENVIRONMENT

WE DENOUNCE

**THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR USING THE OMNIBUS BILL 45 AND CHANGING THE NAVIGABLE WATERS PROTECTION ACT
THIS CHANGE REMOVES THOUSANDS OF LAKES AND STREAMS FROM FEDERAL PROTECTION UNDER THAT LAW. "MEANWHILE, MILLIONAIRES' PLAYGROUNDS AND CONSERVATIVE HACK'S RIDINGS ARE PROTECTED WHILE LAKES THAT SUPPLY DRINKING WATER ARE NOT.**

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR TOLERATING CLIMATE CHANGE DENIERS AND FOR SACRIFICING HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN CANADA FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE TARSANDS PIPELINES AND TANKERS.

WE DRNOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR CALLING THOSE WHO SEEK TO PREVENT THE SENDING OF FOSSIL FUELS ACROSS BC AS "EXTREMISTS".

WE DENOUNCE,

HARPER GOVERNMENT, FOR MISREPRESENTING, TO THE UN, AND TO THE US OF THE CONTRIBUTION TO GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS EMANATING FROM THE TAR SANDS

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR UNDERMINING THE RESOLVE IN THE RIO+20 CONFERENCE TO ELIMINATE SUBSIDIES FOR FOSSIL FUELS

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENTS FOR WITHDRAWING FROM THE KYOTO PROOCOL

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER FOR WITHDRAWING FROM THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION

WE DENOUNCE

HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR OPPOSING A MINING BILL WHICH WOULD REQUIRE CANADIAN MINING COMPANIES TO ABIDE BY STANDARDS WHEN THEY OPERATE OUTSIDE OF CANADA.

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR BLOCKING THE PLACING OF ASBESTOS ON THE ROTTERDAM LIST OF DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES LIST.

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR GUTTING THE FISHERIES ACT THROUGH REMOVING THE STRONGEST SECTION 35 , WHICH STATED THAT IT WAS A CRIMINAL OFFENCE TO DESTROY FISH HABITAT AND

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT, FOR OBSTRUCTING THE BIODIVERSITY PROTOCOL, INDIGENOUS GROUPS ALLEGE CANADIAN OBSTRUCTIONISM ON THE BIODIVERSITY PROTOCOL

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR INCREASING PRODUCTION OF GENETICALLY ENGINEERED FOOD AND CROPS, FOR PERMITTING A STRAIN OF MONSANTO ALFALFA GE SEED TO BEING APPROVED, AND FOR COMPROMISING FOOD SECURITY

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR FAILING TO INVOKE THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE, AND INSTITUTE A BAN ON THE USE OF NEONICOTINOID PESTICIDES WHICH HAVE BEEN SHOWN TO BE KILLING THE BEE POPULATION

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR CONSIDERING DIFFERENT DELIVERY SYSTEMS FOR HEALTH CARE

IN THE 2011 LEADERS DEBATE HARPER SAID; "GOVERNMENTS ACROSS THIS COUNTRY HAVE EXPERIMENTED WITH ALTERNATIVE SERVICE DELIVERY....WE'RE NOT GOING TO WAVE THE FINGER AT PROVINCES BECAUSE THEY EXPERIMENT WITH DIFFERENT DELIVERY."

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR **ABDICATING RESPONSIBILITY OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO SUPPORT THE CANADA HEALTH CARE ACT.**

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR **IGNORING THE PLEAS OF THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FOR CANCELING THE DEBT, AND THE PLEAS OF DEVELOPING NATIONS FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE AND FOR COMPENSATION OF THE DESTRUCTION OF THEIR ATMOSPHERIC SPACE**

CONTRIBUTING TO IN ENVIRONMENTAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS NEGLIGENCE

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR: **APPROVING HAVING ONLY ONE ENGINEER ON TRAINS; THIS COULD HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE ILL-FATED TRAIN DISASTER IN LAC MEGANTIC**

VIOLATING HUMAN RIGHTS

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR **VIOLATION THE CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE IN FGHANISTAN THROUGH TRANSFERRING THE AFHAN DETAINEES**

EVEN THOUGH A CANADIAN AMBASSADOR ADVISED THE GOVERNMENT ABOUT THE FACT THAT THE PRISONERS TRANSFERRED BY CANADA TO AN AFGHAN PRISON WERE BEING TORTURED, THE HARPER MINORITY GOVERNMENT IGNORED THE WARNING. THE HARPER MINORITY GOVERNMENT DENIED THAT THEY HAD BEEN INFORMED AND DISCREDITED HIM, AND NOW IN JUNE, THE DOCUMENTS INDICATE THAT HARPER HAD BEEN INFORMED.

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR **EXTENDING THE ANTI-TERRORIST ACT AND FOR THE VIOLATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS**

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR **THE PUTTING UNDER SUREILLANCE CITIZENS ENGAGED IN LAWFUL ADVOCACY; THIS PRACTICE VIOLATES SECTION 1 OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS- THAT AFFIRMS THAT THERE MUST BE NO DISCRIMINATION ON THE GROUND OF POLITICAL OR OTHER OPINION**

WE DENOUNCE

**THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR PERMITTING EXCESSIVE VIOLENCE AGAINST
PROTESTORS. AT THE G8 - 20**

WE DENOUNCE

**THE HARPER GOVERNMENT' FOR VIOLATING LABOUR RIGHTS
ESPECIALLY FOR CHALLENGING THE RIGHT TO STRIKE**

WE DENOUNCE

**THE HARPER GOVERNMENT HAS CHANGED THE EMPLOYMENT ELIGIBILITY RULES. THESE
CHANGES WILL INCREASE THE PRECARIOUSNESS OF JOBS AND JEOPARDIZE THE
BARGAINING POWER OF WORKERS IN CANADA.**

WE DENOUNCE

**THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR THE DENYING OF RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES'
ARTICLE 19 OF THE UNDECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES WHICH
REQUIRES FAIR PRIOR INFORMED CONSENT; HARPER HAS STATED CONSENT DOES NOT
REALLY MEAN CONSENT IT MEANS CONSULTATION. HE ALSO HAS DECLARED THAT UNDRIP IS
ONLY INSPIRATIONAL.**

WE DENOUNCE

**A FEDERAL TRIBUNAL HAS REBUKED THE GOVERNMENT FOR HIDING DOCUMENTS IN A
CHALLENGE OVER FUNDING FOR FIRST NATIONS CHILDREN.
THE CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS TRIBUNAL SAYS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT KNEW ABOUT
50,000 DOCUMENTS "PREJUDICIAL TO ITS CASE AND HIGHLY RELEVANT" IN 2012, BUT
DIDN'T DISCLOSE THEM UNTIL THEY WERE REVEALED THIS YEAR IN A REQUEST UNDER
FEDERAL ACCESS TO INFORMATION LAWS. (CBC**

WE DENOUNCE

**THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR FAILING TO RATIFY THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF
MIGRANT WORKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES AND FOR CONTRIBUTING TO THE ABUSES AND
EXPLOITATION OCCURRING IN THE TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKER PROGRAM,**

WE DENOUNCE

**THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR MOVING AWAY FROM A COUNTRY OF MULTIFAITH, AND NO
FAITH TOWARDS A FORM OF CHRISTIAN FUNDAMENTALISM WITH LINKS TO Israel**

WE DENOUNCE

**THE HARPER GOVERNMENT BILL C10' TOUGH ON CRIME BILL RTUALLY ALL OF THE CRIME
LEGISLATION IS DIRECTED TOWARDS INCREASING PUNISHMENT BY WAY OF MORE PRISON
TERMS FOR MORE PEOPLE AND FOR LONGER. VIRTUALLY NOTHING IN ANY OF THE
LEGISLATION DOES ANYTHING TO PREVENT CRIME**

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENTS FAILURE TO CONDEMN ISRAEL FOR THE TREATMENT OF THE PALESTINIANS

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR CUTTING DEVELOPMENTAL NGO FUNDING FOR CRITICIZING ISRAEL

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR CUTTING DEVELOPMENTAL NGO FUNDING FOR NOT OPPOSING ABORTION

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR VIOLATING SECTION 1 OF THE 1951 REFUGEE ACT BY MAKING A DISTINCTION BETWEEN 'SAFE' AND 'UNSAFE' COUNTRIES; 'THERE SHOULD BE NO DISCRIMINATION ON GROUNDS OF COUNTRY OF ORIGIN ART. 1, REFUGEE ACT)

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR IMPRISONING OF REFUGEES ARRIVING BY SHIP AND FOR CUTTING OFF HEALTH CARE FUNDING FOR REFUGEES TO CANADA.

ENTRENCHING CORPORATISM

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR BAILING OUT THE BANKS AND LOWERING CORPORATE TAXES YET CUTTING BACK ON FEDERAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR THE INCREASING SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT FOR BAILING OUT THE BANKS AND FOR LOWERING CORPORATE TAXES; YET CUTTING BACK ON FEDERAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES


WE DENOUNCE

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT HAS INCREASED TO GLOBALIZATION, DEREGULATION AND PRIVATIZATION THROUGH ITS SUPPORT FOR TRADE AGREEMENTS, SUCH AS THE WTO/FTAA/NAFTA, SPP, CETA, TTP AND FIPA WHICH SHOULD BE DECLARED NULL AND VOID FOR VIOLATING INTERNATIONAL PEREMPTORY NORMS

WE DENOUNCE

**THE UNDERMINING OF POST SECONDARY EDUCATION
CANADA HAS REDUCED FUNDS FOR UNIVERSITIES, CAUSING UNIVERSITIES AND RESEARCHERS TO GROVEL FOR CORPORATE FUNDING, SUCH AS FROM GOLDCORP AND DEFENCE FUNDING.**

Last Updated on Monday, 27 April 2015 06:37

[CBC has refused to air an advertisement critical of the Conservative government's meddling in the public broadcaster's affairs.](#) 

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 25 July 2013 14:27

Watch the anti-Harper ad CBC refuses to air

by [Miranda Nelson](#) Georgia Strait July 22, 2013

Watch the ad <http://www.straight.com/blogra/402951/watch-anti-harper-ad-cbc-refuses-air>

or at [The Man Behind the Desk](#) -

CBC has refused to air an advertisement critical of the Conservative government's meddling in the public broadcaster's affairs.

The non-profit group, [Friends of Canadian Broadcasting](#), have created an ad highly critical of Stephen Harper's government.

<http://www.straight.com/blogra/402951/watch-anti-harper-ad-cbc-refuses-air>

Last Updated on Thursday, 25 July 2013 22:27

[Read more...](#)

[Farmers Seek Environmental Assessment of GM Alfalfa from Ontario Government](#) 

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 25 July 2013 07:00

By Lucy Sharratt - CBAN Coordinator 6:50 AM JULY 25, 2013

PRESS RELEASE

July 25, 2013. Ottawa - Two farmers have formally asked the Ontario government to carry out an environmental assessment of genetically modified (GM) alfalfa before the seed is sold in the province. Today, they launched an application under Ontario's Environmental Bill of Rights, the first ever request relating to the issue of GM crops.

No expanded doc

[U.S. Courts Uphold Conflict Minerals Disclosure](#) 

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 25 July 2013 06:53

By [Carey L. Biron](#)

WASHINGTON, Jul 24 2013 (IPS) - A U.S. federal judge has upheld a key regulatory provision aimed at ensuring that the profits from products mined in central Africa are not used to benefit armed groups, particularly in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).



Artisanal diamond miners at work in the alluvial diamond mines around the eastern town of Koidu, Sierra Leone. So-called ‘blood diamonds’ helped fund civil wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia, but now provide much-needed jobs as well as revenue for the government. Credit: Tommy Trenchard/IPS

No expanded doc

[Poland’ s Shale Gas Bubble ‘Bursting’](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 25 July 2013 06:50

By [Claudia Ciobanu](#)



Villagers from Zurawlow protesting in Warsaw. The banner says "Shale gas = the death of farming". Credit: Claudia Ciobanu/IPS.

WARSAW, Jul 24 2013 (IPS) - Since Jun. 3, inhabitants of the village Zurawlow in Grabowiec district in southeastern Poland have been occupying a field in their locality where the U.S. company Chevron plans to drill for shale gas. The farmers' resistance is just the latest blow to shale gas proponents in the country.

No expanded doc

[Political Dreaming in the Twenty-First Century Where Has It Gone?](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 25 July 2013 06:43

By [Ira Chernus](http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175728/)

All right, I confess: I have a dream. I bet you do, too. I bet yours, like mine, is of a far, far better world not only for yourself and your loved ones, but for everyone on this beleaguered planet of ours.

And I bet you, like me, rarely talk to anyone about your dreams, even if you spend nearly all your time among politically active people working to improve the planet. Perhaps these days it feels somehow just too naïve, too unrealistic, too embarrassing. So instead, you focus your energy on the nuts and bolts of what's wrong with the world, what has to be fixed immediately.

No expanded doc

2508 readings

Back to Square None: Netanyahu, Abbas to Resume 'Peace Process' that Never Was



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 23 July 2013 13:39

By Ramzy Baroud

The political peddlers, think-tank experts and media professionals are all back in full force. They want us to believe that US Secretary of State John Kerry has done what others have failed to do. On his sixth trip to the Middle East during his post, and following intense shuttle diplomacy likened to that of Henry Kissinger, Kerry managed to create a modest common space between the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority (PA), thus securing their agreement to resume the so-called peace process.

The media is focusing a great deal on how the 'breakthrough' happened, not on why or whether or not it was really a 'breakthrough' in the first place. It is typical in these 'breaking news' dramas that the media inundates itself with excessive superfluous details, while paying little heed to the underlying logic behind the entire story.

For now, we know this: Kerry announced from Amman on July 19 that Palestinian and Israeli negotiators had put the groundwork in place to resume frozen peace talks. They have been frozen since 2010 because Israel refuses to stop illegal settlement construction in occupied Palestinian land. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu wants to continue slicing up the West Bank, fully control and isolate occupied East Jerusalem, build illegal settlements, erect walls and cut down trees, while wining and dining in some fancy Washington retreat, talking about peace and such.

But why would Kerry even bother poking a stick in Netanyahu's beehive in the first place? One must consider the very tumultuous events that are currently shattering the Middle East region – a military coup in Egypt, a civil war in Syria, a return to major violence in Iraq, instability in Lebanon, and a sectarian divide that has turned a wide chasm into a bottomless abyss. Isn't it better for the US to place its diplomatic energies elsewhere? Abbas and Netanyahu are struggling with their own problems, so why are they playing along in a game that will surely fail?

The answer is not simple and cannot be readily expressed through catch phrases and sound bites, although, some commentators are doing just that. Speaking on Israeli public radio, Chico Menashe, said the return to negotiations is like "a half-baked cake Kerry removed from the stove. Kerry convinced the Israelis and Palestinians it was edible, and both sides agreed to eat it." Natan Sachs, a fellow at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institute, was quoted in the Jerusalem Post saying, both parties "basically agreed to disagree, and to talk about that."

And so the commentary teeters between cautious optimism, high hopes, cynicism and creative metaphors. In the final analysis, few truly understand this latest jumpstart of the 'peace process', the political risks it entails, and why the show is likely to go on for a while longer. Predictably, it will come to an abrupt ending followed by a protracted blame game. Knowing how mainstream western media operates, Palestinians will likely be the party responsible for the failure of the talks that are yet to start.

But here are some interesting points that must be considered firstly concerning the Americans. The Middle East region is in a constant influx, between revolutions, counter revolutions and war. Neither the US, nor its traditional allies are able to sway the outcomes in their favor. Neither money, nor arms, nor any political grand scheme is achieving much.

Since the US withdrawal from Iraq in 2010, the US has suffered many blows. Its status as the uncontended superpower is in shambles, and its allies have been caught in the wake of the so-called Arab Spring. Despite attempts at meddling, enticing some parties with money, and inciting violence against others, there are no tangible outcomes that promise to take the region back to an era of 'political stability', as in the same old status quo, that of political stagnation under US stewardship.

To repair its image, the US has to get reengaged in the Middle East. President Barack Obama's administration, besieged by a dysfunctional Congress at home, is barely relevant in the Middle East anymore, with Russia, France, Britain, Turkey, and even China making headway. Resuming the 'peace process' is necessary to give the US a chance to claim leadership in a leaderless region.

Second, concerning the Israelis, Netanyahu's rightwing-dominated coalition government might have looked as the ideal scenario for a rightwing politician who based his career on his love affair with armed settlers and his unmitigated detestation of the United Nations and international law, which he never thinks should apply to Israel. However, being firmly positioned in the rightwing circle has proven to be a public relations disaster.

Even his ever-supportive and malleable European allies are now turning against him. Europe can no longer be seen as an unconditional Israeli backer while pacifying its own populations, the majority of whom don't tolerate Israel's occupation, sieges and violent behavior. If Netanyahu has his domestic audiences to appease, EU countries do too. The writing on the wall became even clearer on July 16, when the Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported on the publication of an EU directive that paves the road for complete boycott of Israel's illegal Jewish settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The directive, which will become effective Jan 1, 2014, is binding. It forbids any EU funding or cooperating with any entity that operates in "the territories occupied by Israel since 1967 (which) comprise the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem." Although grossly belated, the EU move is truly unprecedented and deserving of the 'earthquake' depiction made by a senior Israeli official. The EU directive was described by Economy Minister Naftali Bennett with palpable hysteria as an "economic terror attack."

Israel is in desperate need to remold its scruffy image which has resulted from too many

bombs, damming evidence of war crimes, and arrogant speeches made by numerous politicians. Any 'peace process' at this time would indeed do Israel's image some good, although it will make no lasting difference.

Lastly, the Palestinian Authority, an entity that was created with Israeli consent, and funded by US-led donor countries, cannot operate outside the US political sphere. According to a reading of the just published annual report by the Palestinian Monetary Authority, as reported by Ma'an news agency, the West Bank economic indicators for 2012 were terrible, and prospects for the next two years are even worse. The PA has no political vision, and even if it did, it is too overwhelmed by economic dependency to act as a self-respecting political entity. The PA has to play the game, fully knowing that the game has been rigged from the very start.

All three parties know this very well, but they are willing to return to the negotiations table. Any table will do while they pause for photos, smile and shake hands over and over. By doing so, a media circus made of experts will resume, are ready with metaphors, clichés and sound bites, as long as they are crammed into 30 seconds or less.

- Ramzy Baroud (www.ramzybaroud.net) is an internationally-syndicated columnist and the editor of PalestineChronicle.com. His latest book is: My Father was A Freedom Fighter: Gaza's Untold Story (Pluto Press).

Last Updated on Friday, 26 July 2013 22:50

[Don't Bank on Jobs From a 'Coal Rush'](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 23 July 2013 10:02

By [Torrance Coste](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/torrance-coste/vancouver-island-jobs-coal-rush_b_3596865.html) Wilderness Committee campaigner http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/torrance-coste/vancouver-island-jobs-coal-rush_b_3596865.html

07/16/2013 12:26 am

Last month, the Comox Valley Regional District, a municipal government on central Vancouver Island, received notice that two companies were seeking coal mining permits in the region. These permits don't necessarily mean the mines will be built, but they're part of a disturbing trend to resurrect coal mining on the Island -- a shift some locals are calling the new "Coal Rush."

Last Updated on Tuesday, 23 July 2013 10:05

No expanded doc

[Sea Shepherd's Paul Watson marks one year at sea evading](#)



[arrest](#) :

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 29 July 2013 17:53

By Diana Mehta, The Canadian Press

<http://www.ctvnews.ca/world/sea-shepherd-s-paul-watson-marks-one-year-at-sea-evading-arrest-1.1367341#ixzz2aURC2AIR>

Monday, July 15, 2013 7:37AM



In this May 23, 2012 file photo, Sea Shepherd Conservation founder and President Paul Watson is seen in Berlin, Germany. (AP / Markus Schreiber, File)

TORONTO -- He's been sailing the world's oceans for a year to avoid arrest, has been forced to become an observer at one of his most cherished campaigns and hasn't held his young granddaughter since she was a newborn.

But the Canadian founder of the radical environmental group Sea Shepherd remains as self-assured as ever.

Last Updated on Monday, 29 July 2013 18:03

No expanded doc

119 readings

Let Us Now Sing About the Warmed Earth



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 29 July 2013 07:34

By **Subhankar Banerjee**, July 29, 2013

On July 25 the journal Nature **published an article** about the “Economic time bomb” that is slowly being detonated by Arctic warming. Gail Whiteman of Erasmus University in the Netherlands, and Chris Hope and Peter Wadhams of the University of Cambridge suggest—based on economic modeling that the “release of methane from thawing permafrost beneath the East Siberian Sea” would come with an “average global price tag of \$60 trillion.” The news should have sent a shock wave through the media. But instead, predictably, the public were encouraged to celebrate—again and again, and again—the birth of the royal son.

My first encounter with methane release in the Arctic was in early August 2006. It was a grey, cold day along the Beaufort Sea coast in Alaska. Iñupiaq conservationist Robert Thompson and I were walking along the northwest corner of Barter Island when we came across a rather ghastly scene: an exposed coffin with human bones scattered around it. The permafrost (frozen soil) had melted away and exposed the coffin. Robert speculated that a grizzly bear broke open the coffin and scattered the human remains. What we didn't see, however, is the methane that was released from thawing of the permafrost.

Methane (CH₄) is a greenhouse gas that causes global warming and is more than twenty times more potent than CO₂. Large amount of methane is stored in the Arctic—both terrestrial and subsea. It is released in two ways: when permafrost on land thaws from warming, the soil decomposes and gradually releases methane. In the seabed, methane is stored as a methane gas or hydrate, and is released when the subsea permafrost thaws from warming. The methane release from the seabed can be larger and more abrupt than through decomposition of the terrestrial permafrost.

In 2007, the extent of summer sea ice in the Arctic Ocean hit a record low—30 percent below average. This event spurred a study by scientists from the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) and the National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSID) in Boulder, Colorado. The team used climate models to understand if the “unusually low sea-ice extent and warm land temperatures were related.” In 2008 they published results from their study in Geophysical Research Letters. They **found**:

“The rate of climate warming over northern Alaska, Canada, and Russia could more than triple during periods of rapid sea ice loss ... The findings raise concerns about the thawing of permafrost ... and the potential consequences for sensitive ecosystems, human infrastructure, and the release of additional greenhouse gases [CO₂ and CH₄].”

This was alarming news because Arctic permafrost holds “30 percent or more of all the carbon stored in soils worldwide.” In reality, the Arctic sea ice is continuing to retreat at a rapid pace. The August–September sea ice extent in the Arctic Ocean had set a new record low last year: 18 per cent below the previous record of 2007.

As permafrost thaws, ponds connect with the groundwater system, which lead to drying of streams, lakes and wetlands. Permafrost thawing also accelerates rates of contaminant transfer that have toxic effects on aquatic plants, fish and other animals, and also increases transfer of pollutants to marine areas. This affects not only wildlife, but also indigenous peoples who depend on fish and other animals for subsistence resources.

The NCAR–NSID team found that the terrestrial permafrost was indeed melting in the real world: “Recent warming has degraded large sections of permafrost, with pockets of soil collapsing as the ice within it melts. The results include buckled highways, destabilized houses, and “drunken forests” of trees that lean at wild angles.”

In November 2007, Robert Thompson and I had seen large areas of “drunken forests” in Eastern Siberia, not far from where Stalin's Gulag camps were, along the Kolyma River valley.

About the subsea methane release in the Arctic, I'm aware of only two studies: the decade-long and ongoing Shakhova–Semiletov climate science study in Eastern Siberia, and the Whiteman–Hope–Wadhams

economic modeling that was published last week. Soon I'll talk about both studies, but first a short journey through dystopia in a climate ravaged Earth.

Dystopia is the antithesis of utopia, and is usually framed with literary imaginations. "An imagined place or state in which everything is unpleasant or bad, typically a totalitarian or environmentally degraded one," according to the Oxford Dictionary. Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a good example. But it doesn't have to be literary imaginations only, it can be visual imaginations as well; and it doesn't have to be about the future, it can also be about the present, as Spanish painter Francisco Goya made evident in his print series **The Disasters of War** (1810–1820). Susan Sontag observed in *Regarding the Pain of Others*:

"The ghoulish cruelties in *The Disasters of War* are meant to awaken, shock, wound the viewer. Goya's art, like Dostoyevsky's, seems a turning point in the history of moral feelings and of sorrow—as deep, as original, as demanding. With Goya, a new standard for responsiveness to suffering enters art."

Art historians **have suggested** that Goya created the series "as a visual protest against the violence of the 1808 Dos de Mayo Uprising, the subsequent Peninsular War of 1808–14 and the setbacks to the liberal cause following the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy in 1814." Goya kept both his intentions and the 82 prints he created private during his lifetime. It was finally published in 1863, thirty-five years after his death, when it was deemed "politically safe to distribute a sequence of artworks criticising both the French and restored Bourbons."

Is it possible that climate change experts in the US are keeping their feelings private and not speaking out with outrage against Obama's petro-imperial and pro-coal energy policy—for the fear of—...?

Emission vs. Extraction

On July 22 the Yale Environment 360 **published an article** in which nine climate change experts, including Michael Mann, Bill McKibben and Carol Browner gave their comments on "Obama's New Climate Plan." Eight contributors provided a more or less supportive view of the plan. The ninth contributor, however, a policy analyst from the Heritage Foundation, unsurprisingly took the discussion in the opposite direction, "President Obama's climate plan would have a chilling effect on the economy." For a more critical analysis of the Obama climate plan, you can see Chris Willams' article **here** and mine **here**. Broadly speaking the comments on Yale Environment 360 focused on emission reduction from coal-fired power plants and natural gas as a good "bridge fuel." No one mentioned a word about the "**climate time bomb**" that Obama had set off with his "**National Strategy for the Arctic Region**" in May. And no one said anything about the grave eco-cultural and climate consequences of—his support for expansion of fossil fuels extraction—across the American land and the oceans.

It was a déjà vu for me. In 2010, the phony cap-and-trade bill had focused on emission reduction and was limping through the dysfunctional US Congress, and then failed. To bring the focus back to extraction, later that year, I **wrote** an article on Common Dreams, "Another One Hundred Years of Fossil-Digging in North America?"

Obama in the US, and Harper in Canada, in tandem, are turning North America into a petro-imperial and petro-despot continent. This does not bode well for solving the climate crisis. It's worth reviewing briefly some of the extraction projects taking place now. Since there has been a lot of discussion about tar sands in Alberta, I'll focus on a few others:

- Shell's drilling in the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas in Arctic Alaska (in 2011 I **wrote** that permits were rubber-stamped, and despite repeated appeals, the Obama administration refused to do an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)—a blatant violation of the National Environmental Policy Act).
- Massive expansion of **gas fracking—onshore** that Tara Lohan of AlterNet has been **writing about** all summer, and also offshore off of the coast of California that we learned last week from

a Truthout **investigative report** (no EIS was done for the California offshore fracking project either).

- Hyper-deepwater drilling in the Gulf of Mexico (earlier this year Shell announced plan to **drill the deepest offshore oil well** in the Gulf of Mexico—almost two miles below the water surface, which is twice the depth of BP’s Deepwater Horizon well that caused the worst oil spill in US history).
- Expansion of coal mining in the Powder River Basin of Wyoming.

On July 9 I **wrote**, “In 2011 Obama sold the Powder River Basin in Wyoming to Big Coal. ... Precisely because of this greedy decision two years ago, today the activists in the Pacific Northwest are fighting the coal-port through which (if built) Wyoming coal would go to Asia.” And on July 25 Lynne Peoples **wrote** on Huffington Post that this coal project “could create more national and global environmental impact than a Canadian company’s proposal to ferry Albertan tar sands to the U.S. Gulf Coast via the Keystone XL pipeline.”

Leah Donahey of the Alaska Wilderness League shared with me similar concerns that Obama’s plan for drilling in the Arctic Ocean might have more environmental impact than the Keystone XL pipeline. Last week she wrote to me in an email: “The President is still considering offering new drilling leases in the Arctic Ocean and Shell could be back at this time next year to drill.”

My intention here is not to start a debate about which is the worst offender, but to point out that all of these mega extraction projects will cause massive eco-cultural devastations and contribute enormously to global climate change.

After both their drill rigs, Noble Discoverer and Kulluk, suffered heavy damages and were cited for EPA violations, Shell abandoned the 2013 drilling plan in Alaska’s Arctic seas. I **wrote** in a letter to the editors in the June 6 issue of The New York Review of Books, “There will be calm in the Arctic Ocean this summer.” I was wrong. As it turns out, right now, instead of drilling, Shell is doing sonar surveys in the Chukchi Sea, using the Finnish icebreaker Fennica, to inspect “ice gouges” on the seafloor where Shell “might build pipelines to offshore oil wells,” as **reported** by Alaska KTUU-TV on July 23. With air guns and sonar equipments that Shell is using, the Chukchi Sea is certainly not calm this summer.

The Iñupiat people of Arctic Alaska say, “The Arctic Ocean is our garden.” On July 5 Robert Thompson, who lives in Kaktovik on Barter Island along the Beaufort Sea coast, wrote to me in an email:

“There were two deaths here that I attribute to climate change. Thomas Gordon and his son, Simon, were carried away by a big wave down the coast as they were crossing a low place on a spit. We never used to have such big waves. There is 700 miles of open water. With that, waves get bigger. When I first came here [in 1988] we could see the pack ice, all summer long.”

Why are the climate change experts focusing only on emission reduction, and not on extraction reduction also, you might ask? It might seem paradoxical that while the US is trying to reduce emissions, it is also increasing extractions at the same time. I have a theory. A significant part of the extracted fossil fuels would be sent to other places around the world (like coal from the Powder River Basin will go to Asia)—to make huge money. It will get burned somewhere and contribute to the global climate change. Emissions statistics, however, would show that America is reducing emission and is solving the climate crisis—at home. It’ll all look good on paper. Not so fast though. Two years ago Joseph Nevins **pointed out** on Truthout, “The US military is the world’s single biggest consumer of fossil fuels, and the single entity most responsible for destabilizing the Earth’s climate.” Now imagine: If the American military burns oil in a mission to Afghanistan, that was extracted from America’s Arctic Ocean, would that be included in the accounting of American emission? I think not. If my theory of—emission vs. extraction—proves true, it’d be yet another example of American exceptionalism.

You would think it would be logical to scrap the mega extraction projects if we are sincere about solving the climate crisis. It would indeed be, if we were living in a decent society. But instead, we’re living in a dystopian one.

Elements of Dystopia

There are four elements of dystopia: ecological, political, sociological, and economic—as it relates to climate change.

Scientists from around the world have been using various climate models over the past three decades to predict the ecological future. At times, what's happening in the real world is proving to be more frightening than the outcome of the climate models. For example, the Arctic sea ice is melting at a rate faster than what the models had predicted few years ago.

Polar bear mothers and cubs are **dying from exhaustion** having to swim longer distances in open water of the Arctic Ocean; lack of summer sea ice is forcing thousands of Pacific walrus onshore where they are getting crammed on narrow barrier islands, **stampeding and crushing smaller calves**; reptiles and rodents are **getting burned alive** underground by extreme wildfires in New Mexico; nearly **55 million piñon trees died** during the last decade from bark beetles infestation in New Mexico; **19 firefighters were killed** by a raging wildfire last month in Arizona—are just a few examples of our current climate ravaged America. The future for the whole Earth looks much worse. This is what I'd call—ecological dystopia.

The ecological dystopia, however, didn't paralyze activists to fight for a better future. I was at the 2009 UN Climate Summit COP15 in Copenhagen. The official summit was a dismal failure. The unofficial Klimaforum, however, gave renewed energy to the climate justice movement. By fighting the political system, we had envisioned, it might be possible to move away from fossil fuels, and toward a clean energy future. However, less than four years later, it has now become clear that fossil fuels extraction is rapidly increasing with government support in North America. It will continue to be that way through the rest of this century, and perhaps beyond. And globally—Russia, China, India, Brazil—the story is the same. This is what I'd call—political dystopia.

We're already saying adios to one American coastal city: "Goodbye, Miami." Jeff Goodell **wrote** in Rolling Stone recently that Miami, and much of South Florida would be underwater by the end of the century due to rising sea level. The primary reason behind the sea level rise is the melting of the Greenland ice cap. Soon we will start saying adios to an inland American city also: "Goodbye, Phoenix." Drought, heat, fires, water shortage—will make much of the American southwest uninhabitable. People would be faced with two choices. Those who can afford would move away to more habitable places (from Phoenix to Portland, or from St. Pete to Seattle, for example). But for most people, particularly poor people won't have a choice to move—to a better place. The latter condition would be called, "displacement without moving" that Rob Nixon coined in his groundbreaking book, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Harvard).

Additionally, the American police state might use brutal techniques against millions of people who would become climate refugees, and would be forced to migrate. If you don't believe me read a bit further.

Mexico (like southern Arizona, New Mexico and Texas) would be hit hard by climate change. It is likely that tens of millions of Mexicans would be forced to move North—to the US and Canada—just to survive. The US government is perhaps envisioning such a future scenario. I'd suggest that this is perhaps one of the reasons why America is spending tens of billions of dollars on—not only building a 700-mile long "**Mexico–United States barrier**," but also turning the border into a "War Zone," as Todd Miller recently **pointed out** on TomDispatch. Globally the situation would be similar, as a South–North migration forced by climate change is inevitable. In the Arctic, communities are already being forced to move from their ancestral lands. Here are a few recent books on the subject of migration and displacement forced by climate change: *Climate Change and Migration* (Oxford), *Climate Change and Displacement* (Hart), *Migration and Climate Change* (Cambridge), *Climate Change and Displacement Reader* (Routledge), and *Kivalina: A Climate Change Story* (Haymarket). The tremendous social chaos that will arise from migration and "displacement without moving" is what I'd call—sociological dystopia.

The Whiteman–Hope–Wadhams study has brought to sharp focus, the fourth element—economic dystopia.

Shakhova–Semiletov and Whiteman–Hope–Wadhams Studies

During the 1990s Russian scientist Dr. Natalia Shakhova had done studies of methane release from terrestrial permafrost in Eastern Siberia. In the fall of 2003, Shakhova and her colleague Dr. Igor Semiletov took the study offshore—to the East Siberian Arctic Shelf. Every year since then, they conducted annual research trips, mostly on ships during summer, but also one aerial survey in 2006, and one winter expedition on sea ice in April 2007. They published their findings in the 5 March 2010 issue of the journal *Science*.

Their research, for the first time, **brought attention** to the East Siberian Arctic Shelf as a key reservoir of Arctic methane that “encompasses more than 2 million square kilometers of seafloor in the Arctic Ocean,” and is “more than three times as large as the nearby Siberian wetlands” that was previously “considered the primary Northern Hemisphere source of atmospheric methane.” Their findings showed that the “permafrost under the East Siberian Arctic Shelf, long thought to be an impermeable barrier sealing in methane, is perforated and is starting to leak large amounts of methane into the atmosphere.” Shakhova pointed out that the current average methane concentrations in the Arctic is “about 1.85 parts per million, the highest in 400,000 years.”

The East Siberian Arctic Shelf is shallow, only about 164 feet in depth, which means that the methane that is getting released there, most of it is escaping into the atmosphere rather than getting absorbed into the water, which would have been the case if it was a deep seabed. Shakhova had warned at the time that the release of “even a fraction of the methane stored in the shelf could trigger abrupt climate warming.”

Shakhova and Semiletov now hold joint appointments with the International Arctic Research Center at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and the Pacific Oceanological Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Their research is ongoing, and Shakhova is the lead scientist for the Russia–US Methane Study.

I pointed out earlier that the rapid loss of summer sea ice in the Arctic Ocean is a key contributor to—thawing of terrestrial permafrost. It is also a key contributor to—thawing of the subsea permafrost in the East Siberian Arctic Shelf.

With all these background information, I’m finally ready to discuss the Whiteman–Hope–Wadhams study.

Arctic nations, including US, Russia, Canada, Norway, Denmark, as well as some **non–Arctic nations**, including China and India—are eyeing on the Arctic Economic Prize: “oil and gas” underneath the Arctic seabed. It is estimated that the Arctic Ocean contains 13 percent of undiscovered oil and 30 percent of undiscovered gas. These nations are also working to open up the Arctic sea route for moving all that crude around. It’s a great irony that the rapid melting of the summer sea ice is making the Arctic Ocean accessible for extraction and shipping.

Whiteman, Hope, and Wadhams point out that this frenzy for short-term profit is ignoring the long-term huge “economic impacts of a warming Arctic.” By using modeling they tried to understand the global economic impact of methane release from the East Siberian Arctic Shelf.

Referring to the Shakhova–Semiletov study, Whiteman, Hope, and Wadhams write: “A 50–gigatonne (Gt) reservoir of methane, stored in the form of hydrates, exists on the East Siberian Arctic Shelf. It is likely to be emitted as the seabed warms, either steadily over 50 years or suddenly.” They use “a decade–long pulse of 50 Gt of methane, released into the atmosphere between 2015 and 2025” as input to the PAGE09 economic model. They took into account “sea–level changes, economic and non–economic sectors and discontinuities such as the melting of the Greenland and West Antarctic ice sheets.” They ran the model 10,000 times under two emissions scenarios: low–emissions and business–as–usual emissions. The result is a shocker: a \$60 trillion price tag for the global economy.

That’s just the beginning, because there is much more methane in the Arctic than what is in the East Siberian Arctic Shelf. Furthermore, Whiteman, Hope, and Wadhams write, “The full impacts of a warming Arctic, including, for example, ocean acidification and altered ocean and atmospheric circulation, will be

much greater than our cost estimate for methane release alone.”

“The economic consequences will be distributed around the globe, but the modeling shows that about 80 percent of them will occur in the poorer economies of Africa, Asia and South America,” Whiteman, Hope, and Wadhams write. The \$60 trillion number is astounding, beyond the comprehension of most human minds. It has the capacity to cripple the economy of many small nations, that are already stressed from global economic crises. This is what I’d call—economic dystopia.

Is anybody listening?

Whiteman, Hope, and Wadhams point out that “neither the World Economic Forum in its Global Risk Report nor the International Monetary Fund in its World Economic Outlook recognizes the potential economic threat from changes in the Arctic.”

They also point out that oil and gas drilling in the Arctic Ocean will make warming worse, as gas flaring emits “black carbon, which absorbs solar radiation and speeds up ice melt.” Is Shell listening to any of this? Certainly not! Is Obama listening to any of this? Certainly not!

Like Shakhova and Semiletov, my engagement with the Arctic is also ongoing. Over the past fourteen years I met so many wonderful people all across the world who are working on various Arctic issues. I danced to Gwich’in fiddle music in Arctic Village, and to Iñupiat drumming in Kaktovik. There, I learned that singing and dancing are not just for celebration, but also to heal from past wounds, and to fight for a more just future—for “the diversity of life” on Earth.

But what should we do to move away from the state of dystopia that we find ourselves in, you might ask? No one has the answer, but many are offering ideas, are engaged in conversations, taking various actions.

Subhankar Banerjee is a photographer, writer, and activist. His most recent book **Arctic Voices: Resistance at the Tipping Point** will be published in paperback on August 20 (Seven Stories Press). He was recently Director’s Visitor at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, Distinguished Visiting Professor at Fordham University in New York, received Distinguished Alumnus Award from the New Mexico State University, and Cultural Freedom Award from Lannan Foundation. *His most recent book Arctic Voices: Resistance at the Tipping Point will be published in paperback on August 20 (Seven Stories Press).*

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Update: The article uses methane’s **Global Warming Potential** (GWP) over a 100–year horizon, which according to the IPCC is 25 times more than carbon dioxide. But the 20–year horizon GWP for methane is 72 according to the **IPCC 4th assessment report**. This means methane is 72 times more potent as a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide over a 20–year period. And according to Drew Shindell and his group at NASA, taking into account aerosol responses, the numbers are even higher, **105 for 20–year** and 33 for 100–year. We ought to be using the 20–year value because the short to mid–term is far more important than the 100–year horizon (it’s hard to even imagine what Earth would look like 100 years from now).

Last Updated on Monday, 29 July 2013 09:06

[U.S. and EU Frustrate Peasants' Rights Declaration](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 29 July 2013 06:49

By **[Gustavo Capdevila](#)**



The U.N. declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas would protect farmers like this woman weeding a field in South Sudan's Eastern Equatoria state. Credit: Charlton Doki/IPS

GENEVA, Jul 27 2013 (IPS) - Staunch opposition by the U.S. delegation and, to one extent or another, by European countries has blocked the approval this year of a draft multilateral declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas, which is backed by the developing world.

Last Updated on Monday, 29 July 2013 06:52

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[Now You See Him, Now You Don' t Living in a One-Superpower World \(or Edward Snowden vs. Robert Seldon Lady\)](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 29 July 2013 03:40

By **[Tom Engelhardt](http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175729/)** <http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175729/>

He came and he went: that was the joke that circulated in 1979 when 70-year-old former Vice President Nelson Rockefeller had a heart attack and [died](#) in his Manhattan townhouse in the presence of his [evening-gown-clad](#) 25-year-old assistant. In a sense, the same might be said of retired CIA operative Robert Seldon Lady.

Recently, Lady proved a one-day wonder. After years in absentia -- poof! -- he reappeared out of nowhere on the border between Panama and Costa Rica, and made the news when Panamanian officials took him into custody on an Interpol warrant. The CIA's station chief in Milan back in 2003, he had achieved brief notoriety for overseeing a [la dolce vita version](#) of extraordinary rendition as part of Washington's Global War on Terror. His colleagues kidnapped Hassan Mustafa Osama Nasr, a radical Muslim cleric and terror suspect, [off the streets of Milan](#), and rendered him via U.S. airbases in Italy and Germany to the [torture chambers](#) of Hosni Mubarak's Egypt. Lady evidently rode shotgun on that transfer.

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[Angry Birds Skip Polluted Delhi](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 23 August 2013 07:37

By [Ranjit Devraj](#)



Eurasian Spoonbill wintering at the Okhla sanctuary in the heart of New Delhi city.

Credit: T.K. Roy/IPS

NEW DELHI, Aug 22 2013 (IPS) - Every winter the Okhla wetlands, a charmed haven in

the heart of India's bustling capital city, play host to Greater Flamingoes, Greylag Geese, Tufted Pochards, Northern Shovelers and other exotic, feathered visitors winging in from colder climes as far away as Siberia

Last Updated on Friday, 23 August 2013 14:38

No expanded doc

[Rising Temperature, Rising Food Prices](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 22 August 2013 07:35

By [Lester R. Brown](#)

Many farmers will be forced to adapt to a changing climate. Geoffrey Ndung'u, from Kanyonga village in semi-arid Eastern Kenya, earns a living growing watermelons on his dry land. Credit: Isaiah Esipisu/IPS

WASHINGTON, Aug 21 2013 (IPS) - Agriculture as it exists today developed over

11,000 years of rather remarkable climate stability. It has evolved to maximize production within that climate system. Now, suddenly, the climate is changing. With each passing year, the agricultural system is becoming more out of sync with the climate system.

No expanded doc

[Sustainable Technologies Safeguard the Soil in Cuba](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 21 August 2013 10:27

By [Ivet González](#)



Esmilda Sánchez picks string beans on the Finca de Semillas farm. Credit: Jorge Luis Baños/IPS

HAVANA, Aug 20 2013 (IPS) - The furrows are hard to make out in fields of the Finca de Semillas, a farm on Havana's outskirts, because its administrators, Esmilda Sánchez and Raúl Aguilar, protect every centimetre of soil with mulch.

“This technique has done the most to boost our yields,” said Sánchez, one of 1,200 farmers who have benefited from a pilot project for the improvement and conservation of soil, water, and forestland in order to adapt to climate change. “The earth holds the humidity, something that is very much needed in our area, which is affected by drought,” she added.

Last Updated on Wednesday, 21 August 2013 10:30

No expanded doc

4223 readings

Proroguing not again! The Former



Governor General appeased Harper by dissolving and by proroguing Parliament. Now the Current GG must invoke Article V

Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 20 August 2013 12:10

PEJ News - Joan Russow, Ph.D. Global Compliance Research Project

August 20, 2013-



The House of Commons (Adrian Wyld/The Canadian Press)

A modest Proposal

Under Article V of the Letters Patent of the Governor General, The Governor has the powers to "upon sufficient cause to remove from his office, or to suspend from the exercise of the same" there is sufficient cause to remove and suspend Stephen Harper. Under Article VI of the Letters Patent of the Governor General, there is a provision not only to dissolve, and prorogue Parliament but also to suspend or remove from office. The time has come to remove and suspend Harper, and to SUMMON Parliament and ask the opposition parties to form a minority government, and govern as Harper did as a quasi majority government and end Harper's autocracy.[It would then be the Conservatives who would be afraid to cause a vote of non-confidence and trigger an election]

<http://PEJNews.com>

In 2008, THE FORMER GOVERNOR GENERAL ERRED IN PERMITTING DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT WHEN OUTSTANDING UNRESOLVED ACCUSATIONS AGAINST HARPER EXISTED

Prior to the calling of the 2008 election, the Conservative Party, under Stephen Harper,

was being investigated by the Parliamentary Committee on Ethics, Access to Information and Privacy, for violation of the Elections Act, in the 2006 election. The Chief Electoral Officer appeared before the Committee and stated that the practice, which was described as an "in-and out" funding scheme, was in violation of the Elections Act. During the 2006 Election, the Conservatives appeared to be exceeding the spending limit at the Federal level. To circumvent this Federal limit, the Conservative administration transferred funds into 65 ridings where it was anticipated that the candidate would not arrive at the allotted riding spending limit. These funds were recorded in the candidates' income, returned to the Federal party to be spent at the national level, but the expenses were recorded not at the national level, but as a local expense which was contrary to the Election Act. It was the assigning of national expenses at the Federal level at the riding level that was in violation of the Act. When the Parliamentary Committee was investigating this practice, the candidates were going to be required to appear before the Parliamentary Committee. The Conservative Party administration, under the guidance of Stephen Harper, indicated to the candidates in 67 ridings that they did not have to appear before the Committee. When 27 subpoenas were issued, only three appeared before the Committee.

While the Committee was attempting to fully address the inquiry, Stephen Harper stepped down and asked the Governor General to dissolve Parliament and call an election, which she did.

An election should never have been called, while there was still an investigation into fraudulent practices in the previous election.

As a result of the election being called, the Parliamentary Committee was dissolved.

The Governor General erred at this time.

THE FORMER GOVERNOR GENERAL ERRED IN PROROGING PARLIAMENT

The Governor General, through permitting the prorogation of Parliament, set a dangerous precedent in allowing a Prime Minister when facing an imminent non-confidence vote, to be permitted to evade a vote that was destined to pass.

She also failed to acknowledge that there was a credible coalition of opposition parties, representing over 60% of the Electorate that was willing to govern. permitted Stephen Harper and the Conservative party to evade a non-confidence vote,

THE FORMER GOVERNOR GENERAL ERRED AGAIN IN PROROGING PARLIAMENT

She allowed the Harper government to evade accusations of complicity in torturing Afghani prisoners. by her permitting the Prorogation of Parliament. The Current governor General now must oppose prorogation which is being used again to stall challenges from opposition

NOW THE CURRENT GOVERNOR GENERAL MUST RECOGNIZE THE PREVIOUS ERRORS of the former Governor General AND USE HIS POWERS UNDER ARTICLE V OF His LETTERS PATENT

THERE IS SUFFICIENT CAUSE TO REMOVE AND SUSPEND STEPHEN HARPER

Under Article V of the Letters Patent of the Governor General, there is the following provision:

And We do further authorize and empower Our Governor General, so far as We lawfully may, upon sufficient cause to him appearing, to remove from his office, or to suspend from the exercise of the same, any person exercising any office within Canada, under or by virtue of any Commission or Warrant granted, or which may be granted, by Us in Our name or under Our authority.

https://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9322:save-canada-by-denouncing-harpers-transgression&catid=75:cjustice-news&Itemid=218

There has been "sufficient cause" to remove Stephen Harper from office and suspend him from exercising his powers. Apart from the outstanding accusations of fraudulent election funding practices, there have been numerous cases where Stephen Harper, has almost irreversibly damage Canada's international reputation related to human rights, and the environment.

It is time for Governor General to remove, the Harper government, from office and to request the Opposition to form government and to overturn 7 years of the Harper government's transgressions. Since 2006 when Harper government came to power, Canada has increasingly become an international pariah.

Last Updated on Friday, 23 August 2013 14:38

[5 Terrifying Statements in the Leaked Climate Report](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 20 August 2013 07:27

IS THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE GETTING BLUNT ABOUT HOW BAD GLOBAL WARMING IS GOING TO BE?

—By [Chris Mooney](http://www.motherjones.com/environment/2013/08/five-terrifying-statements-ipcc-report) <http://www.motherjones.com/environment/2013/08/five-terrifying-statements-ipcc-report>

Tue Aug. 20, 2013 7:02 AM PDT



In the long run, global sea level rise could easily exceed 5 meters. Brendan Howard/[Shutterstock](#)

Climate Desk has obtained a leaked copy of the draft Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 2013 Summary for Policymakers report, which other media outlets are [also reporting on](#). The document is dated June 7, 2013. We recognize, as we've [previously reported](#), that this document is not final, and is in fact certain to change.

Last Updated on Tuesday, 20 August 2013 07:30

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[Ecological Cuban Recipes Boost Sustainable Agriculture](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 20 August 2013 07:15

By [an IPS Correspondent](#)

In 2012, the Community Food Preservation Project won the Triple Corona, the highest prize awarded by the National Urban Agriculture Group. Credit: Jorge Luis Baños/IPS

HAVANA, Aug 19 2013 (IPS) - Vilda Figueroa and her husband, José Lama, live in Marianao on the outskirts of Havana, where they share hundreds of recipes based on Cuban-grown foods and sun-drying, along with other ecological food preservation methods.

“We figured that there were lots of easy ways to preserve vegetables and condiments for when they were out of season,” said Lama, who, along with his wife, began searching for these types of alternatives in 1996. “That’s why we began experimenting with the principle of not adding anything artificial,” he told IPS.

Last Updated on Tuesday, 20 August 2013 07:18

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[Opponents of Fracking Seek to Thwart Shale Gas Finance](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 20 August 2013 07:08

By [Emilio Godoy](#) |



Satellite image of the Gulf of San Jorge in Argentina's Patagonia region, rich in shale gas and part of the world's second largest reserve after China, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Credit: IPS/Photostock

MEXICO CITY, Aug 18 2013 (IPS) - Non-governmental organisations are putting pressure on multilateral financial institutions not to finance production of shale gas by hydraulic fracturing or fracking because of the high environmental costs they say are associated with this method.

[Read more...](#)

[Abracadabra: You' re a Part-Timer How Corporate America Used the Great Recession to Turn Good Jobs Into Bad Ones](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 20 August 2013 06:34

By [Barbara Garson](#)


<http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175738/>

Watch closely: I' m about to demystify the sleight-of-hand by which good jobs were transformed into bad jobs, full-time workers with benefits into freelancers with nothing, during the dark days of the Great Recession.

First, be aware of what a weird economic downturn and recovery this has been. From the end of an "average" American recession, it ordinarily takes slightly less than a year to reach or surpass the previous employment

peak. But in June 2013 -- four full years after the official end of the Great Recession -- we had recovered only 6.6 million jobs, or just three-quarters of the 8.7 million jobs we lost.

[Read more...](#)

[Canada accused of ignoring NAFTA obligations by environmental law association](#) 

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 15 August 2013 13:58

MARK HUME


VANCOUVER — The Globe and Mail
, Aug. 14 2013,

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/canada-accused-of-ignoring-nafta-obligations-by-environmental-law-association/article13778435/#dashboard/>

Canada has so weakened its environmental laws that it is “in violation” of its obligations under the North American free-trade agreement, the West Coast Environmental Law association says.

In an open letter released Wednesday, the non-profit legal foundation asks the Commission for Environmental Cooperation to take a hard look at Canada’s actions, saying the government has exposed the environment to undue risk to give Canadian industry an edge over the U.S. and Mexico.

[Read more...](#)

[Teenagers in Space Star Wars, G. I. Joe, Rambo, Red Dawn, and How a Tale of American Triumphalism Was Returned to the Child’ s World \(Part 2\)](#) 

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 15 August 2013 07:16

By [Tom Engelhardt](#)

[The following excerpt from Tom Engelhardt’s book [The End of Victory Culture](#) is posted with permission from the [University of Massachusetts Press](#). Part I, “The Secret History of G.I. Joe,” can be found by [clicking here](#).]

1. “Hey, How Come *They* Got All the Fun?”

Now that Darth Vader’s breathy techno-voice is a staple of our culture, it’s hard to remember how empty was the particular sector of space *Star Wars* blasted into. The very day the Paris Peace Accords were signed in 1973, Richard Nixon also signed a decree ending the draft. It was an admission of the obvious: war, American-style, had lost its hold on young minds. As an activity, it was now to be officially turned over to the poor and nonwhite.

[Read more...](#)

[Wild salmon advocate learns \\$75,000 lesson in court so you won’ t have to](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

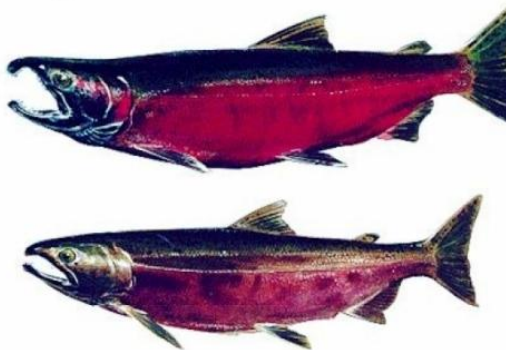
Tuesday, 13 August 2013 08:20

BY [Carol Linnitt](#) Vancouver Observer.

[http://www.vancouverobserver.com/blogs/earthmatters/wild-salmon-advocate-learns-75000-lesson-court-so-you-won’ t have](http://www.vancouverobserver.com/blogs/earthmatters/wild-salmon-advocate-learns-75000-lesson-court-so-you-won%E2%80%99t-have)

: Aug 12th, 2013

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Recently the BC Court of Appeal fined an anti-fish farm activist named Don Staniford \$75,000 plus court fees for defamation. Staniford’s work to advertise the dangers fish farms pose to wild salmon stocks did not constitute fair comment, said the judge, because he failed to adequately cite scientific information.

Last Updated on Tuesday, 20 August 2013 07:43

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2165 readings

US TO LAUNCH NUCLEAR MISSILES ON DAY OF UNITED NATIONS HIGH LEVEL MEETING ON NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT



Peace News

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 23 September 2013 17:55

By John Halam

In a development that's almost as bizarre as it is outrageous, the United States plans to launch a nuclear-capable Minuteman-III missile from Vandenberg Airforce Base in California, to Kwajelien Athol, on what is both the day of the United Nations High-Level-Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament, and the exact 30th anniversary of 'The Day the World Nearly Ended', an event of half-past midnight Moscow time in which Colonel Stanislav Petrov narrowly averted the launch of over 10,000 nuclear warheads at the US during the tensest and most perilous part of the Cold War. Colonel Petrov is now the hero of the film 'The Man who Saved the World', due for release in October in NY.

THURS 26 SEPTEMBER 2013

PEOPLE FOR NUCLEAR
DISARMAMENT/CPACS HUMAN SURVIVAL
PROJECT

**26 SEPT 2013-26SEPT 1983 - THE DAY
THE WORLD NEARLY ENDED**

**US TO LAUNCH NUCLEAR MISSILES ON
DAY OF UNITED NATIONS HIGH LEVEL
MEETING ON NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT**

In a development that's almost as bizarre as it is outrageous, the United States plans to launch a nuclear-capable Minuteman-III missile from Vandenberg Airforce Base in California, to

Kwajelien Athol, on what is both the day of the United Nations High-Level-Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament, and the exact 30th anniversary of 'The Day the World Nearly Ended', an event of half-past midnight Moscow time in which Colonel Stanislav Petrov narrowly averted the launch of over 10,000 nuclear warheads at the US during the tensest and most perilous part of the Cold War. Colonel Petrov is now the hero of the film 'The Man who Saved the World', due for release in October in NY.

According to John Hallam of the Human Survival Project, (a joint project of PND and the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies):
“The High-Level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament was the result of an overwhelming General Assembly vote in 2012, and the idea is for the very highest levels of national decision-makers – heads of state and ministers – to be involved in a global discussion on nuclear disarmament.

It has so happened that it takes place on the exact 30th anniversary of an event that, had decisions been made slightly differently from the way they were in fact made, could have all too easily resulted in the destruction of civilisation and possibly of humans as a species.”

“The launching of 10,000 nuclear warheads by the USSR, which believed it was under attack by the US, would certainly have resulted in retaliation at a similar level. The ultimate use of between 20 and 30,000 large nuclear warheads on the cities of the US, Russia, China, Japan, and NATO, would give an immediate body-count in the hundreds of millions to billions, and would have created what we now know would be a long-lasting nuclear winter.”

“There could hardly be a more appropriate day for a high-level meeting on nuclear disarmament – or a more utterly and crassly INAPPROPRIATE day for a Minuteman-III missile test!”

“So utterly and crassly inappropriate is the timing for this test – and the US has already done one within hours of the ending of the International Day of Peace on 21Sept – that one is forced to

wonder if there is not some perverse deliberateness to the timing. Certainly, the US is thumbing its nose at the rest of the world.”

“If this had been a North Korean missile test we'd be talking about UN Security Council resolutions of condemnation and sanctions. But for this there is just embarrassed silence.”

A memo has been circulated to the entire General Assembly concerning 'The Day the World Nearly Ended', which is attached. The memo was written **before** the announcement of the Minuteman-III test.

Inquiries:

John Hallam

johnhallam2001@yahoo.com.au ,
jhjohnhallam@gmail.com ,

61-2-9810-2598

61-416-500-793m

428 readings

**The Commission on Sustainable Development will be examining its legacy
and that of Rio + 20: will the CSD delineate the future we do not want?**
Earth News



Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 19 September 2013 08:22

On September 20, the Commission on Sustainable Development will end and examine its legacy: its successes and its shortcomings.

The theme of Rio+20 was "the future we Want". The question arises can we have the future we want without proscribing the future we do not want. Is it possible to have sustainability within a world of predominantly unsustainable institutes and practices without concurrently eliminating these practices? To achieve the future we must :

- A. Prevent war and conflict
- B Avert Environmental Devastation and Health Problems
- C. Cease Exploitative Trade
- D Stave off Corporatism and Financial Institutions
- E. Guarantee social Justice and Human Rights
- F Abide by International Law

In the preambles to UN documents is usually reaffirmation of obligations from numerous Covenants, conventions and treaties, and of

commitments made in UN conference plans and UNGA resolutions and declarations. Then in the operational clauses there is a list of prescriptions -proposed actions, to address the obligations and commitments. What is missing is a list of proscriptions of actions and practices that impede the prescriptions.

For example, at the CSD (Commission of Sustainable Development) 17 many member states were willing to be prescriptive but were careful not to be "proscriptive. Member states that produce and export genetically engineered food and crops, felt comfortable in stating the importance of promoting organic agriculture but, were not willing to call for the banning of genetically engineered food and crops and destructive pesticides; they ignored the often impossibility for the GE and the Organic crops to co-exist.

The future we want is impeded by the future we do not want. The following is a list of 99+ practices of the 1% that must be banned, prohibited, removed discontinued; averting environmental devastation and health problems; ceasing exploitative trade; staving off corporatism and financial institutions; guaranteeing social justice and human rights, abide by international law etc. Below are 99 +suggestions.

in order to have" the future we want".

.A

PREVENTING WAR AND CONFLICT

1.D elegalize war- Given the social, environmental, health, human rights, economic consequences of war, under no conditions or circumstance is war legal or just.

2.End any attempt to undermine the international resolve to prevent the scourge of war; this would include not engaging in intimidation, in using propaganda for war, in cajoling or in offering economic incentives in exchange for support for military interventions.

3.End the reluctance to abide by the 1975 Declaration on the Use of Scientific and Technological Progress in the Interests of Peace and for the Benefit of humanity.

4.Dismantle the UN Security Council because it violates a fundamental principle in the Charter of the United Nations- the sovereign equality of states, and bestow more power to the UN General Assembly that does respect this principle.

5.End the misconstruing of Article 51 (self-defence) of the Charter of the United Nations to justify premeditated non-provoked military aggression, or to use various such pretexts for invading other sovereign states.

6.Abandon the guise of the pre-emptive/preventive attack policy that has resulted in aggressive attacks on sovereign states and that has been in violation of the Article 2 of United Nations and international law as being the 'supreme' international crime of a war of aggression.

7.End the practice of invoking Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations rather than invoking Chapter VI - the peaceful resolutions of disputes - and be prepared to be judged by the International Court of Justice.

8.End the practice of disrespecting of the jurisdiction and decisions of the International Court of Justice.

9. Withdraw immediately from any military involvement and occupation of sovereign states.

10.End the trumping of health, environment, civil and political and human rights for the sake of "security, power and profit.

11.End the use of "human security" which has been extended to "humanitarian intervention", and used along with the "responsibility to protect" or with right to intervene with a view to justifying military intervention in other states.

12.True security is "common security", as defined in documents prepared by Olaf Palme, and which entrench peremptory norms related to the preventing war and conflict, guaranteeing human rights, protecting the environment, and ensuring social justice.

13.End the practice of targeting or assisting in the assassination of leaders of other sovereign states, and of engaging in "regime change".

14. End the practice of mollifying public opposition by couching aggressive acts in euphemistic "operations" such as "Operation Just Cause", "Operation Iraqi Freedom", "Operation Enduring Freedom",

15. End the destabilization of states and regions through the sale of arms, including through the guise of "foreign aid" or through infiltration of NGOs, such as USAID, NED, Freedom House or through fundamentalist Christians in groups such as Operation Rescue.

16. End the production of land mines, as required in the convention against landmine and end the procrastination, by those responsible, to remove land mines from all areas of the world where land mines are known to exist.

17. End the reluctance of nuclear arms states to comply with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty by failing to implement Article VI of the Treaty, (Article VI: commits all parties to pursue negotiations in good faith on measures to end the nuclear arms race and to achieve disarmament.).

18. End the production of all weapons of mass destruction such as nuclear, chemical, and biological, as agreed to in UNCHE in 1972, and in specific conventions. And discontinue the gutting of the Treaty on Cluster bombs

19. Suffocate the production of uranium, end importing and exporting of uranium, prohibit the use of weapons such as those with depleted uranium and cluster and end the continued profit-making from the sale of arms and trade in small arms.

20. Disband NATO for its disregard of the international rule of law, including the objective of the Charter of the United Nations, and the Convention against Torture.

21. Prohibit propaganda for war (ICCPR), including establishing military bases, engaging in war games, producing and selling of armaments, and holding arms exhibitions, unequal treatment of the states. End government investment in weapons systems

22. End the destabilizing impact of the Middle East as a result of the possession of nuclear weapons by Israel.

23. End the disregard for the obligations under the 1967 Outer Space Treaty to ensure that exploration and use of outer space, including the moon and other celestial bodies, shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development, and shall be the province of all mankind [humanity].

24. Repeal the Patriot Act and Anti-Terrorism Act because they violate civil and political rights, and results in racial profiling.

25. End the practice of "rendering"- sending "persons of interests" to countries which are known to condone torture.

26. End the refusal to be judged by an international tribunal for any actions that might be deemed to violate international law related to crimes against the peace, to war crimes, or to genocide.

27. End the misuse of UN "peacekeeping" forces to clean up aggressive acts of destruction and occupation caused by other states.

28. Close and convert, to peaceful purposes, all foreign military bases in sovereign states around the world.

29. End the production, circulation and berthing of nuclear powered or nuclear arms-capable vessels throughout the world.

30. End "War Games" or "Military Exercises" such as Exercise Trident Fury or Northwest Training Range complex.

31. Discontinue the propping up and financing of military dictators and abandon the long standing policy enunciated against Somoza "he's a bastard but he is our bastard".

32. Demilitarize the economy by reallocating resources presently committed to military purposes to provide for the needs of citizens to pass on the peace dividend to the developing countries as undertaken through numerous UN Conference Action Plans and UN General Assembly Resolutions and Declarations.

33. End misplaced spending priorities: on militarism, on adulterated unsafe food, on production of products and substances harmful to the

environment and human health, and redirecting budgetary expenses to eradicate poverty.

B

AVERTING ENVIRONMENTAL DEVASTATION AND HEALTH PROBLEMS

34. End the exploitation of Nature affirmed in 1982 World Charter of Nature; every form of life is unique, warranting respect regardless of its worth to humans, and to accord other organisms such recognition's, humans must be guided by a moral code of action,

35. Eliminate unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, particularly in industrialized countries; this pattern has contributed to poverty, to the inequitable distribution of resources within countries and between countries, has increased the vulnerability to natural disasters and has threaten the well-being of future generations.

36. Reduce the ecological footprint, as required in Habitat II, that has contributed to a socially inequitable and environmentally unsound world; end the conversion of nature into a source of raw materials, and the practice of "built-in obsolescence"

37. End the reluctance to invoke the precautionary principle - in the Rio Declaration, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Framework Convention on Climate Change- as a general and enforceable principle of law: where there is a threat of irreversible harm the lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing measure to prevent the threat.

38. End the application of the reverse onus strategy which places the onus not on the proponent of an intervention to prove safety but on the opponent, to demonstrate harm.

39. Prevent Natechs- natural disasters caused by technology or technological disasters caused by natural disasters and not rely on after-the fact attempts to reduce or mitigate disasters.

40. Ban, through the invoking the precautionary principle, the production and distribution of genetically engineered food and crops, the practice of biopiracy of genes of indigenous peoples, the dumping of GE food and adventitious materials [living modified organisms] on developing countries. And remove off the shelves all processed foods containing genetically engineered material.

41. Ban Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) which are bioaccumulative and toxic, and are capable of traveling .long distances from their original source.

42. Prosecute countries for violating the transboundary principle that holds that states shall be held legally responsible for any pollution, in other states, caused by activities under their own jurisdiction.

43. End the practice of causing environmental devastation and then relying on restorative or clean-up technologies to remediate the environmental destruction rather than taking the preventive approach so as to avoid costly and inadequate subsequent measures to "rehabilitate" the site.

44. End the unsustainable forest management, the conversion of forests into agricultural land and the expansion of large-scale agro-industrial monocultures for food, fibre and, increasingly, energy. End the land grab of land in by developed states, in developing states

45. End land degradation, soil erosion, salinization, water logging, and soil pollution, which contribute to loss of soil fertility.

46. End the strategy of substituting proposals of adaption to or offsetting of climate change rather than seriously addressing the issue of preventing climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

47. Phase out the use of fossil fuels, especially those from the unconventional sources such as the tar sands, reduce other greenhouse gas producing activities, ban fracking and end the substantial contribution to greenhouse gas emissions caused by methane gas resulting from the dependency on animal protein.

48. Discontinue the promoting of false "solutions" to climate change such as biofuels, large hydro projects, and nuclear energy which are not socially equitable and environmentally safe and sound renewable energy sources. Abandon the market based proposal of the so-called Green Economy that commodifies nature

49. End the failure of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to investigate and estimate the full impact of greenhouse gas emissions by the military, and to demand that each state release information related to the greenhouse gas emissions from the production of all militarism, from military exercises, war games, weapons testing, military aviation troop transfer, military operations, and waste generation, to reconstruction after acts of violent interventions etc.

50. End the practice of member states relying not on the emerging scientific data, but on the IPCC 2007 report which was based on 2004 and 2005 data. The emerging data now indicates the urgency of keeping the rise in temperature below the dangerous level of 1°C, [which is the point at which global systems on land, water and air will be so affected as to create vicious feedback cycles and destabilise many ecosystems and human societies]; whereas the IPCC 2007 Report had indicated that 2 degrees was the safe threshold. The emerging scientific data also indicates that there are more serious climate-induced events than anticipated in the 2007 IPCC Report.

51. End the climate injustice of using the atmospheric space of developing countries, and refusing to pay compensation

52. End the misappropriation of agricultural land for the growing of biofuel and contributing to food insecurity, and prohibit the purchase and use of land for biofuels to serve foreign markets and undermine food security.

53. Prohibit the practice, by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in violating the principle that a regulator must not be a promoter, of promoting civil nuclear energy.

54. Phase out the use of civil nuclear energy, and refuse to accept nuclear energy as the solution to climate change and delete Article IV of the NPT which bestows the inalienable right of states to access so-called "peaceful" use of nuclear energy.

55. Prevent the relocation and transfer to other States of any activities and substances that cause severe environmental degradation or are found to be harmful to human health. (Principle 14 Rio Declaration, 1992)

56. End the defiance by industrialized states, of principle 7 of the 1992 Rio Declaration which was adopted by all states at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). This principle states that:

"States shall cooperate in a spirit of global partnership to conserve, protect and restore the health and integrity of the Earth's ecosystem. In view of the different contributions to global environmental degradation, States have common but differentiated responsibilities. (Principle 7, Rio Declaration)

57. End environmentally induced diseases, address the social determinant of health problems- such as poverty, and provide universal access to a publicly-funded not-for-profit health non-two tier health care system.

58. End the lack of commitment to ensure, as agreed in Habitat II, that Corporations, including transnational corporations, comply with international law, including international environmental law

59. End the use of the notion of "prior consent" to persuade the poor, disadvantaged and vulnerable countries or communities within developed countries to accept the dumping of products and substances that are potentially harmful to the environment and human health. End the ruse of using extraterritorialism. -what right do we have to impose our higher standards on a developing country with lower standards

60. Prevent Pharmaceutical collusion between university and Pharmaceutical corporations. And end the policy of permitting Universities to sell products of research to corporations

61. End practice of the Pharmaceutical industry in creating new health problems to create market potential for new drugs

62. Prohibit the patenting of genes under the WTO TRIPS provision

63. End the misguided dependency on drugs when doctors fail to offer the possibility that change in life style could effectively address the health problem

64. Oppose the continued production and export of products that have been banned... or withdrawn

65.Prevent import of products banned or not yet approved in country of origin

C

C.CEASING EXPLOITATIVE TRADE

66.End the undermining, by International Trade agreements, such as GATT, and the subsequent WTO, of measures which would advance and promote socially equitable environmentally safe and sound renewable energy, transportation, agriculture, forestry etc.

67.Dismantle or abrogate trade institutions and agreements, such as WTO and NAFTA, which promulgate globalization, deregulation and privatization; these institutions and agreements undermine the rule of international public trust law, and condone and actively facilitate corporations benefiting and profiting from war and from environmental destruction.

68.End all proposals which will result, through the practice of harmonization of standards and regulations, in arriving at the lowest common denominator for health and environmental standards.

69.End the requirement of) "testing once" and (ii) "reliance on testing by the private sector". That if the private sector has already tested the substance or product, Environmental agencies would have to justify before congress if they want to test again.

(i) "Testing once" to eliminate redundancy by testing once so that if a product is tested in one of the three countries it does not have to be tested in the other two. This practice would undermine the ability of states to carry out their own tests and ban substances such as the banning by Canada of RBST or Bovine Growth Hormone in milk.

70.Abandon the IMF Structural Adjustment Program which has led to the violation of human rights, has exploited citizens in the developing world, which has resulted in years of privatization, and elimination of essential services throughout the world and has adversely impacted on vulnerable and indigenous peoples around the world.

D.

STAVING OFFCORPORATISM AND FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Spitzer's pr

oposals

1Call for a full rollback of the Bush tax cuts for all those above \$1 million in annual income.

2Demand true accountability on Wall Street.

3Demand that a financial service transaction fee be imposed.

4Start a petition drive in every state demanding that the state municipal governments stop using Goldman Sachs for advice and

5 Demand that the New York Fed have "public" board members who truly represent the public

71.End the privatization, including Public Private Partnerships, of public services such as water, sewage and health care, and end the opposition to the affirmation that the access to water is a human right.

72.End corporate funding of education, including the corporate direction of research, and opposing end the opposition to the principle that research must be arms-length and not tied to corporations.

73.Enforce the international commitment made to ensure that corporations, including transnational corporations, comply with international law including international environmental law.

And oppose corporate "voluntary compliance",

74.End the subsidizing and investing, of public funds, in corporations that have developed weapons of mass destruction and "conventional arms" that have violated human rights that have denied social justice, that have exploited workers, and that have destroyed the environment.

75.Revoke charters of corporations, including transnational

corporations, which have engaged in activities that impact on health

and environment, including on the right to food, and right to water; end the legal fiction that the corporate form has constitutional rights

as a person and prohibit corporate funding of political parties.

76. Phase out sunset industries—ones that are harmful to human health and the environment and institute a fair and just transition for workers and communities affected by the phase out, and end the lucrative profits made on money trading.

77. End the egregious practice of derivatives and other banking schemes, and end the support of non-cooperative and non-community banks

78. End the bail-out of corporations and banks under the guise of their being "too big to fail", and end the reclassifying of function, by financial institutions, such as Goldman Sachs in order to take advantage of the bail-out

79. Prohibit the centralization of banks and the egregious funny money banking systems and abandon the capitalist, exploitative, competitive economic model, and prohibit corporate funding of politicians,

80. End shifting, by corporations, of their addresses offshore to lower their taxes, and end the evading, by corporations, of criminal charges by spinning off their companies.

E.

GUARANTEEING SOCIAL JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

81. Eliminate the widening gap between the developed and the developing countries and ensure steadily accelerating economic and social development and peace and justice for present and future generation... (Preamble, Declaration on the Establishment of a new international economic order, 1974)

82. Cancel Third World debt. And end the reluctance to implement the long-standing international commitment to transfer .7% of the GDP for overseas development aid (ODA)

83. End the practice of sending arms as ODA and end the extension of active assistance to developing countries tied, political or military conditions. and cancel third world debt

84. End all discrimination on the following grounds:

- race, tribe, or culture;
- colour, ethnicity, national ethnic or social origin, or language; nationality, place of birth, or nature of residence (refugee or immigrant, migrant worker);
- gender, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, or form of family, [including same-sex marriage]
- disability or age;
- religion or conviction, political or other opinion, or - class, economic position, or other status.

85. End the violation of human rights including labour rights, civil and political rights, social and cultural rights- right to food, right to housing, right to water right to sewage treatment, right to a universally accessible, not-for-profit health care system, right to education and social justice.

86. End the denial of the labour right to strike, of the right to have collective bargaining,

87. End the denial of the requirement of equal pay for work of equal value

85. End the redefinition of Torture and thus the violating of the Convention against Torture through Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment,

86. End the practice of rendition of citizens and failure to abide by the Geneva Conventions.

87. End cruel and inhumane punishment such as capital punishment, which violates accepted international norms.

89. End the discrimination against immigrants, and refugees and against Migrant Workers and their Families; and to revoke the Secure Fence Act and end the unconscionable wall between the United States and Mexico. Tear down walls and the wall in Israel/

90. Abandon the no-fly list, and no-cross boarder lists.

91 Oppose Strategic Law suits Against Public Participation ("SLAPP) suits" against public participation.

92 End the targeting, intimidating and discriminating against activists on the grounds of political and other opinion (a listed ground in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights).

93. End religious extremism and proselytizing including the spread of Evangelical Christianity around the world, which has undermined local indigenous cultures, instilled fear through the dangerous belief in the "rapture", "Armageddon" and "left behind", and condemn dispensationalist "end times" scenario which has serious irreversible consequences. And has led to the undermining of other established beliefs and practices

94. End the practice of ending speeches with the invocation of God Bless a country

F

ABIDING BY INTERNATIONAL LAW.

95 End the defiance of the Geneva Conventions on the treatment of civilians, and respect international human rights and humanitarian law.

96. End unilateralism and affirm a commitment to multilateralism and oppose unilateral actions that undermine global common security.

97. End current irreversible practices that will violate the rights of future generation intergenerational equity includes the rights of future generations to their cultural, natural heritage and to a safe environment.

98. End the US position of refusing to respect the jurisdiction of the international Court of Justice in terms of revenge through military intervention and to instead seek justice through the International Court of Justice.

99. End US reluctance to do the following:

1 to ratify the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties

2 to ratify the international Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women and its protocol

3. to ratify the Convention on Biological Diversity

4 to ratify the Kyoto Protocol

5 to ratify the Convention on the rights of migrant Workers and their families

6. to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child

7. to ratify the International Covenant of Social economic, and Cultural Rights

8. to ratify the Optional Protocols of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

9. to abide by the Convention Against Torture


10. to abide by the Geneva protocols on prohibited weapons

11. and to sign and ratify the Convention for the Banning of Landmines,

11 to sign and ratify all Geneva Protocols, including Protocol V, which requires the removal of remnants of war

12 to invoke the precautionary principle, which appears in the Rio Declaration, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity, as a general and enforceable principle of law

Last Updated on Saturday, 05 October 2013 15:05

[Joy Arises, Rules Fall Apart Thoughts for the Second Anniversary of Occupy Wall Street](#) 

Posted by Joan Russow


Sunday, 15 September 2013 06:05

By [Rebecca](#)

[Solnit](#) <http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175747/>

I would have liked to know what the drummer hoped and what she expected. We' ll never know why she decided to take a drum to the central markets of Paris on October 5, 1789, and why, that day, the tinder was so ready to catch fire and a drumbeat was one of the sparks.

[Read more...](#)

[Boulder Flooding: Remembering Warnings from “Weather Report”](#) 

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 13 September 2013 08:33

by Subhankar Banerjee

On Thursday as I was reading about war and peace, headlines about a flash flood in Boulder kept arriving all through the day: “At least 3 dead in Colorado flooding; Boulder ‘overwhelmed with water’” (*LA Times*), “Flood threat still strong as 3 killed in Colorado” (*USA Today*), “Boulder flood: 2nd death confirmed, county calls in National Guard to assist with rescues” (*Boulder Daily Camera*), “Boulder Flooding: Deadly High Waters in Northern Colorado Force Evacuations, Cause Mudslides” (*Huffington Post*), ...

Soon I'll talk about the flood, but first the warning.

[Read more...](#)

[Hay contaminated with Monsanto GMOs rejected for export](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 12 September 2013 15:07

By [John Upton](#) http://grist.org/news/hay-contaminated-with-monsanto-gmos-rejected-for-export/#disqus_thread

September 12 2013



[Shutterstock](#) Bad news for Washington

farmers?

Pity a Washington farmer who grew a crop of GMO-free alfalfa only to have it rejected for export — because tests showed it had been tainted by a genetically modified variety.

An exporter found the farmer's hay to have been contaminated with Roundup-resilient alfalfa, which was developed by Monsanto and approved for use by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 2011. Farmers who grow the GMO alfalfa can douse their fields with the herbicide Roundup without hurting the crop.

Last Updated on Thursday, 12 September 2013 15:43

[Read more...](#)

[Massive Starfish Die-Off Baffles Scientists](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 12 September 2013 06:32

by [Carrie Arnold](#) in [Weird & Wild](#)

<http://newswatch.nationalgeographic.com/2013/09/09/massive-starfish-die-off-baffles-scientists/>

September 9, 2013

The waters off British Columbia, Canada, are littered with dead [starfish](#), and researchers have no idea what's causing the deaths.

At the end of August, marine biologist and scuba enthusiast [Jonathan Martin](#) was out on his usual Saturday dive with some friends when he noticed something unusual.



A decomposing *P. helianthoides* starfish still clinging to a rock. Photograph courtesy Jonathan Martin

"We just started noticing dead starfish that looked like they had their arms chopped off," Martin said.

They were sunflower starfish (*Pycnopodia helianthoides*), a major marine predator in the area that feeds mostly on sea urchins and snails. Like most starfish, the sunflower starfish can regenerate lost limbs—it can have up to 20—and can grow to be up to three feet (a meter) across. (Related pictures: "[5 Animals That Regrow Body Parts.](#)")

Last Updated on Thursday, 12 September 2013 11:35

[Read more...](#)

[Our Fossil-Fueled Future World Energy in 2040](#) 

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 10 September 2013 07:11

By [Michael T. Klare](#)

<http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175745/>

What sort of fabulous new energy systems will the world possess in 2040? Which fuels will supply the bulk of our energy needs? And how will that change the global energy equation, international politics, and the planet's health? If the experts at the U.S. Department of Energy are right, the startling "new" fuels of 2040 will be oil, coal, and natural gas -- and we will find ourselves on a baking, painfully uncomfortable planet.

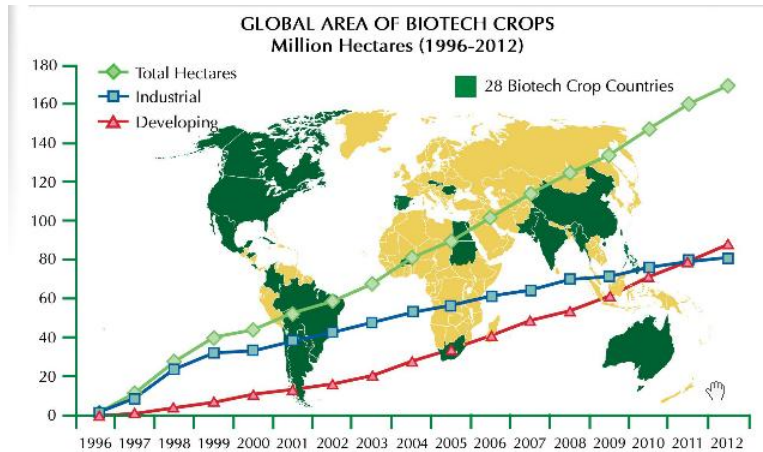
[Read more...](#)

[GLOBAL DECLARATION CALLING FOR THE BANNING OF GENETICALLY ENGINEERED FOOD AND CROPS](#) 

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 09 September 2013 16:14

by Joan Russow Global Compliance Research



A record 17.3 million farmers, in 28 countries, planted 170.3 million hectares (420 million acres) in 2012, a sustained increase of 6% or 10.3 million hectares (25 million acres) over 2011.

Project

To sign a petition at Change.org please go to

<http://www.change.org/en-CA/petitions/the-un-general-assembly-institute-a-global-ban-of-genetically-engineered-food-and-crops>

Genetically engineered food and crops have contaminated the Global food system and undermined food security and must be banned

Last Updated on Monday, 16 September 2013 15:16

[Read more...](#)

[A MODEST PROPOSAL FOR OBAMA HOW TO CROSS THE LINE PEACEFULLY](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 09 September 2013 13:57

By Joan Russow Global Compliance Research Project

RESPECT THE WISDOM OF BAN KI MOON, AT THE G20. THE SECRETARY GENERAL STATED THERE MUST BE A POLITICAL SOLUTION, CEASE FIRE, PEACE CONFERENCE AND A FUND FOR REFUGEES AND HOST COUNTRIES.

AND REMEMBER THAT *SERGEY LAVROV* AND YOU BOTH OPPOSED THE INVASION OF IRAQ, AND NOW ACCEPT HIS CURRENT PROPOSAL TO PLACE SYRIAN CHEMICAL WEAPONS UNDER INTERNATIONAL CONTROL

Last Updated on Saturday, 14 September 2013 13:22

[Read more...](#)

[Oracle Open Back](#)



[Door](#)

Posted by Dragonslayer

Monday, 09 September 2013 10:42

Oracle Chief Executive Larry Ellison said Tuesday the National Security Agency surveillance program is "great" and "essential" for minimizing strikes, in an interview with Charlie Rose on "CBS." The fact he thinks this is great means that you can expect every Oracle database is compromised by the spy agencies and notably the NSA.

Since almost every government and medium to large business on the planet runs Oracle, you should expect that all electronic data is compromised and being sold to the highest bidder. Corporate research, accounting, business secrets and everything else including medical records and every detail of your life is being accessed for sinister purposes. Anyone anywhere can say things about you and it becomes part of your profile and is indistinguishable from truth or fantasy

Last Updated on Monday, 09 September 2013 10:45

[Internet experts want security revamp after NSA revelations](#)



Posted by Dragonslayer

Sunday, 08 September 2013 12:12

[\(Reuters\)](#) - Internet security experts are calling for a campaign to rewrite Web security in the wake of disclosures that the U.S. National Security Agency has developed the capability to break encryption protecting millions of sites. [\(Reuters\)](#)

[Read more...](#)

2340 readings

COP 19: Reallocate at least 50% of Global Military Budget to help Address Urgency of Climate Change

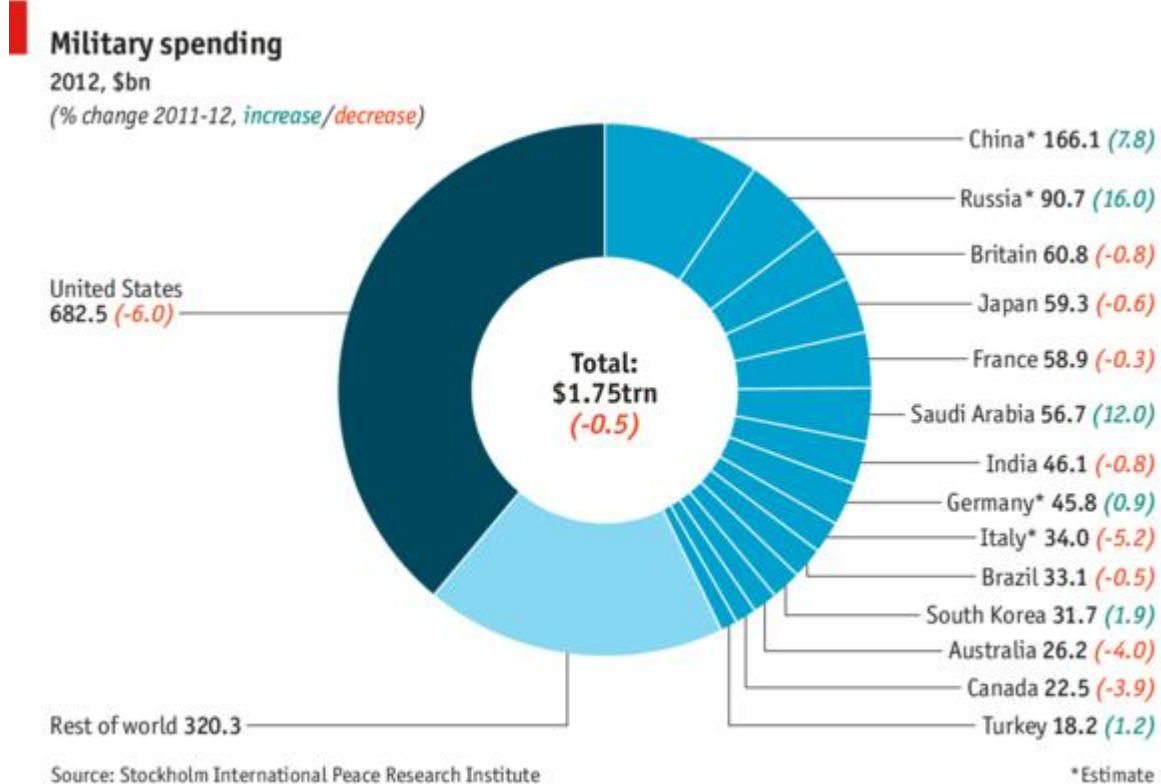


Peace News

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 18 November 2013 02:10

By **Joan Russow- Global Compliance Research Project**



Economist.com/graphicdetail

At every Climate Change conference the question is posed "where will we get the funds to address the urgency of climate change?" One answer is to end fossil fuel subsidies and invest in renewable socially equitable and environmentally sound energy. Another answer is to reallocate Global military expenses.

Not only does militarism divert funds from climate justice but also militarism is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions.

At COP 19 "LOSS AND DAMAGES" MUST BE ADDRESSED

YEARS OF INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS TO REDUCE THE MILITARY BUDGET IGNORED

"The reduction of the military budget and disarmament are necessary conditions of security and development" (Anatole Rapaport, presentation at the World Order Conference, 2001)

Throughout the years, through international agreements, member states of the United Nations have recognized that the military budget has been a waste and misuse of resources. Unfortunately, institutional memory is either short or member states ignore precedents.

In 1976 at Habitat 1, member states of the United Nations affirmed the following in relation to the military budget:

"The waste and misuse of resources in war and armaments should be prevented. All countries should make a firm commitment to promote general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, in particular in the field of nuclear disarmament. Part of the resources thus released should be utilized so as to achieve a better quality of life for humanity and particularly the peoples of developing countries" (II, 12 Habitat 1).

In 1981, in the General Assembly resolution entitled Resolution on the reduction of the military budget, the member states:

(i) reaffirmed "the urgent need to reduce the military budget, and agreed to freeze and reduce the military budget";

(ii) recognised that "the military budget constitutes a heavy burden for the economies of all nations, and has extremely harmful consequences on international peace and security";

(iii) reiterated the appeal "to all States, in particular the most heavily armed States, pending the conclusion of agreements on the reduction of military expenditures, to exercise self-restraint in their military expenditures with a view to reallocating the funds thus saved to economic and social development, particularly for the benefit of developing countries" (Resolution on the Reduction of Military budgets, 1981).

These appeals were further reinforced in a 1983 General Assembly Resolution on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, that curbing the arms build-up would make it possible to release additional resources for use in economic and social development, particularly for the benefit of the developing countries." Also in the 1993 resolution, member states considered that "the magnitude of military expenditures is now such that their various implications can no longer be ignored in the efforts pursued in the international community to secure the recovery of the world economy and the establishment of a new international economic order."

Also in 1992, all member states recognized that "Warfare is inherently destructive of sustainable development" (Rio Declarations. Principle 24, UNCED, 1992), and in Chapter 33, of Agenda 21, member states of the United Nations made a commitment to the "the reallocation of resources presently committed to military purposes" (33.18e)

In 1994, in adopting the statement from the International Conference on Population and Development, the member states of the United Nations concurred that the attainment of "quantitative and qualitative goals of the present Programme of Action clearly require additional resources, some of which could become available from a reordering of priorities at the individual, national and international levels. However, none of the actions required—nor all of them combined— is expensive in the context of either current global development or military expenditures." (Article 1.19)

In 1995, similarly, states in adopting the statement from the Social Development Summit endorsed the calling for "the reallocation of military spending to ensure a greater pocket of resources to expand public services. Again, in 1995, member states of the United Nations reconfirmed these commitments by adopting the Platform of Action at the UN conference on Women, Equality, Development and Peace. In the Platform of Action, States have made a commitment to maintain "peace and security at the global, regional and local levels, together with the prevention of policies of aggression ... and the resolution of armed conflict" (Art. 14) and to reduce "...military expenditures" (Art. 15), states have also made a commitment to the "prevention and resolution of conflicts" (Art.15) and to "increase and hasten, ... the conversion of military resources and related industries to development and peaceful purposes" (145a).

In the Habitat II Agenda, what was originally proposed as Article 140 m: "use a reduction of national military budgets to fund local programs for human settlements" was left out in the final Habitat II Agenda in the sections related to Domestic financial resources and economic instruments.

In the 1984 General Assembly Resolution entitled the Right of Peoples to Peace, there were "Appeals to all States and international organizations to do their utmost to assist in implementing the right of peoples to peace through the adoption of ...measures at both the national and the international level." (4. Declaration on the Right of Peoples to Peace approved by General Assembly resolution 39/11 of 12 November 1984)

It is time for the member states of the United Nations to give substance to the Habitat II Agenda, by recapturing the commitment from Habitat 1, in 1976, to substantially reduce the military budget.

Currently the Global Community spends more than 1.75 trillion, annually (See Chart below) on the military budget at a time when many basic and fundamental rights have not been fulfilled: the right to affordable and safe housing; the right to unadulterated food (pesticide-free and genetically engineered-free food); the right to safe drinking water; the right to a safe environment; the right to universally accessible, not for profit health care; and the right to free and accessible education.

2013 GLOBAL MILITARY EXPENSES 1.7 TRILLION

2010 MILITARY EXPENSES NATO MILITARY EXPENSES

- United States 711
- Russia 70
- United Kingdom 54.4
- France 54
- Italy 30.8
- Japan 41.1
- Germany 37.8
- Canada 20

ESTIMATION OF UP TO 2010 MILITARY EXPENCES INCLUDING SUPPLEMENTAL US EXPENSES ON AGHANISAN AND IRAQ. (Analysis of Congressional Research Service data.)

TOTAL IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN SUPPLEMENTAL WAR FUNDING TO DATE

(Budget Authority in Billions of Dollars up to 2010)

	FY01& FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09(To Date)	Total(To Date)		
Iraq	0	53.0	75.9	85.5	101.7	133.6	158.0	53.4	661.1		
Afghanistan		20.8	14.7	14.5	20.0	19.0	36.9	36.5	15.1	177.5	
Enhanced Base Security			13.0	8.0	3.7	2.1	0.8	0.4	0.5	0	28.5
Subtotal		33.8	81.2	94.1	107.6	121.5	170.9	195.0	68.5	872.6	

SOURCE AND NOTES: Analysis of Congressional Research Service data. Budget authority totals include war-related funding for the Department of Defense, the State Department, and the Department of Veterans' Affairs. FY03 subtotal of \$81.2 billion includes \$5.5 billion in funding that CRS cannot allocate. FY08 funding includes \$16.8 billion for Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles in the first FY08 continuing resolution and FY08 DOD Appropriations Bill (HR 3222).

IPCC NEEDS TO DETERMINE THE CONTRIBUTION OF MILITARISM TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Declaration from the Anti-militarism and Peace causes at the DPI/NGO Climate Change Conference at the United Nations

Excerpts from the September 7, 2007 Declaration, prepared by the NGO military' nuclear matters and the NGO Peace Caucus was presented to the Chair , Rajendra K. Pachauri, of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

We call upon the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to investigate and estimate the full impact on greenhouse gas emissions by the military and demand that each state release information related to the

greenhouse gas emissions from the production of all weapons systems, military exercises, from war games, weapons testing, military aviation, environmental warfare, troop transfer, military operations, waste generation, reconstruction after acts of violent interventions etc.;

We support the call for the disbanding of NATO, whose collective activities have contributed to, not only the perpetuation of the scourge of war and the violation of international peremptory norms, but also the substantial release of greenhouse gas emissions:

(ii) call upon the member states of the United Nations to act on the commitment in Chapter 33 of Agenda 21, to reallocate military expenses;

(iii) call upon the United Nations General Assembly UNGA to acknowledge the inextricable link between climate change and conflict over resources, such as oil, water etc.;

(v) call upon the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to investigate and estimate the full impact on greenhouse gas emissions by the military and demand that each state release information related to the greenhouse gas emissions from the production of all weapons systems, military exercises, from war games, weapons testing, military aviation, environmental warfare, troop transfer, military operations, waste generation, reconstruction after acts of violent interventions etc.;

(vi) support the call for the disbanding of NATO, whose collective activities have contributed to, not only the perpetuation of the scourge of war and the violation of international peremptory norms, but also the substantial release of greenhouse gas emissions.

YEARS OF UNHEEDED WARNINGS, IGNORED OBLIGATIONS AND SPURIOUS SOLUTIONS

Laws have to be in place to compel the global community to end years of procrastination and finally discharge their obligations and fulfill their commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and conserve carbon sinks.

In 1988, scientists, politicians and members of non government organizations (NGOs) met at the Changing Atmosphere conference in Toronto to address the issue of climate change and concurred that:

In the conference statement from the 1988 conference, the participants concurred that:

" the stabilizing of the atmospheric concentrations of co2 is an imperative goal. it is currently estimated to require reductions of more than 50% from present [1988] emission levels. energy research and development budgets must be massively directed to energy options which would eliminate or greatly reduce co2 emissions and to studies undertaken to further refine the target reductions."

and warned that ""humanity is conducting an unintended, uncontrolled, globally pervasive experiment whose ultimate consequence could be second only to a global nuclear war. ...and that it is imperative to act now".

In 1992, the Framework Convention on Climate Change was negotiated and signed by most states at the UN Conference on Environment and Development. Under this Convention, member states incurred the obligation to reduce greenhouse gases to 1990 levels by the end of the century, and to adhere to the precautionary principle.

All UN member states, including the United States, ratified the Framework Convention on Climate Change. Largely coerced into inaction by industry, industry front groups, industry funded academics and industry controlled states, governments have failed to address the urgency of the crisis through their reluctance to enact effective legislation.

If citizens are willing to do their part in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, member states of the united nations must stop subsidizing the fossil fuel and military industries, must redirect military expenses; must discontinue the promotion of nuclear energy – the most hazardous and expensive form of energy known- as the solution to climate change.

Corporations and policymakers are talking openly about nuclear energy as the solution to climate change. In 1991, a Canadian parliamentary committee Report "Out of Balance: the Risks of Irreversible Climate Change" affirmed the principle that a solution that is worse than the problem it is intended to solve is not a solution. Nuclear energy with its radioactive footprint and its inextricable link to the development of nuclear

arms, and to depleted uranium in weapon system is not a solution

THE IMPACT OF MILITARISM ON CLIMATE CHANGE CANNOT BE IGNORED AND PROPOSALS FOR SPURIOUS SOLUTIONS SUCH AS NUCLEAR ENERGY MUST BE ABANDONED.

LOSS AND DAMAGES G77 WALKS OUT

Poor countries walk out of UN climate talks as compensation row...

Bloc of 132 countries exit Warsaw conference after rich nations refuse to discuss climate change recompense until after 2015

[View on web](#)



Poor countries walk out of UN climate talks as compensation row...

Bloc of 132 countries exit Warsaw conference after rich nations refuse to discuss climate change recompense until after 2015

[View on web](#)

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#COP19. "LOSS AND DAMAGE" militarism diverts funds from climate justice http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9466:cop-19-reallocate-at-least-50-of-global-military-budget-to-address-urgency-of-climate-change&catid=104:i-peace-news&Itemid=204 **#G77 #UNDP #unfccc #Democracynow.org #MRFCJ**

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1.

1.



Vivian **@NilssonvIperen** 52m

2.

Poor countries walk out of **#UN #climate** talks as compensation row rumbles on <http://gu.com/p/3kgkj/tw> via **@guardian #G77**

3.

Last Updated on Wednesday, 20 November 2013 09:10

161 readings

Surviving Climate Change Is a Green Energy Revolution on the Global Agenda?



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 17 November 2013 19:27

By **Michael T. Klare**

[tp://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175773/](http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175773/)

A week after the most powerful “super typhoon” ever recorded pummeled the Philippines, killing **thousands** in a single province, and three weeks after the northern Chinese city of Harbin suffered a devastating “**airpocalypse**,” suffocating the city with coal-plant pollution, government leaders beware! Although individual events like these cannot be attributed with absolute certainty to increased fossil fuel use and climate change, they are the type of disasters that, scientists tell us, will become a pervasive part of life on a planet being transformed by the massive

consumption of carbon-based fuels. If, as is now the case, governments across the planet back an **extension of the carbon age** and ever increasing reliance on **“unconventional” fossil fuels** like tar sands and shale gas, we should all expect trouble. In fact, we should expect mass upheavals leading to a green energy revolution.

None of us can predict the future, but when it comes to a mass rebellion against the perpetrators of global destruction, we can see a glimmer of the coming upheaval in events of the present moment. Take a look and you will see that the assorted environmental protests that have long bedeviled politicians are gaining in strength and support. With an awareness of climate change growing and as intensifying **floods, fires, droughts,** and **storms** become an inescapable feature of daily life across the planet, more people are joining environmental groups and engaging in increasingly bold protest actions. Sooner or later, government leaders are likely to face multiple eruptions of mass public anger and may, in the end, be forced to make radical adjustments in energy policy or risk being swept aside.

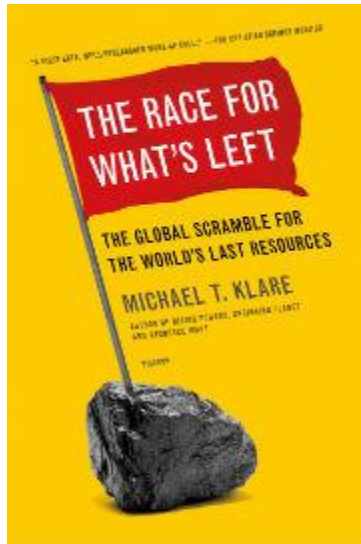
In fact, it is possible to imagine such a green energy revolution erupting in one part of the world and spreading like wildfire to others. Because climate change is going to inflict increasingly severe harm on human populations, the impulse to rebel is only likely to gain in strength across the planet. While circumstances may vary, the ultimate goal of these uprisings will be to terminate the reign of fossil fuels while emphasizing investment in and reliance upon renewable forms of energy. And a success in any one location is bound to invite imitation in others.

A wave of serial eruptions of this sort would not be without precedent. In the early years of twentieth-first century, for example, one government after another in disparate parts of the former Soviet Union was swept away in what were called the **“color revolutions”** -- populist upheavals against old-style authoritarian regimes. These included the **“Rose Revolution”** in Georgia (2003), the **“Orange Revolution”** in Ukraine (2004), and the **“Pink”** or **“Tulip Revolution”** in Kyrgyzstan (2005). In 2011, a similar wave

of protests erupted in North Africa, culminating in what we call the Arab Spring.

Like these earlier upheavals, a “ green revolution ” is **unlikely** to arise from a highly structured political campaign with clearly identified leaders. In all likelihood, it will erupt spontaneously, after a cascade of climate-change induced disasters provokes an outpouring of public fury. Once ignited, however, it will undoubtedly ratchet up the pressure for governments to seek broad-ranging, systemic transformations of their energy and climate policies. In this sense, any such upheaval -- whatever form it takes -- will prove “revolutionary” by seeking policy shifts of such magnitude as to challenge the survival of incumbent governments or force them to enact measures with transformative implications.

Foreshadowings of such a process can already be found around the globe. Take the mass environmental protests that erupted in Turkey this June. Though sparked by a far smaller concern than planetary devastation via climate change, for a time they actually posed a significant threat to Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his governing party. Although his forces eventually succeeded in crushing the protests -- **leaving** four dead, 8,000 injured, and 11 blinded by tear-gas canisters -- his reputation as a moderate Islamist was **badly damaged** by the episode.



Buy the book

Like so many surprising upheavals on this planet, the Turkish uprising had the most modest of beginnings: on May 27th, a handful of environmental activists **blocked** bulldozers sent by the government to level Gezi Park, a tiny oasis of greenery in the heart of Istanbul, and prepare the way for the construction of an upscale mall. The government responded to this small-scale, non-violent action by sending in riot police and clearing the area, a move that enraged many Turks and prompted tens of thousands of them to occupy nearby Taksim Square. This move, in turn, led to an even more brutal **police crackdown** and then to huge demonstrations in Istanbul and around the country. In the end, mass protests **erupted** in 70 cities, the largest display of anti-government sentiment since Erdogan's Justice and Development Party came to power in 2002.

This was, in the most literal sense possible, a “green” revolution, ignited by the government's assault on the last piece of greenery in central Istanbul. But once the police intervened in full strength, it became a wide-ranging rebuke to Erdogan's **authoritarian impulses** and his drive to **remake** the city as a neo-Ottoman showplace -- replete with fancy malls and high-priced condominiums -- while eliminating poor neighborhoods and freewheeling public spaces like Taksim Square. “It's all about superiority,

and ruling over the people like sultans,” **declared** one protestor. It’s not just about the trees in Gezi Park, **said** another: “We are here to stand up against those who are trying to make a profit from our land.”

The Ningbo Rebellion

The same trajectory of events -- a small-scale environmental protest evolving into a full-scale challenge to governmental authority -- can be seen in other mass protests of recent years.

Take a Chinese example: in October 2012, students and middle class people joined with poor farmers to protest the construction of an \$8.8 billion petrochemical facility in Ningbo, a city of 3.4 million people south of Shanghai. In a country where environmental pollution has reached nearly unprecedented levels, these protests were **touched off** by fears that the plant, to be built by the state-owned energy company Sinopec with local government support, would produce **paraxylene**, a toxic substance used in plastics, paints, and cleaning solvents.

Here, too, the initial spark that led to the protests was small-scale. On October 22nd, some 200 farmers obstructed a road near the district government’s office in an attempt to block the plant’s construction. After the police were called in to clear the blockade, students from nearby Ningbo University joined the protests. Using social media, the protestors quickly enlisted support from middle-class residents of the city who converged in their thousands on downtown Ningbo. When riot police moved in to break up the crowds, the protestors **fought back**, attacking police cars and throwing bricks and water bottles. While the police eventually gained the upper hand after several days of pitched battles, the Chinese government concluded that mass action of this sort, occurring in the heart of a major city and featuring an alliance of students, farmers, and young professionals, was too great a threat. After five days of fighting, the government gave in, **announcing** the cancellation of the petrochemical project.

The Ningbo demonstrations were **hardly the first** such upheavals to erupt in China. They did, however, highlight a growing governmental vulnerability to mass environmental

protest. For decades, the reigning Chinese Communist Party has justified its monopolistic hold on power by citing its success in generating rapid economic growth. But that growth means the use of ever more fossil fuels and petrochemicals, which, in turn, means increased carbon emissions and disastrous atmospheric pollution, including one “[airpocalypse](#)” after another.

Until recently, most Chinese seemed to accept such conditions as the inevitable consequences of growth, but it seems that tolerance of environmental degradation is rapidly [diminishing](#). As a result, the party finds itself in a terrible bind: it can slow development as a step toward cleaning up the environment, incurring a risk of growing economic discontent, or it can continue its growth-at-all-costs policy, and find itself embroiled in a firestorm of Ningbo-style environmental protests.

This dilemma -- the environment versus the economy -- has proven to be at the heart of similar mass eruptions elsewhere on the planet.

After Fukushima

Two of the largest protests of this sort were sparked by the reactor meltdowns at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plants on March 11, 2011, after a massive tsunami struck northern Japan. In both of these actions -- the first in Germany, the second in Japan -- the future of nuclear power and the survival of governments were placed in doubt.

The biggest protests occurred in Germany. On March 26th, 15 days after the Fukushima explosions, an estimated [250,000](#) people participated in anti-nuclear demonstrations across the country -- 100,000 in Berlin, and up to 40,000 each in Hamburg, Munich, and Cologne. “Today’s demonstrations are just the prelude to a new, strong, anti-nuclear movement,” [declared](#) Jochen Stay, a protest leader. “We’re not going to let up until the plants are finally mothballed.”

At issue was the fate of Germany’s remaining nuclear power plants. Although touted as an attractive alternative to fossil fuels, nuclear power is seen by most Germans as a dangerous and unwelcome energy option. Several months prior to Fukushima, German Chancellor Angela

Merkel **insisted** that Germany would keep its 17 operating reactors until 2040, allowing a smooth transition from the country's historic reliance on coal to renewable energy for generating electricity. Immediately after Fukushima, she ordered a temporary shutdown of Germany's seven oldest reactors for safety inspections but refused to close the others, provoking an outpouring of protest.

Witnessing the scale of the demonstrations, and after suffering an electoral defeat in the key state of Baden-Württemberg, Merkel evidently came to the conclusion that clinging to her position would be the equivalent of political suicide. On May 30th, she **announced** that the seven reactors undergoing inspections would be closed permanently and the remaining 10 would be phased out by 2022, almost 20 years earlier than in her original plan.

By all accounts, the decision to phase out nuclear power almost two decades early will have significant repercussions for the German economy. **Shutting down** the reactors and replacing them with wind and solar energy will cost an estimated \$735 billion and take several decades, **producing** soaring electricity bills and periodic energy shortages. However, such is the strength of **anti-nuclear sentiment** in Germany that Merkel felt she had no choice but to close the reactors anyway.

The anti-nuclear protests in Japan occurred considerably later, but were no less momentous. On July 16, 2012, 16 months after the Fukushima disaster, an estimated **170,000 people** assembled in Tokyo to protest a government plan to restart the country's nuclear reactors, idled after the disaster. This was not only Japan's largest antinuclear demonstration in many years, but the largest of any sort to occur in recent memory.

For the government, the July 16th action was particularly significant. Prior to Fukushima, most Japanese had embraced the country's growing reliance on nuclear power, putting their trust in the government to ensure its safety. After Fukushima and the disastrous attempts of the reactors' owner, the **Tokyo Electric Power Company** (TEPCO), to deal with the situation, public support for nuclear power **plummeted**. As it became increasingly evident that

the government had **mishandled** the crisis, people lost faith in its ability to exercise effective control over the nuclear industry. Repeated promises that nuclear reactors could be made safe lost all credibility when it became known that government officials had **long collaborated** with TEPCO executives in **covering up** safety concerns at Fukushima and, once the meltdowns occurred, in **concealing** information about the true scale of the disaster and its medical implications.

The July 16th protest and others like it should be seen as a public vote against the government's energy policy and oversight capabilities. "Japanese have not spoken out against the national government," **said** one protestor, a 29-year-old homemaker who brought her one-year-old son. "Now, we have to speak out, or the government will endanger us all."

Skepticism about the government, rare for twenty-first-century Japan, has proved a major obstacle to its desire to **restart** the country's 50 idled reactors. While most Japanese oppose nuclear power, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe remains determined to get the reactors running again in order to reduce Japan's heavy reliance on imported energy and promote economic growth. "I think it is impossible to promise zero [nuclear power plants] at this stage," he **declared** this October. "From the government's standpoint, [nuclear plants] are extremely important for a stable energy supply and economic activities."

Despite such sentiments, Abe is finding it extremely difficult to garner support for his plans, and it is doubtful that significant numbers of those reactors will be coming online anytime soon.

The Explosions Ahead

What these episodes tell us is that people around the world are becoming ever more concerned about energy policy as it affects their lives and are prepared -- often on short notice -- to engage in mass protests. At the same time, governments globally, with rare exceptions, are deeply wedded to existing energy policies. These almost invariably turn them into targets, no matter what the original spark for mass opposition. As the results of

climate change become ever more disruptive, government officials will find themselves repeatedly choosing between long-held energy plans and the possibility of losing their grip on power.

Because few governments are as yet prepared to launch the sorts of efforts that might even begin to effectively address the peril of climate change, they will increasingly be seen as obstacles to essential action and so as entities that need to be removed. In short, climate rebellion -- spontaneous protests that may at any moment evolve into unquenchable mass movements -- is on the horizon. Faced with such rebellions, recalcitrant governments will respond with some combination of accommodation to popular demands and harsh repression.

Many governments will be at risk from such developments, but the Chinese leadership appears to be especially vulnerable. The ruling party has staked its future viability on an endless carbon-fueled growth agenda that is steadily destroying the country's environment. It has already faced half-a-dozen environmental upheavals like the one in Ningbo, and has responded to them by **agreeing** to protestors' demands or by employing brute force. The question is: How long can this go on?

Environmental conditions are **bound to worsen**, especially as China continues to rely on coal for home heating and electrical power, and yet there is **no indication** that the ruling Communist Party is prepared to take the radical steps required to significantly reduce domestic coal consumption. This translates into the possibility of mass protests erupting at any time and on a potentially unprecedented scale. And these, in turn, could bring the Party's very survival into question -- a **scenario** guaranteed to produce immense anxiety among the country's top leaders.

And what about the United States? At this point, it would be ludicrous to say that, as a result of popular disturbances, the nation's political leadership is at any risk of being swept away or even forced to take serious steps to scale back reliance on fossil fuels. There are, however, certainly signs of a growing nationwide campaign

against aspects of fossil fuel reliance, including [vigorous protests](#) against hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”) and the [Keystone XL tar sands pipeline](#).

For environmental activist and writer Bill McKibben, all this adds up to an incipient mass movement against the continued consumption of fossil fuels. “In the last few years,” he has [written](#), this movement “has blocked the construction of dozens of coal-fired power plants, fought the oil industry to a draw on the Keystone pipeline, convinced a wide swath of American institutions to divest themselves of their fossil fuel stocks, and challenged practices like mountaintop-removal coal mining and fracking for natural gas.” It may not have achieved the success of the drive for gay marriage, he observed, but it “continues to grow quickly, and it’s starting to claim some victories.”

If it’s still too early to gauge the future of this anti-carbon movement, it does seem, at least, to be gaining momentum. In the 2013 elections, for example, three cities in energy-rich Colorado -- Boulder, Fort Collins, and Lafayette -- [voted](#) to ban or place moratoriums on fracking within their boundaries, while protests against Keystone XL and similar projects are on the rise.

Nobody can say that a green energy revolution is a sure thing, but who can deny that energy-oriented environmental protests in the U.S. and elsewhere have the potential to expand into something far greater? Like China, the United States will experience genuine damage from climate change and its unwavering commitment to fossil fuels in the years ahead. Americans are not, for the most part, passive people. Expect them, like the Chinese, to respond to these perils with increased ire and a determination to alter government policy.

So don’t be surprised if that green energy revolution erupts in your neighborhood as part of humanity’s response to the greatest danger we’ve ever faced. If governments won’t take the lead on an imperiled planet, someone will.

Michael T. Klare is a professor of peace and conflict studies at Hampshire College and the author, most recently, of [The Race for What’s Left](#). A documentary movie

version of his book *Blood and Oil* is available from [the Media Education Foundation](#).

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164 readings

Iran. Lavrov Reveals Amended Draft Circulated at “Last Moment”



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 17 November 2013 17:32

by: IPS -Inter Press Service Posted date: 16 November 2013 In: **Ecology and Environment, International issues**



Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. Credit: UN Photo/Paulo Filgueiras

WASHINGTON, Nov 15 2013 (IPS) - Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov revealed a crucial detail Thursday about last week's nuclear talks with Iran in Geneva that explains much more clearly than previous reports why the meeting broke up without agreement.

Lavrov said the United States circulated a draft that had been amended in response to French demands to other members of the six-power P5+1 for approval "literally at the last moment, when we were about to

leave Geneva.”

Lavrov’s revelation, which has thus far been ignored by major news outlets, came in a news conference in Cairo Thursday that was largely devoted to Egypt and Syria. Lavrov provided the first real details about the circumstances under which Iran left Geneva without agreeing to the draft presented by the P5+1

The full quote from Lavrov’s press conference is available thanks to the report from Voice of Russia correspondent Ksenya Melnikova.

Lavrov noted that unlike previous meetings involving the P5+1 and Iran, “This time, the P5+1 group did not formulate any joint document.”

Instead, he said, “There was an American-proposed draft, which eventually received Iran’s consent.” Lavrov thus confirmed the fact that the United States and Iran had reached informal agreement on a negotiating text.

He further confirmed that Russia had been consulted, along with the four other powers in the negotiations with Iran (China, France, Germany and the UK), about that draft earlier in the talks — apparently Thursday night, from other published information.

“We vigorously supported this draft,” Lavrov said. “If this document had been supported by all [members of the P5+1], it would have already been adopted. We would probably already be in the initial stages of implementing the agreements that were offered by it.”

Then Lavrov revealed for the first time that the U.S. delegation had made changes in the negotiating text that had already been worked out with Iran at the insistence of France without having consulted Russia.

“But amendments to [the negotiating draft] suddenly surfaced,” Lavrov said. “We did not see them. And the amended version was circulated literally at the last moment, when we were about to leave Geneva.”

Lavrov implies that the Russian delegation, forced to make a quick up or down decision on the amended draft, did not realise the degree to which it was likely to cause the talks to fail.

“At first sight, the Russian delegation did not notice any significant problems in the proposed amendments,” Lavrov said.

He made it clear, however, that he now considers the U.S. manoeuvre in getting the six powers on board a draft that had been amended with tougher language – even if softened by U.S. drafters — without any prior consultation with Iran to have been a diplomatic blunder.

“[N]aturally, the language of these ideas should be acceptable for all the participants in this process – both the P5+1 group and Iran,” Lavrov said.

The crucial details provided by Lavrov on the timing of the amended draft shed new light on Secretary of State John Kerry’s claim in a press conference in Abu Dhabi on Monday of unity among the six powers on the that draft.

“We were unified on Saturday when we presented a proposal to the Iranians.” Kerry said, adding that “everybody agreed it was a fair proposal.”

Kerry gave no indication of when on Saturday that proposal had been approved by the other five powers, nor did he acknowledge explicitly that it was a draft that departed from the earlier draft agreed upon with Iran. Lavrov’s remarks make it clear that the other members of the group had little or no time to study or discuss the changes before deciding whether to go along with it.

Although the nature of the changes in the amended draft remain a secret, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has charged that they were quite far-reaching and that they affected far more of the draft agreement that had been worked out between the United States and Iran than had been acknowledged by any of the participants.

In tweets on Tuesday, Zarif, responding to Kerry’s remarks in Abu Dhabi, wrote, “Mr. Secretary, was it Iran that gutted over half of US draft Thursday night?” Zarif’s comments indicated that changes of wording had nullified the previous understanding that had been reached between the United States and Iran on multiple issues.

The two issues that French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius had raised in Geneva concerned what Iran would be required to do regarding the Arak heavy-water reactor and its stockpile of 20 percent-enriched uranium.

The agreement that had been worked out with Iran before Saturday had required that Iran not “activate” the Arak reactor, but did not require an immediate end to all work on the reactor, according a detailed

summary leaked to CNN by two senior Obama administration officials Thursday night, Nov. 7.

A shift from "activate" to another verb suggesting Iran would be required to suspend all work on Arak – which Fabius was demanding Saturday on behalf of Israel – would have nullified the previous U.S.-Iran compromise.

Even more sensitive politically was the understanding reached Thursday night on the disposition of the Iranian stockpile of 20 percent-enriched uranium. That was the main proliferation concern of the Obama administration, because that stockpile could in theory be enriched to weapons grade.

But the summary leaked to CNN indicated that the agreed text had required Iran to "render unusable most of its existing stockpile", which left open the option of Iran's continuing convert the stockpile into "fuel assemblies" for the Tehran Research Reactor (TRR) or for a similar reactor in the future.

According to the latest IAEA report made public Thursday, Iran has enriched 420 kg of uranium to the 20 percent level, a little more than half which has been converted to such assemblies. The agreement reached before Saturday evidently anticipated Iran converting most of the remaining 197 kg to fuel assemblies over the course of the interim agreement.

That would reduced the stockpile to less than 100 kg and would reduce the stockpile to roughly one-fifth of the 250 kg of 20 percent-enriched uranium that Israel has suggested would be sufficient to convert to weapons grade uranium necessary for a single nuclear weapon.

But if the text was altered to change "render unusable" to language requiring the export of most or all of the stockpile, as appears to have been the objective of the Fabius intervention, that would have nullified the key compromise that made agreement possible.

Zarif's tweet, combined with remarks by President Hassan Rouhani to the national assembly Sunday warning that Iran's rights to enrichment are "red lines" that could not be crossed, suggests further that the language of the original draft agreement dealing with the "end game" of the negotiating process was also changed on Saturday.

Kerry himself alluded to the issue in his remarks in Abu Dhabi, using the curious formulation that no nation has an "existing right to enrich."

One of the language changes in the agreement evidently related to that issue, and it was aimed at satisfying a demand of Israeli origin at the expense of Iran's support for the draft.

Now the Obama administration will face a decision whether to press Iran to go along with those changes or to go back to the original compromise when political directors of the six powers and Iran reconvene Nov. 20. That choice will provide the key indicator of how strongly committed Obama is to reaching an agreement with Iran.

Gareth Porter, an investigative historian and journalist specialising in U.S. national security policy, received the UK-based Gellhorn Prize for journalism for 2011 for articles on the U.S. war in Afghanistan.

141 readings

VICTORIA CROWD JOINS ANTI-PIPELINE CHORUS ACROSS CANADA



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 17 November 2013 07:06

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BY CINDY E. HARNETT / TIMES COLONIST

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[HTTP://WWW.TIMESCOLONIST.COM/ENTERTAINMENT/VICTORIA-CROWD-JOINS-ANTI-PIPELINE-CHORUS-ACROSS-CANADA-1.699495](http://www.timescolonist.com/entertainment/victoria-crowd-joins-anti-pipeline-chorus-across-canada-1.699495) NOVEMBER 16, 2013 08:04 P



Pipeline opponents rally at Clover Point on Saturday, part of the Defend our Climate! Defend our Communities! nationwide day of action.

Photograph by: ADRIAN LAM, Times Colonist



Melina Laboucan-Massimo talks to the crowd at Clover Point for an anti-pipeline, anti-tanker rally,

part of the Defend our Climate! Defend our Communities! nationwide day of action. Photograph by: ADRIAN LAM, Times Colonist



Michael Erwin holds a sign at Clover Point for a No Tankers! No Pipelines! rally on Saturday.

Photograph by: ADRIAN LAM, Times Colonist



People come out to pick up some signs, as people gather at Clover Point for a No Tankers! No Pipelines! rally on Saturday. Photograph by: ADRIAN LAM, Times Colonist



Sam Verbaarschot, 5, holds a sign, as people gather at Clover Point for a rally as part of the Defend our Climate! Defend our Communities! nationwide day of action on Saturday. Photograph by: ADRIAN LAM, Times Colonist

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Pipeline opponents rally at Clover Point on Saturday, part of the Defend our Climate! Defend our Communities! nationwide day of action. Photograph by: ADRIAN LAM, Times Colonist

A crowd estimated at about 1,000 people gathered at Clover Point on Saturday, part of a countrywide rally against pipeline projects and oil-tanker traffic on B.C.'s coast.

Harsh winds whipped off the Juan de Fuca Strait and buffeted the crowd, which ranged widely in age.

Speakers called on the throng to rise up against pipelines and tankers but pace themselves for a long battle.

"I am here today to say: 'No means no,' " said Caitlyn Vernon, a campaigner for the Sierra Club, prompting the crowd to pick up the chant. B.C. residents, First Nations and municipalities have said no to Enbridge's proposed Northern Gateway pipeline, she said.

The 1,200-kilometre pipeline would carry 550,000 barrels of heavy oil a day from Alberta to a port in Kitimat, for shipment to lucrative markets in Asia.

"When we say no to pipelines and tankers, we are saying yes to salmon, yes to good green jobs," Vernon said. "We are saying yes to a livable climate, yes to a future where dinner can still be pulled from the ocean, yes to a world with orca whales, with spirit bears, and wolf pups playing with ravens on the beach."

The nationwide day of action — called Defend Our Climate! Defend Our Communities! — was held in about 130 communities.

Organizers of the Clover Point rally said they were thrilled with the size of the crowd, which they suggested exceeded 1,000. Victoria police estimated the number at 750 to 1,000.

Supporters waved placards directed at the Alberta oilsands, declaring: Tough Love Alberta, Water Before Oil. Some signs targeted the B.C. government with the message: "Frack U Christy Clark defend our climate and our community." Other placards focused on the environment with a gentler message: "This World Needs a Group Hug."

In Vancouver, hundreds of people danced to First Nations drummers during a rally that drew dozens of environmental groups, First Nations and families.

Dozens of protesters in Toronto lay on the ground to form a "human pipeline" to illustrate their opposition to pipeline projects.

Last week, Premier Alison Redford and B.C. Premier Christy Clark endorsed each other's energy strategies in a move that could more easily pave the way for oil pipelines to B.C.'s west coast. Both premiers said the deal does not mean any pipeline projects are immediately going ahead.

charnett@timescolonist.com

— With files from The Canadian Press

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Last Updated on Sunday, 17 November 2013 09:32

74 readings

Sir Paul McCartney urges Putin leniency for Greenpeace



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 15 November 2013 14:09

By the BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-24952035>

November 2013



The protesters are from 18 different countries

Ex-Beatle Sir Paul McCartney has written to Vladimir Putin, calling for the release of a group of detainees known as the Arctic 30.

In his letter to the Russian president, he expresses hope that the 28 protesters and two journalists could be home before Christmas.

They were arrested during a Greenpeace demonstration against oil drilling in the Russian arctic eight weeks ago.

The group - which includes six Britons - have been charged with hooliganism.

'Hugely respected'

In his letter, Sir Paul, who received a personal guided tour from Mr Putin a decade ago, addressed the Russian president as "Vladimir".

"Millions of people in dozens of countries would be hugely grateful if you were to intervene to bring about an end to this affair," he wrote.

"I understand of course that the Russian courts and the Russian presidency are separate. Nevertheless I wonder if you may be able to use whatever influence you have to reunite the detainees with their families?"

[Continue reading the main story](#)

Extracts from Sir Paul's 14 October letter to President Putin

- It is now more than ten years since I played in Red Square, but I still often think about Russia and the Russian people.
- I am writing to assure you that the Greenpeace I know is most certainly not an anti-Russian organisation. In my experience they tend to annoy every government! And they never take money from any government or corporation anywhere in the world.
- I see you yourself have said that they are not pirates - well, that's something everybody can agree on. Just as importantly, they don't think they are above the law.
- Forty-five years ago I wrote a song about Russia for the White Album, back when it wasn't fashionable for English people to say nice things about your country. That song had one of my favourite Beatles lines in it: 'Been away so long I hardly knew the place, gee it's good to be back home.'
- I hope, when our schedules allow, we can meet up again soon in Moscow.

[Posting the letter on his personal website](#), the singer said Mr Putin had yet to reply but that the Russian ambassador to the UK had told him the prisoners' plight "is not properly represented in the world media".

Greenpeace says there are five detention centres in St Petersburg and that the detainees have been split between them.

The charity say a further charge of piracy against the group has not yet been formally dropped, despite reports to the contrary.

The Britons being held are journalist Kieron Bryan from London, activists Philip Ball from Oxfordshire and Anthony Perrett from Newport in south Wales, logistics co-ordinator Frank Hewetson from London, communications officer Alexandra Harris from Devon, and second engineer Iain Rogers from Exeter.

They were arrested when Russian security sources stormed the ship following the demonstration.

Executive director of Greenpeace International Kumi Naidoo said: "Sir Paul is hugely respected in Russia, and so we hope his letter brings the day closer when those thirty brave men and women are back with their families."

Last Updated on Sunday, 17 November 2013 17:35

148 readings

Ban Fracking



Now

Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 15 November 2013 13:48



By the Council of Canadians

Right now families across Canada are suffering terribly from fracking... and it's getting worse.

David and Carol Diwell live every day fearing for their health. After fracking began next door to them in Dawson Creek, B.C., **their once clean, safe drinking water is now extremely volatile and toxic.**



In neighbouring Alberta, farmers Shawn and Ronalie Campbell found the home of their dreams outside Ponoka. But relentless fracking has **contaminated their groundwater with deadly methane** and ruined their dream. South of them in Rosebud, **Jessica Ernst can light her tap water on fire** and has brought worldwide attention to her battle with energy giant EnCana.

Filthy, flammable drinking water is the terrible new reality for more and more families whose lives are being destroyed by the booming fracking industry.

It's why at this very moment women, men and children of the Elsipogtog First Nation are courageously blocking American fracking company SWN from illegally entering their land. "I want my children to be able to eat fish and drink water without getting sick," is how mother Amy Sock puts it.



Yet premiers like Christy Clark in B.C. and David Alward in New Brunswick are **pushing for more fracking – not less!** Government-issued permits allow fracking companies to drain local watersheds at the rate of up to **200 million litres per fracked well**, leaving little for families and farms. A criminal lack of industry regulation and government oversight **keeps landowners and communities powerless and in the dark**. And Big Oil & Gas couldn't have a better friend in Ottawa than **Stephen Harper to keep it all this way**.

Who's going to put a stop to this fracking madness?

You and me, that's who.

That's why I'm urgently writing to you now. The Council of Canadians has just launched our national "Ban Fracking Now" campaign to **help families and communities protect their land and drinking water**, including developing public education materials, producing community action tools, and planning strategic political interventions.

Now we need to raise **\$150,000** by the end of November to put these plans into action! [Will you help crowdfund this urgently needed frack-tivism?](#)

[DONATE NOW »](#)

I know that sounds like a lot. But challenging government agendas and Big Oil & Gas isn't cheap. And we can't sit by and allow even one more family to suffer like the Diwells and Campbells.

Chip in right now and your gift will immediately fund tools and actions to:

1. **Empower communities to say "NO" to fracking.** You'll help produce our "Ban Fracking Toolkit" packed with research, case studies, and tools for communities to stop fracking before it starts.
2. **Expand our student engagement program.** You'll fund the development of new course material on fracking for schools throughout Canada to reach the next generation of "frack-tivists."
3. **Brief Members of Parliament.** You'll help organize a formal meeting with MPs in Ottawa to urge cross-party support – and action – for a federal ban on fracking.
4. **Build our Community Fracking Action Fund.** You'll provide urgently needed resources and legal assistance to families on the front lines fighting to save their water.

If just 3,000 of us give \$50 each, we'll hit our goal! I know we can do this because the Council of Canadians has been crowdfunding effective public advocacy work for almost 30 years.

[And if you can give \\$75 or more I'll send you a FREE, SIGNED copy of my bestselling new book, Blue Future!](#)

Thanks to your generous support, we have a proven track record when it comes to taking on industry and government. It was only last month that **you and I helped stop Nestlé** from stomping the water rights of a rural Ontario community!

That's why I know we can do it again.

Fracking is the most immediate threat to our drinking water today. Together we'll raise the public awareness and political will needed to ban it for good.

[DONATE NOW »](#)

Let's do this!



Maude Barlow
National Chairperson, the Council of Canadians

78 readings

U.N. Climate Meet: “It’s About Survival”



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 14 November 2013 09:13

By [Desmond Brown](#)

Climate defenders line the entrance to the National Stadium in Warsaw where the United Nations Climate Change Conference COP19 is being held. Credit: Desmond Brown/IPS

WARSAW, Nov 13 2013 (IPS) - For the small island developing states of the Caribbean, there is nothing more important than the United Nations Climate Change Conference taking place here at the national stadium of Poland from Nov. 11-22.

“We’re being impacted by climate change right now. We have to fight sea level rise, we are looking at increases in the frequency and severity of storm events, so it’s about survival,” Hugh Sealy, vice chair of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) [Executive Board](#), told IPS.

“What we do in the next seven years will affect generations to come.” -- Hugh Sealy

“In my humble opinion, and forgive me for being melodramatic, this is the most important decade facing mankind,” said Sealy, a national of Grenada. “What we do in the next seven

years will affect generations to come.”

The CDM is the largest carbon market in the world. It has so far delivered more than 315 billion dollars in assistance to developing countries. It has launched more than 7,400 projects since 2004 and has saved the developed countries about three billion dollars in cost compliance. The CDM now has a regional collaboration centre at St. George’s University in Grenada with two more centres in Lome and Kampala.

A new report released here shows that Haiti led the list of the three countries most affected by weather-related catastrophes in 2012. The others were the Philippines and Pakistan.

Germanwatch presented the ninth annual [Global Climate Risk Index](#) at the onset of the Climate Summit in Warsaw.

“The landfall of Hurricane Sandy in the U.S. dominated international news in October 2012. Yet it was Haiti – the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere – that suffered the greatest losses from the same event,” said Sönke Kreft, team leader for international climate policy at Germanwatch and co-author of the index.

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In the last two decades, the 10 most affected countries have without exception been developing nations, with Honduras, Myanmar and Haiti taking the brunt during the period 1993-2012, the report noted.

The Germanwatch Climate Risk Index ranks countries according to relative and absolute number of human victims, and relative and absolute economic damage. The core data stems from the Munich Re NatCatSERVICE. The most recent available data from 2012 as well as for the 20-year-period 1993-2012 were taken into account for the preparation of this index.

“Our results are really a wake-up call to ramp up international climate policy and to better manage weather-related disasters,” said Kreft. “The year 2015 represents a major milestone, which needs to deliver a new climate agreement, and the international disaster framework is also up for renewal.”

The climate summit in Warsaw is expected to chart a road-map for an ambitious 2015 agreement. But Sealy and a very vocal Caribbean delegation at the summit are determined to leave Warsaw with some tangible benefits.

“I live in Grenada right now,” Sealy told IPS. “The cost for electricity in Grenada is 40 U.S. cents per kilowatt hour, it’s one of the highest in the world. Ten percent of our GDP is spent on importing diesel. It’s a constraint for the entire economy. We have hotels that can’t pay their electricity bills.

“If we can get something out of this conference that says that monies will pour into developing countries to help them transform their energy sectors then that’s a sustainable development benefit that will affect the entire region.”

Sealy’s role here is as the lead negotiator for work stream two for the alliance. He explained that at the 2011 climate summit in Durban, it was agreed that developing countries and developed countries have to come together to take mitigation action to reduce CO2

emissions.

"Work stream one is trying to come up with a 2015 agreement that would come into effect in 2020. Work stream two, which is what the alliance pushed for, says we cannot wait until 2020 for an agreement," Sealy said.

"We have to take action now so we insisted that we have a work stream two and my job here is to make sure that countries move forward in the next seven years enhancing mitigation," he explained. "So what we hope to get out of work stream two is a technical process that identifies the mitigation potential that developing countries could take and also the means of implementation – the finance, the technology transfer, the capacity building that would allow small islands to move forward."

The Warsaw conference also negotiates how to directly address climate-related loss and damage, a topic of special interest to small island states.

On Wednesday, the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) reported that this year is on course to be among the top 10 warmest years since modern records began in 1850.

The first nine months, January to September, tied with 2003 as the seventh warmest such period on record, with a global land and ocean surface temperature of about 0.48°C (0.86°F) above the 1961–1990 average, according to the report.

WMO's provisional annual statement on the Status of the Global Climate 2013 provides a snapshot of regional and national temperatures. It also includes details on precipitation, floods, droughts, tropical cyclones, ice cover and sea-level.

"Temperatures so far this year are about the same as the average during 2001-2010, which was the warmest decade on record," said WMO Secretary-General Michel Jarraud.

"All of the warmest years have been since 1998 and this year once again continues the underlying, long-term trend, the coldest years now are warmer than the hottest years before 1998," he said.

"Atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases reached new highs in 2012, and we expect them to reach unprecedented levels yet again in 2013. This means that we are committed to a warmer future," added Jarraud.

Sealy told IPS that the key issues for the Caribbean at Warsaw include "recognising that climate change is affecting us now and we need support now to not only adapt but also to transform our economies."

He pointed to Typhoon Haiyan that hit the Philippines with sustained winds of 300 kilometres an hour and peak winds of 380 kilometres per hour.

"How can we adapt to that type of storm in the Caribbean? It's totally impossible. So what the world has to do is reduce their emissions and that's what we're trying to do here. We are trying to bring a sense of urgency to this conference that we have to do things now, not wait until 2020," Sealy added.

Last Updated on Thursday, 14 November 2013 09:16

179 readings

A Trail of Tears How Veterans Return From America's Wars



Peace News

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 14 November 2013 08:26

By [Ann Jones](http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175772/) <http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175772/>

[The text of this piece is an excerpt, slightly adapted, from Ann Jones's new book [They Were Soldiers: How the Wounded Return from America's Wars -- The Untold Story](#), just published by Dispatch Books/Haymarket Books]

In 2010, I began to follow U.S. soldiers down a long trail of waste and sorrow that led from the battle spaces of Afghanistan to the emergency room of the trauma hospital at Bagram Air Base, where their catastrophic wounds were surgically treated and their condition stabilized. Then I accompanied some of them by cargo plane to Ramstein Air Base in Germany for more surgeries at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, or LRMCC (pronounced Larm-See), the largest American hospital outside the United States.

Once stabilized again, those critical patients who survived would be taken by ambulance a short distance back to Ramstein, where a C-17 waited to fly them across the Atlantic to Dover Air Base in Delaware. There, tall, multilayered ambulances awaited the wounded for the last leg of their many-thousand-mile journey to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington D.C. or the Naval Hospital at Bethesda, Maryland, where, depending upon their injuries, they might remain for a year or two, or more.

Now, we are in Germany, halfway home. This evening, the ambulance from LRMCC heading for the flight line at Ramstein will be full of critical-care patients, so I leave the hospital early and board the plane to watch the medical teams bring them aboard. They've done this drill many times a week since the start of the Afghan War. They are practiced, efficient, and fast, and so we are soon in the air again. This time, with a full load.

Two rows of double bunks flank an aisle down the center of the C-17, all occupied by men tucked under homemade patchwork quilts emblazoned with flags and eagles, the handiwork of patriotic American women. Along the walls of the fuselage, on straight-backed seats of nylon mesh, sit the ambulatory casualties from the Contingency Aeromedical Staging Facility (CASF), the holding ward for noncritical patients just off the flight line at Ramstein.

At the back of the plane, slung between stanchions, are four litters with critical care patients, and there among them is the same three-man CCAT (Critical Care Air Transport) team I accompanied on the flight from Afghanistan. They've been back and forth to Bagram again since then, but here they are in fresh brown insulated coveralls, clean shaven, calm, cordial, the doctor busy making notes on a clipboard, the nurse and the respiratory therapist checking the monitors and machines on the SMEEDs. (A SMEED, or Special Medical Emergency Evacuation Device, is a raised aluminum table affixed to a patient's gurney.) Designed to bridge the patient's lower legs, a SMEED is now often used in the evacuation of soldiers who don't have any.

Here again is Marine Sergeant Wilkins, just as he was on the flight from Afghanistan: unconscious, sedated, intubated,

and encased in a vacuum spine board. The doctor tells me that the staff at LRMC removed Wilkins' s breathing tube, but they had to put it back. He remains in cold storage, like some pod-person in a sci-fi film. You can hardly see him in there, inside the black plastic pod. You can' t determine if he is alive or dead without looking at the little needles on the dials of the machines on the SMEED. Are they wavering? Hard to tell.

Flight Risk

The CCAT team has three other critical patients to think about. They are covered with white sheets and blankets, but it' s easy to see that the second patient is missing both legs. His right hand is swathed in thick bandages, almost as fat as a football. His face is ripped and torn so that his features appear to be not quite where they belong, but pushed up and to one side -- his nose split and turned askew. He' s sedated and on a ventilator meant to assist his breathing, but his chest convulses as he struggles with the job.



Buy the book

The respiratory therapist hovers, checking monitors, adjusting a breathing tube, and the man quiets. But not for long. The IED blast that took off both his legs above the knee bypassed his pelvis to slam into his chest. He must have been doubled over, crouching, when he walked onto the bomb. The impact damaged his lungs in ways not yet fully understood, so that now when he breathes on his own, every breath costs him more than he has to give.

The CCAT team confers. To stop the convulsive effort to breathe, the doctor can paralyze him and let the ventilator

do the work of respiration, but that means removing from his intestine the feeding tube pumping in the calories he needs to heal these catastrophic wounds. It's a fine line, and the team walks it for the next hour until it's clear the man needs rest more than nourishment. Then the doctor administers a drug, the body grows still as stone, and the soldier inside sleeps softly while the ventilator steadily breathes in and breathes out.

Patient number three is breathing on his own and fast asleep, a saline drip feeding into his arm. He looks okay, but for the flattening of the blanket under the SMEED. He's lost both legs, but both below the knee. He has his hands. He has his junk. Of these four patients, he's the one the military and the media will call "lucky." But the doctor doesn't call him that. He says, "You can't assess his injuries in comparison to those of other soldiers who happen to be on the same plane. You have to assess them in comparison to who he was before." He is a boy who used to have legs and now he doesn't.

The fourth CCAT patient is a darkly handsome kid who lost both legs to an IED. His right arm ends in a bulbous bandage, but something about its shape suggests the hand might still be all there. He's conscious and breathing on his own, vaguely gazing at a thin woman in blond boots and a light jacket who stands next to his litter and clutches at the rail as if to hold herself upright.

She was called to LRMC because her son was close to death, but she is now taking him home, what's left of him, alive. In the dim light, she looks dazed, but she leans over him and speaks into his ear and soon he sleeps. The doctor tells me that the boy, a Marine, lost one leg below the knee, and the other very high up -- too high for him to wear a prosthetic leg.

"He'll be in a wheel chair," the doctor says. "It's doubtful he'll ever walk. His right arm is all there, but the hand is blasted. He'll probably lose his fingers at least, but he may have enough of a hand left to power a wheel chair on his own. It's hard to say. He lost one testicle, too, and part of the penis and urethra. But he could still be fertile. There's a chance."

The cavernous plane is very cold. There's a blanket on each of the seats along the wall. I wrap myself up and sit down next to my military minder Sergeant Julian, mainly to stay out of the way of the CASF nurses who are busy checking on their patients, getting those on the bunks well settled for the long flight. The mother of the handsome kid has also sunk into a seat next to her son's litter, but she leans forward, still clutching the bedrail as if to hang on to her boy. She has thrown a blanket around her like a cape, but even at a distance I can see that she's cold. I pick up a spare blanket and take it to her. She looks up as I hold it out to her wordlessly in the deafening plane. "I'm fine," she says, loudly enough for me to hear.

"Your son?"

"He's fine." She looks at him and changes tense. "He's going to be fine."

"That's good," I say.

"He's alive. He almost wasn't, but he's alive. He's fine."

I offer the blanket again. "Take it. Keep warm."

Later I notice that she has made a cocoon of the blankets and slumped over the adjacent seat to sleep. Only toward the end of the flight, when she must be feeling some relief that her son is going to survive it, does she begin to tell me about him. She got word of his injury when he was still in the field hospital in Helmand Province, and she arrived at LRMC from southern California the same day he was brought in from Bagram. Three days later, miraculously, she is bringing him home. Well, not home really, but to the States anyway, to the Naval hospital at Bethesda, Maryland.

Her son has an older brother who deployed once to Iraq and once to Afghanistan and now is safe at home in California. But this boy, a Marine, had a training accident that left him with a head injury requiring brain surgery. He was medically discharged, but reenlisted and was deployed to Afghanistan. He had been there two months when his unit was assigned to clean up an area another unit had officially cleared of Taliban. You remember the policy: clear, hold, and build. They were doing the hold part when he stepped on

the IED. The other Marine, the one who can't breathe, was hit by the same blast, or maybe another one at the same time. "They told me how it happened," she says, "but I don't think I heard."

Months later, I will call her in California to see how her son is getting along. He's still in the hospital. They're still working on his wounds. He's not doing any rehab yet. But the military moved him to San Diego so she and her husband can visit him often. She says he's doing "fine," though it will still be many months before he can come home.

In the meantime, her contractor husband has enlisted his friends to help widen doorways, lower light switches, build ramps, and reconstruct a bathroom on the ground floor for a boy in a wheelchair. It's a weekend and I can hear them hammering as we talk on the phone. "They say he'll always be in a wheelchair," she says, her voice shaking. "I was in our pool this morning, and I realized that he'll never be able to get into it by himself. He loves the pool." I stay on the line, listening to her cry. She says, "He's a beautiful swimmer."

"Everything Still Hurts..."

On the plane I talk to some of the ambulatory patients sitting along the walls, wrapped in blankets like so many Pashtuns. Most are hurt just enough to have to be out of action for a while. One boy got a boot caught in the door of an armored vehicle, an MRAP, that wasn't moving at the time. It's a long way down from the passenger seat. He broke his arm. He blurts this out, then tells me he worries about what he's going to say back at his home base. "I can't tell them I just fell out."

Another kid dropped a barbell in the gym and broke some bones in his foot. Two others hadn't recovered from chronic back pain and muscle spasms induced by carrying too much weight. Doctors sent them back downrange to their units two or three times and each time they broke down again. The painkillers had only left them dazed. One says, "Everything still hurts, and you can't remember what you're doing, so it makes you nervous. So now they're sending me home because I guess maybe the pain doesn't make you so nervous in the U.S. of A."

One young man collapsed while jogging at a base in the Persian Gulf. "I need a new valve in my heart," he says, "so they're sending me home to get it done there. I'm really lucky they found it. The Army saved my life." His wife sits beside him, wearing a brand new Frankfurt sweatshirt and a bracelet dripping with gnomes. While the doctors at LRMC assessed her husband's cardiac function, she went shopping. She tells me confidentially, "I for sure didn't want to sit around any old hospital."

An older Army officer calls me over and gestures toward the empty seat by his side. He sits ramrod straight, wrapped in his blanket, and speaks through tight lips as if he fears what might come out of his mouth. "I've been in the Army twenty-six years," he says, "and I can tell you it's a con."

He has been an adviser to the chief counterterrorism officer in Iraq. It's hard even to imagine what's involved in work like that, but his version of his job description evidently failed to match the official checklist of his boss. He doesn't think much of military bosses or politicians or Americans in general who send the lowliest 1% to fight wars that make the other 1%, on the high end, "monu-fuckin'-mentally rich."

He says he's going home for "psych reasons" caused by "life," and he is never going to deploy again. He has two sons, 21 and 23, in college, "They won't have to serve," he says. "Before that happens, I'll shoot them myself."

I ask if he has any particular reason to dislike the military so intensely. "War is absurd," he says. "Boys don't know any better. But for a grown man to be trapped in stupid wars -- it's embarrassing, it's humiliating, it's absurd."

[TomDispatch regular](#) Ann Jones is the author of a new book, [They Were Soldiers: How the Wounded Return from America's Wars -- the Untold Story](#), a Dispatch Books project in cooperation with Haymarket Books. Andrew Bacevich has already had this to say about it: "Read this unsparing, scathingly direct, and gut-wrenching account -- the war Washington doesn't want you to see. Then see if you still believe that Americans 'support the troops.'" Jones, who

has reported from Afghanistan since 2002, is also the author of two books about the impact of war on civilians: *Kabul in Winter* and *War Is Not Over When It's Over*. This article is an excerpt from her new book.

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dated on Saturday, 30 November 2013 12:43

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 13 November 2013 07:41

By [Thalif Deen](#)



Sea level rise threatens Raolo island in the Solomon Islands. Credit: Catherine Wilson/IPS

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 11 2013 (IPS) - Threatened by rising seas, some of the world's small island developing states (SIDS) are demanding that the U.N.'s new set of Sustainable Development Goals place a high priority on the protection of oceans and marine resources.

Last Updated on Wednesday, 13 November 2013 07:44

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Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 12 November 2013 22:34

By Gurdeep Stephens

Re: "Activists muddy the water on GMOs and fracking, Globe and Mail", November 4th 2013

In the article *Activists muddy the Water on GMOs and Fracking*, Gwyn Morgan says that both GMOs and

Fracking are based on activist propaganda and have no scientific backing. I respectfully disagree and would like to address his comments on GMOs in particular.

Last Updated on Thursday, 14 November 2013 10:20

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Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 13 November 2013 13:17



201 readings

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[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

By Joan Russow Global Compliance Research Project, Ecological Rights Association *

Wednesday, 13 November 2013 13:17

The time for procrastination about climate change has long since passed; the world is in a state of emergency and further inaction is gross or even criminal negligence. The developing states should take the major greenhouse gas-emitting states to the International Court of Justice for ignoring the precautionary principle, and the common and differentiated responsible principle, and for failing to discharge their obligation under Article 2 of the UNFCCC "to prevent dangerous anthropogenic levels"

Canadian Department of the Environment has misconstrued the precautionary principle

In the legally binding UN Framework Convention on climate change there

was the obligation: to take precautionary measures to anticipate, prevent or minimize

the causes of climate change and mitigate its adverse effects.

Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty [of the serious harm] should not be used as a reason for postponing such measures. (UNFCCC, 1992)

Here is how it is misinterpreted in Canadian Department of environment:

The application of “precaution”, “the precautionary principle” or “the precautionary approach” recognizes that the absence of full scientific certainty [that it is safe] shall not be used as a reason for postponing decisions where there is a risk of serious or irreversible harm. (the Canadian Department of Environment response to a Petition submitted to the Canadian Commissioner on the Environment)

At every Climate Change conference the question is posed “where will we get the funds to address the urgency of climate change?” One answer is to end fossil fuel subsidies and invest in renewable socially equitable and environmentally sound energy. Another answer is to reallocate Global military expenses. **Not only does militarism divert funds from climate justice but also militarism is a major contributor to greenhouse gas**

emissions. http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9466:cop-19-reallocate-at-least-50-of-global-military-budget-to-address-urgency-of-climate-change&catid=104:i-peace-news&Itemid=204

THE FOLLOWING WAS ORIGINALLY WRITTEN IN 2007 BY Joan Russow and Richard Levicki, submitted to COP 15 in Copenhagen, expanded for COP16 in Cancun and posted by Joan Russow, November 2013 for WARSAW SUBMISSION

This is posted to illustrate “the shifting baseline syndrome” – to show what was demanded in 2010 in Cancun. Original tables not included.

KEY MESSAGE:

The time for procrastination about climate change has long since passed; the world is in a state of emergency and further inaction is gross or even criminal negligence. The developing states should take the major greenhouse gas-emitting states to the International Court of Justice for ignoring the precautionary principle, and the common and differentiated responsible principle, and for failing to discharge their obligation under Article 2 of the UNFCCC "to prevent dangerous anthropogenic levels"

At WARSAW states must agree to base the COP 19 on the UNFCCC and on credible emerging and current science and the precautionary principle and thus:

Because of the global urgency, there must be the political will to strive to return earth's temperature to its natural pre-industrial level, and strict time frames must be imposed, so that overall global emissions will begin to be reversed as of 2011. There must be a global target of at least 30% below 1990 levels by 2015, at least 50% below by 2020, at least 75% by 2030, at least 85% by 2040 and at least 100% below by 2050, while adhering to the precautionary principle, the differentiated responsibility principle *, and the fair and just transition principle.

The required reductions in emissions cannot be achieved without an immediate end to the destruction of carbon sinks. Under the UNFCCC, every state signatory incurred the obligation to conserve carbon sinks; thus the destruction of sinks, including deforestation and elimination of bogs must end immediately.

The goal of COP 19 must be to return temperatures to pre-industrial levels and return atmospheric CO₂ back to 278 ppm at the latest by 2050.

To succeed in being below the dangerous 1°C, member states of the United Nations must commit to remove CO₂ from the atmosphere. It is estimated that to remove the necessary CO₂ from the atmosphere, member states of the United Nations would have to commit to removing over 1000GT CO₂ by 2050. This must be done through socially equitable and environmentally safe and sound methods

and the levels required calculated within an in depth research project. Greenhouse Gas emissions resulting from destructive land use practices including in the rural, the urban and peri-urban environment must end. In order to achieve the required emission reductions, deforestation and the destruction of carbon sinks must end immediately and developing nations whose development will be affected must be compensated.

The right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet developmental and environmental needs of developing countries and of present and future generations.

The credible current emerging science has indicated that the global climate crisis is much more urgent than was conveyed in the 2007 IPCC Report that was based on data from the years 2004 and 2005. As such current and emerging science and not the science from the 2007 IPCC Report must be used in WARSAW.

The emissions reduction required to avoid dangerous climate change and the small timeframes available to achieve this are so extreme that the methods used to achieve the required reductions must be based on the maximum achievable targets within the shortest timeframes as described in diagram 1.

The Global Humanitarian Forum Climate Change Human Impact report that summarised data including that issued by WHO on the impacts estimates that in 2009, 325 million people were seriously affected by climate change (based on negative health outcomes), and there were 303,000 deaths as a result of climate change. It predicts that in 2030, 660 million people a year will be affected by climate change and that 471,500 people will die from climate change. These factual estimates invoke very serious legal obligations for immediate action based on the current science. Action that will knowingly cause deaths which number over 10 million must be treated as crimes. Climate change could kill 250,000 children next year, and the figure could rise to more than 400,000 by 2030, according to a report by Save the Children, Feeling the Heat.

Diagram 1: Source Richard Levicki

A paper published in Nature (no. 458) on the 30 April 2009 which is the up to date current science on climate change emission thresholds states that in order to have an 8-37% chance of not exceeding 2 Degrees we can only emit 886GT CO₂ between 2000 and 2050. Between 2000 and 2011 we have used more than 363GT CO₂ or 41% of the total budget for a high chance of exceeding 2 Degrees. We are currently at 0.78 Degrees above pre-industrial temperatures and possibly committed to at least 0.6 Degrees of further warming (Lenton et al). At 1.5 Degree Lenton et al suggest that forest dieback will emit an additional 100Gt of CO₂, reducing the 886 GT limit to 776GT. An important recent paper by Turney and Jones (Does the Agulhas Current amplify global temperatures during super-interglacials?, Chris S.M. Turney, Richard T. Jones, Journal of Quaternary Science, Volume 25, Issue 6, pages 839–843, September 2010) suggests that at 1.9 Degrees there is a high risk of a rise in sea levels of between 6.6 and 9.4 m and serious disturbance to regional ocean circulations that can amplify warming effects. Based on these facts it is clear that an agreement must be reached this year.

At WARSAW STATES MUST AGREE TO BASE THE UNFCCC OBLIGATIONS ON SCIENCE AND ON PEREMPTORY NORMS FROM INTERNATIONAL LAW

The time for procrastination about climate change has long since passed; the world is in a state of emergency and further inaction is gross negligence or even criminal negligence.

OVERVIEW

Years of unheeded warnings

The time for procrastination about climate change has long since passed; the world is in a state of emergency and further inaction is gross if not criminal negligence. The actual and anticipated impacts of climate change as well as the unintended consequences of climate change, and the short-term and long-term effects that are known and yet to be known have all contributed to the state of emergency. Any denial of the state of emergency is eclipsed by the moral imperative and legal obligation to abide by the precautionary principle and ACT.

While the threat of climate change has been obvious to most scientists for five decades, the industrialised world - the major contributors to greenhouse gas emissions - has refused to acknowledge, let alone address the urgency of the crisis. Industrialised nations have been heavily influenced by financial, media and industrial corporations, corporate front groups, industry-funded academics, and compromising NGOs as well as by citizens that deny the current science and quote pseudo science, all of which have tried to cast doubt on the reality of human-caused climate change.

It must be acknowledged that the major contribution to the causing and the exacerbating of climate change is waste and over-consumption; the root cause is corporate capitalism – a destructive model centred on individualism, accumulation of monetary wealth and corporate profits

Member states of the United Nations have been warned about climate change, and have been incurring obligations and making commitments related to climate change through a range of Conventions, Conference Action Plans and General Assembly Resolutions. These instruments form a central strand in both national and International peremptory norms; the time for procrastination has long since passed.

Solutions for the state of emergency depend upon the political will and on the discharging of the legal obligation to address climate change within the complexity and interdependence of issues related to: guaranteeing human rights, including the human right to food, to drinking water, to sanitation and to health; ensuring social justice; protecting and conserving the environment and ecosystems; reducing the ecological footprint and moving away from the current over-consumptive model of development; and preventing war and conflict, and to avowing the right to live and survive.

As far back as 1958, scientists began to acknowledge the potential threat of climate change. The threat was consistently ignored.

In 1988, however, scientists, politicians and members of Non-Governmental

Organizations (NGOs) met at the Changing Atmosphere Conference in Toronto to address the issue of climate change and warned that:

"Humanity is conducting an unintended, uncontrolled, globally pervasive experiment whose ultimate consequence could be second only to a global nuclear war. The earth's atmosphere is being changed at an unprecedented rate by pollutants resulting from wasteful fossil fuel use ... These changes represent a major threat to international security and are already having harmful consequences over many parts of the globe.... it is imperative to act now."

In the Conference Statement from the 1988 Conference, the participants - scientists, government representatives, and industry and NGO organizations - called for:

"The stabilizing of the atmospheric concentrations of CO₂ is an imperative goal. Energy research and development budgets must be massively directed to energy options which would eliminate or greatly reduce CO₂ emissions and to studies undertaken to further refine the target reductions." *It should be noted that this warning was issued when the parts per million were at a level at about 350ppm which was not deemed to be safe.*

In view of this important and accurate statement made at this major international conference, the developed world cannot claim that it had never been warned.

In 2009, the World Health Organization (WHO) issued a report on the impacts of climate change; the Report estimated that in 2009, 325 million people were seriously affected by climate change (based on negative health outcomes), and there were 303,000 deaths as a result of climate change. It predicted that in 2030, 660 million people a year will be affected by climate change and that 471,500 people will die from climate change. These factual estimates invoke very serious legal obligations for immediate action based on the current and emerging science. According to a report by Save the Children, in *Feeling the Heat*:

“Climate change could kill 250,000 children next year, and the figure could rise to more than 400,000 by 2030”

Actions or inactions which will knowingly cause deaths in numbers over 10 million must be treated as criminal negligence or crimes against humanity

By failing to agree to legally binding enforceable protocols and to thus enact effective legislation to discharge obligations under the UNFCCC the major greenhouse gas emitting states have reneged on their responsibility to address the urgency of the crisis facing the global community. States have also failed to even consider

(i) the resources required for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and for the conservation of carbon sinks or (ii) the funds needed to protect the poor and most vulnerable from the current and future impacts of climate change. Developed States claim that they must rely on market-based solutions because there will not be sufficient funds to assist the developing states. This claim can be discounted by the fact that these states offer only \$30 billion for climate change solutions while spending over \$1.5 trillion dollars annually on militarism. It is a question of priorities. In addition, developed states have failed to consider the need to assist low-lying states and Small Island developing states that have already been impacted by climate change, and to compensate the global displacement of people resulting from climate change.

If, in WARSAW, States exhibit dereliction of duty: (i) in continuing to fail to discharge their legal obligations under the UNFCCC (ii) in reneging act on their responsibility under the transboundary principle. (iii) in not agreeing on a legally binding WARSAW Protocol with bold targets and high percentage greenhouse gas reductions, these states must be compelled to act under existing or new international legal organs. And if they continue to flaunt their legal obligations under a strong legally binding Warsaw Protocol, these states must also be compelled to act under existing or new international legal organs.

Failing to institute mandatory emissions reductions and time lines and targets to discharge obligations under the UNFCCC

Refusing to agree to emissions reductions and time lines

Under Article 2 of the UNFCCC, states incurred the following obligation:

”stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere must be at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.”

In 1992, This obligation clearly affirmed the urgency of addressing climate change

Because of the global urgency, and legal obligations there must be the political will to achieve the following objectives;

To return the earth's temperature to its natural state, that equates to 0 °C above pre-industrial levels and to return the concentrations of CO₂ in the atmosphere to 278 ppm.

To impose strict time frames so that overall global emissions will begin to be reversed as of 2011. There must be a global target of at least 30% below 1990 levels by 2015, at least 50% below 1990 by 2020, at least 75% below 1990 by 2030, at least 85% below 1990 by 2040 and 100% below 1990 by 2050,

Removal of CO₂ to return the atmosphere to 278ppm

Only if the CO₂ levels are not beyond 278 ppm will the rise in temperature be maintained below 1°C, the level at which many scientists have determined to be the danger level. To succeed in being below the dangerous 1°C, member states of the United Nations must commit to remove CO₂ from the atmosphere. An initial calculation suggests that between 1105.62GT CO₂ and 1842GT CO₂ from the atmosphere (see table 1) must be removed. The initial removal phase should start in 2011 and run to 2020, with a research program to determine the required GT GHG to be removed to achieve 278ppm of CO₂ by 2050 and socially equitable and environmentally safe and sound methods of CO₂ ppm reduction. By the latest in 2020, between 36.85 GT CO₂ yr⁻¹ and 61.42 GT CO₂ yr⁻¹ must be removed. In the period 2011-2020 natural carbon sinks must be restored.

Emission reductions should be based on global caps for emissions of GHG and must follow a smooth path as shown in Graphs 1, 2 and 3. Carbon elimination must not be used to offset reduction targets, and must be done through socially equitable and environmentally safe and sound methods. Greenhouse Gas Emissions resulting from Destructive land use practices including in the rural, the

urban and peri-urban environment must end. Deforestation must end and developing nations whose development will be affected must be compensated. There must be caps on yearly emissions of GHG as per table 1 and graphs 2 and 3 and as required for the 1°C target. Current research only shows cumulative emission budgets for a 2 °C target, the targets in this submission are based on trying to be below a 1 °C target.

Refusing to agree to Targets

The targets must be based on the current and emerging science and be calculated as being a cumulative emissions maximum of at most 360GT CO₂ by 2050.

To achieve these massive emissions reductions, an interdisciplinary committee of scientists, economists, sociologists, psychologists, etc. should carry out an assessment which will identify where emissions can be cut most within the shortest timeframes.

This process would assist in determining how individual country limits should be set.

The emissions reduction required to avoid dangerous climate change and the small timeframes available to achieve this are so extreme that the methods used to achieve the required reductions must be based on the maximum achievable targets within the shortest timeframes as described in diagram 2.

Once the individual country limits are assigned, the funding required to achieve this must be allocated through a new created UNFCCC Fund, which will not impact on the world's poor and vulnerable and will take into account the principle of common but differentiated responsibility that will be core to this process.

Failing to achieve key objectives

*To recognize that the complexity and interdependence of issues inherent are inextricably linked to climate change: the guaranteeing of human rights including social economic and cultural rights and civil and political rights, labour rights women's rights, children's rights and indigenous rights; ensuring social justice and the right to development; the preventing war and conflict; and to preserving and conserving the environment; to moving away from the over consumptive model of development and to reducing the ecological footprint;

Diagram 2: Source Richard Levicki

*To abide by Rio Principles: "the precautionary principle, the common and differentiate responsibility principle, the non-transference to other states of substances and activities that are harmful to the environment or health principle, the transboundary principle and the intergenerational principle.

* To implement the objective of the UNFCCC to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and conserve carbon sinks including forests and bogs, and thus discharge the obligation under article 2 of the UNFCCC to prevent dangerous anthropogenic levels and

*To respect the rule of international law and to act through the establishment of legal enforcement mechanisms through existing legal international instruments such as the ICJ and its auxiliary Chambers or through new instruments such as an International Tribunal established under the UNFCCC.

At every Climate Change conference the question is posed "where will we get the funds to address the urgency of climate change?" One answer is to end fossil fuel subsidies and invest in renewable socially equitable and environmentally sound energy. Another answer is to reallocate Global military expenses.

Not only does militarism divert funds from climate justice but also militarism is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions.

ORIGINALLY WRITTEN IN 2007 BY Joan Russow and Richard Levicki , submitted to COP 15 in Copenhagen,

expanded for COP16 in Cancun and posted by Joan Russow, November 2013 for WARSAW SUBMISSION

This is posted to illustrate “ the shifting baseline syndrome”– to show what was demanded in 2010 in Cancun.

Original tables not included.

KEY MESSAGE:

The time for procrastination about climate change has long since passed; the world is in a state of emergency and further inaction is gross or even criminal negligence. The developing states should take the major greenhouse gas-emitting states to the International Court of Justice for ignoring the precautionary principle, and the common and differentiated responsible principle, and for failing to discharge their obligation under Article 2 of the UNFCCC "to prevent dangerous anthropogenic levels"

At WARSAW states must agree to base the COP 19 on the UNFCCC and on credible emerging and current science and the precautionary principle and thus:

Because of the global urgency, there must be the political will to strive to return earth's temperature to its natural pre-industrial level, and strict time frames must be imposed, so that overall global emissions will begin to be reversed as of 2011. There must be a global target of at least 30% below 1990 levels by 2015, at least 50% below by 2020, at least 75% by 2030, at least 85% by 2040 and at least 100% below by 2050, while adhering to the precautionary principle, the differentiated responsibility principle *, and the fair and just transition principle.

The required reductions in emissions cannot be achieved without an immediate end to the destruction of carbon

sinks. Under the UNFCCC, every state signatory incurred the obligation to conserve carbon sinks; thus the destruction of sinks, including deforestation and elimination of bogs must end immediately.

The goal of COP 19 must be to return temperatures to pre-industrial levels and return atmospheric CO₂ back to 278 pm at the latest by 2050.

To succeed in being below the dangerous 1°C, member states of the United Nations must commit to remove CO₂ from the atmosphere. It is estimated that to remove the necessary CO₂ from the atmosphere, member states of the United Nations would have to commit to removing over 1000GT CO₂ by 2050. This must be done through socially equitable and environmentally safe and sound methods and the levels required calculated within an in depth research project. Greenhouse Gas emissions resulting from destructive land use practices including in the rural, the urban and peri-urban environment must end. In order to achieve the required emission reductions, deforestation and the destruction of carbon sinks must end immediately and developing nations whose development will be affected must be compensated.

The right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet developmental and environmental needs of developing countries and of present and future generations.

The credible current emerging science has indicated that the global climate crisis is much more urgent than was conveyed in the 2007 IPCC Report that was based on data from the years 2004 and 2005. As such current and emerging science and not the science from the 2007 IPCC Report must be used in WARSAW.

The emissions reduction required to avoid dangerous climate change and the small timeframes available to achieve this are so extreme that the methods used to achieve the required reductions must be based on the maximum achievable targets within the shortest timeframes as described in diagram 1.

The Global Humanitarian Forum Climate Change Human Impact report that summarised data including that issued by WHO on the impacts estimates that in 2009, 325 million people were seriously affected by climate change (based on negative health outcomes), and there were 303,000 deaths as a result of climate change. It predicts that in 2030, 660 million people a year will be affected by climate change and that 471,500 people will die from climate change. These factual estimates invoke very serious legal obligations for immediate action based on the current science. Action that will knowingly cause deaths which number over 10 million must be treated as crimes. Climate change could kill 250,000 children next year, and the figure could rise to more than 400,000 by 2030, according to a report by Save the Children, *Feeling the Heat*.

Diagram 1: Source Richard Levicki

A paper published in *Nature* (no. 458) on the 30 April 2009 which is the up to date current science on climate change emission thresholds states that in order to have an 8-37% chance of not exceeding 2 Degrees we can only emit 886GT CO₂ between 2000 and 2050. Between 2000 and 2011 we have used more than 363GT CO₂ or 41% of the total budget for a high chance of exceeding 2 Degrees. We are currently at 0.78 Degrees above pre-industrial temperatures and possibly committed to at least 0.6 Degrees of further warming (Lenton et al). At 1.5 Degree Lenton et al suggest that forest dieback will emit an additional 100Gt of CO₂, reducing the 886 GT limit to 776GT.

An important recent paper by Turney and Jones (Does the Agulhas Current amplify global temperatures during super-interglacials?, Chris S.M. Turney, Richard T. Jones, Journal of Quaternary Science, Volume 25, Issue 6, pages 839–843, September 2010) suggests that at 1.9 Degrees there is a high risk of a rise in sea levels of between 6.6 and 9.4 m and serious disturbance to regional ocean circulations that can amplify warming effects. Based on these facts it is clear that an agreement must be reached this year.

At WARSAW STATES MUST AGREE TO BASE THE UNFCCC OBLIGATIONS ON SCIENCE AND ON PEREMPTORY NORMS FROM INTERNATIONAL LAW

The time for procrastination about climate change has long since passed; the world is in a state of emergency and further inaction is gross negligence or even criminal negligence.

OVERVIEW

Years of unheeded warnings

The time for procrastination about climate change has long since passed; the world is in a state of emergency and further inaction is gross if not criminal negligence. The actual and anticipated impacts of climate change as well as the unintended consequences of climate change, and the short-term and long-term effects that are known and yet to be known have all contributed to the state of emergency. Any denial of the state of emergency is eclipsed by the moral imperative and legal obligation to abide by the precautionary principle and ACT.

While the threat of climate change has been obvious to most scientists for five decades, the industrialised world - the major contributors to greenhouse gas emissions - has refused to acknowledge, let alone address the urgency of the crisis. Industrialised nations have been heavily influenced by financial, media and industrial corporations,

corporate front groups, industry-funded academics, and compromising NGOs as well as by citizens that deny the current science and quote pseudo science, all of which have tried to cast doubt on the reality of human-caused climate change.

It must be acknowledged that the major contribution to the causing and the exacerbating of climate change is waste and over-consumption; the root cause is corporate capitalism – a destructive model centred on individualism, accumulation of monetary wealth and corporate profits

Member states of the United Nations have been warned about climate change, and have been incurring obligations and making commitments related to climate change through a range of Conventions, Conference Action Plans and General Assembly Resolutions. These instruments form a central strand in both national and International peremptory norms; the time for procrastination has long since passed.

Solutions for the state of emergency depend upon the political will and on the discharging of the legal obligation to address climate change within the complexity and interdependence of issues related to: guaranteeing human rights, including the human right to food, to drinking water, to sanitation and to health; ensuring social justice; protecting and conserving the environment and ecosystems; reducing the ecological footprint and moving away from the current over-consumptive model of development; and preventing war and conflict, and to avowing the right to live and survive.

As far back as 1958, scientists began to acknowledge the potential threat of climate change. The threat was consistently ignored.

In 1988, however, scientists, politicians and members of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) met at the Changing Atmosphere Conference in Toronto to address the issue of climate change and warned that:

"Humanity is conducting an unintended, uncontrolled, globally pervasive experiment whose ultimate consequence could be second only to a global nuclear war. The earth's atmosphere is being changed at an unprecedented rate by pollutants resulting from wasteful fossil fuel use ... These changes represent a major threat to international security and are already having harmful consequences over many parts of the globe.... it is imperative to act now."

In the Conference Statement from the 1988 Conference, the participants - scientists, government representatives, and industry and NGO organizations - called for:

"The stabilizing of the atmospheric concentrations of CO₂ is an imperative goal. Energy research and development budgets must be massively directed to energy options which would eliminate or greatly reduce CO₂ emissions and to studies undertaken to further refine the target reductions." *It should be noted that this warning was issued when the parts per million were at a level at about 350ppm which was not deemed to be safe.*

In view of this important and accurate statement made at this major international conference, the developed world cannot claim that it had never been warned.

In 2009, the World Health Organization (WHO) issued a report on the impacts of climate change; the Report estimated that in 2009, 325 million people were seriously affected by climate change (based on negative health outcomes), and there were 303,000 deaths as a result of climate change. It predicted that in 2030, 660 million people a year will be affected by climate change and that 471,500 people will die from climate change. These factual estimates invoke very serious legal obligations for immediate action based on the current and emerging science. According to a report by Save the Children, in *Feeling the Heat*:

“Climate change could kill 250,000 children next year, and the figure could rise to more than 400,000 by 2030”

Actions or inactions which will knowingly cause deaths in numbers over 10 million must be treated as criminal negligence or crimes against humanity

By failing to agree to legally binding enforceable protocols and to thus enact effective legislation to discharge obligations under the UNFCCC the major greenhouse gas emitting states have reneged on their responsibility to address the urgency of the crisis facing the global community. States have also failed to even consider

(i) the resources required for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and for the conservation of carbon sinks
(ii) or (ii) the funds needed to protect the poor and most vulnerable from the current and future impacts of climate
(iii) change. Developed States claim that they must rely on market-based solutions because there will not be
(iv) sufficient funds to assist the developing states. This claim can be discounted by the fact that these states offer
(v) only \$30 billion for climate change solutions while spending over \$1.5 trillion dollars annually on militarism.
(vi) It is a question of priorities. In addition, developed states have failed to consider the need to assist low-lying
(vii) states and Small Island developing states that have already been impacted by climate change, and to
(viii) compensate the global displacement of people resulting from climate change.

If, in WARSAW, States exhibit dereliction of duty: (i) in continuing to fail to discharge their legal obligations under the UNFCCC (ii) in reneging act on their responsibility under the transboundary principle. (iii) in not agreeing on a legally binding WARSAW Protocol with bold targets and high percentage greenhouse gas reductions, these states must be compelled to act under existing or new international legal organs. And if they continue to flaunt their legal obligations under a strong legally binding Warsaw Protocol, these states must also be compelled to act under existing or new international legal organs.

Failing to institute mandatory emissions reductions and time lines and targets to discharge obligations under the UNFCCC

Refusing to agree to emissions reductions and time lines

Under Article 2 of the UNFCCC, states incurred the following obligation:

”stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere must be at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.”

In 1992, This obligation clearly affirmed the urgency of addressing climate change

Because of the global urgency, and legal obligations there must be the political will to achieve the following objectives;

To return the earth’s temperature to its natural state, that equates to 0 °C above pre-industrial levels and to return the concentrations of CO₂ in the atmosphere to 278 ppm.

To impose strict time frames so that overall global emissions will begin to be reversed as of 2011. There must be a global target of at least 30% below 1990 levels by 2015, at least 50% below 1990 by 2020, at least 75% below 1990 by 2030, at least 85% below 1990 by 2040 and 100% below 1990 by 2050,

Removal of CO₂ to return the atmosphere to 278ppm

Only if the CO₂ levels are not beyond 278 ppm will the rise in temperature be maintained below 1°C, the level at which many scientists have determined to be the danger level. To succeed in being below the dangerous 1°C, member states of the United Nations must commit to remove CO₂ from the atmosphere. An initial calculation suggests that between 1105.62GT CO₂ and 1842GT CO₂ from the atmosphere (see table 1) must be removed. The

initial removal phase should start in 2011 and run to 2020, with a research program to determine the required GT GHG to be removed to achieve 278ppm of CO₂ by 2050 and socially equitable and environmentally safe and sound methods of CO₂ ppm reduction. By the latest in 2020, between 36.85 GT CO₂ yr⁻¹ and 61.42 GT CO₂ yr⁻¹ must be removed. In the period 2011-2020 natural carbon sinks must be restored.

Emission reductions should be based on global caps for emissions of GHG and must follow a smooth path as shown and must be done through socially equitable and environmentally safe and sound methods. Greenhouse Gas

Emissions resulting from Destructive land use practices including in the rural, the urban and peri-urban environment must end. Deforestation must end and developing nations whose development will be affected must be compensated. There must be caps on yearly emissions of GHG as per table 1 and graphs 2 and 3 and as required for the 1°C target. Current research only shows cumulative emission budgets for a 2 °C target, the targets in this submission are based on trying to be below a 1 °C target.

Refusing to agree to Targets

The targets must be based on the current and emerging science and be calculated as being a cumulative emissions maximum of at most 360GT CO₂ by 2050.

To achieve these massive emissions reductions, an interdisciplinary committee of scientists, economists, sociologists, psychologists, etc. should carry out an assessment which will identify where emissions can be cut most

This process would assist in determining how individual country limits should be set.

The emissions reduction required to avoid dangerous climate change and the small timeframes available to achieve this are so extreme that the methods used to achieve the required reductions must be based on the maximum achievement

Once the individual country limits are assigned, the funding required to achieve this must be allocated through a new created UNFCCC Fund, which will not impact on the world's poor and vulnerable and will take into account the principle of common but differentiated responsibility that will be core to this process.

Failing to achieve key objectives

*To recognize that the complexity and interdependence of issues inherent are inextricably linked to climate change: the guaranteeing of human rights including social economic and cultural rights and civil and political rights, labour rights women's rights, children's rights and indigenous rights; ensuring social justice and the right to development; the preventing war and conflict; and to preserving and conserving the environment; to moving away from the over consumptive model of development and to reducing the ecological footprint;

Diagram 2: Source Richard Levicki

*To abide by Rio Principles: "the precautionary principle, the common and differentiate responsibility principle, the non-transference to other states of substances and activities that are harmful to the environment or health principle, the transboundary principle and the intergenerational principle.

* To implement the objective of the UNFCCC to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and conserve carbon sinks

including forests and bogs, and thus discharge the obligation under article 2 of the UNFCCC to prevent dangerous anthropogenic levels and

*To respect the rule of international law and to act through the establishment of legal enforcement mechanisms through existing legal international instruments such as the ICJ and its auxiliary Chambers or through new instruments such as an International Tribunal established under the UNFCCC.

Committing errors at COP15 in Copenhagen

Because of the global urgency, the mistakes of Copenhagen must not be repeated. In Copenhagen, the pleas of the developing states especially those of the most vulnerable states and reports from scientists and international institutions were discounted

Because of the false time lines and inadequate percentages of emissions reductions and because of the violation of the transparent decision making process, the contents of the Copenhagen Accord must not be in any way the basis for any future agreement

Still ignoring the urgency

Still failing to commit agree to commit to mandatory emission reductions

Because of the global urgency, and legal obligations there must be the political will to achieve the following objectives;

To return the earth's temperature to its natural state, that equates to 0 °C above pre-industrial levels and to return the concentrations of CO2 in the atmosphere to 278 ppm.

To impose strict time frames so that overall global emissions will begin to be reversed as of 2011. There must be a global target of at least 30% below 1990 levels by 2015, at least 50% below 1990 by 2020, at least 75% below 1990 by 2030, at least 85% below 1990 by 2040 and 100% below 1990 by 2050,

Overriding the majority of the developing states

- A flawed decision making process

At COP15, on November, 2009, heads of states were making presentations to the plenary. The majority of heads of states were calling for the global community to maintain the rise in temperature to well below 1.5 degrees. Bolivia led the way by demanding that the rise in temperature must remain below 1 degree and the ppm must return to 300ppm. Tragically, it was clear at COP15 that the pleas of the majority of states were discounted not only by rogue states but also by many international NGOS.

On December 7th, Papua New Guinea had proposed that, rather than descend to the lowest common denominator, the parties should strive for consensus with a fall back of 75%. Unfortunately, this proposal was summarily dismissed by the Chair. This proposal should now be accepted and implemented at WARSAW.

If one counts the G77 representing 130 developing states along with some low-lying states or small island states which were not members of the G77 and, with some of the member states of the European Union, then possibly over 75% of the signatories of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) would

have been prepared to sign and ratify a strong, legally binding Protocol.

It should be noted that the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change was adopted in 1992 by 150 states out of the 188 then member states (79 %) of the member States of the United Nations. It should also be noted that Article 18 of the Charter of the United Nations reads: “Decisions of the General Assembly on important questions shall be made by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting. These questions shall include recommendations with respect to the maintenance of international peace and security.” Undoubtedly, the impact of climate change could be deemed to fall under this category

If there had been a strong legally binding Copenhagen Protocol, then citizens from major greenhouse gas emitting states along with progressive developing states could have used a new legally binding instrument to force the emitting state governments that refuse to take the required actions to cut emissions appropriately to act. The UNFCCC is a legally binding instrument and coupled with a legally binding Copenhagen protocol, could have been used to force the delinquent states to comply either through the international Court of justice (ICJ), through the Chamber on Environmental matters of the ICJ or through other legal instruments such as an international tribunal.

Hopefully the international Climate Justice Tribunal, which was proposed in the Peoples Agreement from Cochabamba, will now be established under the UNFCCC.

Discounting emerging science

At COP15, The dominant developed states ignored not only the developing states but also the emerging science and institutional reports

At COP15, There were important press Conferences on significant emerging data from international scientific bodies and institutions. The emerging science indicated that the global climate crisis was much more urgent than what was conveyed in the 2007 IPCC Report that was based mostly on data from the years 2004 and 2005, and some data from 2006.

The 2007 report itself states that” between climate and biogeochemical cycles. The areas of science covered in this report continue to undergo rapid progress and it should be recognized that the present assessment reflect scientific understanding based on the peer-reviewed literature available in mid-2006.”

The 2007 IPCC Report presented a gradual and smooth increase in scale and severity of impacts with increasing temperature. The reality is that this is unlikely. There are a number of thresholds along the way that are likely to result in step changes of level of impacts once triggered. These ‘tipping points’, or small change can make a big difference. (Source Major Tipping points in the Earth’s Climate System and Consequences for the Insurance Sector, 2009, Tim Lenton, UEA/Tyndall Centre, Anthony Footitt, UEA/Tyndall Centre, Dr. Andrew Dlugolecki, Andlug Consulting).The report suggests that “Historical GHG emissions have already ‘committed’ us to at least 0.6 °C of further warming.” That takes us into a 1.5°C pre-industrial scenario which according to the report would result in an additional 100 GTCO₂ emissions. These additional emissions are not considered in IPCC scenarios. Add to this the feedback effects of the melting of the ice sheets and decreases in the albedo and the thresholds in the IPCC reports must be considered unsafe. Please see flow diagram 3 for an example of the possible feedbacks and

tipping points. The IPCC Special Report on Emission Scenarios does not include feedbacks.

At a COP15 press conference, a representative from the IPCC stated that at a 2 degree rise above pre-industrial levels, the poor, the disenfranchised and the vulnerable would not survive, and at a 1.5 degrees rise, they might survive. Reports from the WMO indicated that the temperature was rising faster, and that climate-related incidents were more intense and more wide-spread than previously estimated, and that drought was advancing more extensively than previously anticipated.

Disregarding research on tipping points

Diagram 3: Source: Richard Levicki

Discounting International institutional reports

At COP15, as well, at press conferences, reports were released (i) from the UN High Commission on Refugees; their report indicated that climate-change related refugees had increased. And (ii) from the WHO that reported on the failure in the negotiations to consider the health impacts of climate change as well as the health benefits and savings from seriously reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

At COP 15 the call for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to rectify the fact that militarism, a major contributor to greenhouse emissions has been excluded from the IPCC deliberations was also ignored.

Undermining of process, by major NGOS, of progressive states

In addition, at COP15, there were many big international NGOs which ignored the pleas of the developing states and the reports from the emerging science and from various institutions and held compromising positions. In many cases they were not even prepared to go close to the positions of the progressive states that were willing to demand the necessary provisions to address the emergency revealed by the current and emerging science. . For example, while Bolivia was calling for the reduction of parts per million to 300ppm, the 350. org campaign was not willing to change its campaign to encompass Bolivia's position. While Bolivia was demanding that the temperature must not rise above 1 degree from pre-industrial levels the international NGO, Climate Action Network, was still demanding that the global average temperature must not rise above 2 degrees.

The Kyotoplus petition also called for limitation of the maximum CO₂ emission on an extent with which the climate warming does not go beyond the limit of 2 degrees centigrade,

compromising by NGOs, on targets and percentages of greenhouse gas emissions

kyotoplusPetition called for a completely inadequate and negligent proposal which set a national target to cut greenhouse gas emissions at least 25 per cent from 1990 levels by 2020.

SealththeDeal. <http://www.sealthedeal2009.org/petition> involving NGOs from Canada and the United States called

for setting binding targets to cut greenhouses gases by 2020, AGAIN **completely inadequate and** negligent.

The NGO tektcktk.org, and their 250 partners asked, without even mentioning a baseline, for a reduction from developed nations of at least 40% by 2020again **completely inadequate and negligent**

. Climate Action Network CAN stated: We , as citizens of industrialized states, demand our leaders not to fail this

last chance and live up to the G8 climate target by fully accepting a 40% emissions reduction between 1990 and 2020

In addition, at COP 15, many NGOs were asking for 40% below 1990 levels reduction in carbon emissions by 2020 from developed countries and 80% globally by 2050. This position was established through compromise.

An example of the antics by NGOs can be gathered by the workings of Stop Climate Chaos in the UK. Their joint request was to ask that:

“Industrialised countries must lead the effort in reducing global carbon emissions. These countries must deliver an aggregate emissions reduction of at least 40% by 2020 (compared to 1990 levels), decarbonising by 2050 to contribute to a global emissions cut of at least 80% by the same date (<http://www.stopclimatechaos.org/policy/act-fair-and-fast>).

The ‘The Stop Climate Chaos Board’ was at that time made up of:

Paul Brannen, Head of Campaigns, Christian Aid,

Andy Atkins, Executive Director, Friends of the Earth,

John Sauven, Executive Director, Greenpeace UK,

Anne Miller, Network for Social Change,

Phil Bloomer, Director of Campaigns and Policy, Oxfam,

Ian Leggett, Director, People & Planet,

Graham Wynne, Chief Executive, RSPB,

Mike Robinson, Chairperson, Stop Climate Chaos Scotland,

Paul Cook, Director of Advocacy, Tearfund,

Ruth Bond, Trustee, Women's Institute

David Norman, Director of Campaigns, WWF.

Stop Climate Chaos is a mouthpiece for most of the major UK

NGOs, that makes this a very significant policy proposal that needs to be of the highest validity and is under scrutiny in this submission.

These proposals were completely inadequate and could result in a temperature increase, in vulnerable areas of more than 4 degrees which would condemn the global community to irreversible social economic cultural, psychological consequences and which would be in breach of article 2 of the UNFCCC. This position has not moved on 1 year later in the build up to WARSAW when the science is clearly suggesting that this is totally inadequate to prevent dangerous climate change.

In addition, in Copenhagen, often the media ignored the press conferences on science and institutional reports, and opted to cover flashy NGO demonstrations and failed to point out the disconnect between what the reports from the scientists and institutions were revealing and what data the states were relying on to support the Copenhagen Accord

Defying all perception of democratic decision making

At COP 15, the dominant Greenhouse gas producing states ignored all the emerging data and appeals and

proceeded to negotiate in secret. The Copenhagen Accord did not adhere to Article 2 of the UNFCCC, which states that emissions must not pose a danger. The Copenhagen Accord which, if followed would condemn the globe to an increase of temperature way above a rise in 2 degrees Celsius, and would definitely, as the IPCC representative at COP15 indicated cause the poor, disenfranchised and vulnerable to , not survive.

From Copenhagen to Cancun

See **FROM COPENHAGEN TO CANCUN- A PATHWAY OF ERRORS THAT DISCREDITS THE UNITED NATIONS PROCESS;**

or events leading up to the justification for Bolivia taking action through the International Court of Justice, or through other legal channels

Joan Russow
Global Compliance Research Project

In Copenhagen, Bolivia was seriously respecting the emerging science, adhering to principles in the UNFCCC and addressing the urgency by demanding that the temperature not rise above 1 degree, and the parts per million must return to 300 ppm.

Between Copenhagen and Cancun, while Bolivia was involved with open inclusive and multilateral processes, the pro-Copenhagen Accord states were active behind the scenes engaging in many bilateral meetings, or mini events and conferences to pressure states to support the Copenhagen Accord

prepared for the Watershed Sentinel BLOG <http://www.watershedsentinel.ca/documents/From%20Copenhagen%20To%20Cancun.pdf>

Leading towards WARSAW

Now in in WARSAW there is an opportunity to enter into a legally binding protocol consistent with peremptory norms and the current and emerging science. There is a range of national law related to criminal negligence as well as international laws designed to protect humanity, from international and national crimes. At this stage where the point of no return is approached, legal action must be taken to address the dereliction of duty and irresponsible behaviour of the major per capita greenhouse gas emitting states.

Now in the lead up to COP 17 WARSAW Climate Change 2011 talks, many big NGOS are also ignoring the pleas of the developing states and the emerging science and demanding more or less the same as in Copenhagen and still asking for inadequate emissions targets and time lines

In WARSAW, the time for vested state interest and NGO compromising must end and a firm commitment to address the global state of emergency must prevail

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In WARSAW, rather than descending to the lowest common denominator approach to setting climate targets and time frames, member states of the United Nations must acknowledge the emerging science of dwindling glaciers, increasing atmospheric turbulence, desertification, ocean warming and acidification and rising sea levels, and agree to act on the current and emerging science and to institute strong, effective, and mandatory targets and time frames to address the urgency

It is possible that a majority of the member states could agree to a strong legally binding “WARSAW protocol” to the UNFCCC. A strong Protocol to the UNFCCC could then be used against the delinquent states, and for example a case could be taken to the Chamber on Environmental Matters of the International Court of Justice under the UNFCCC, which has been signed and ratified by 192 states, including even the delinquent states SUCH AS Canada and the United States.

In WARSAW COP 19 States must support the demands contained in the April 22, 2010 People’s Agreement negotiated in Cochabamba Bolivia and endorsed by acclamation by 35,000 participants from wide international range of institution and citizens. These demands reinforce the position taken by Bolivia at the COP15; this position called for the global temperature to remain below 1degree Centigrade and the parts per million to return to 278 ppm

SUBMISSION TO THE WARSAW CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Summary of Content

PREAMBLE

(i)Failing to commit to emissions reductions and time frames

NOTING WITH DEEP CONCERNTHAT states for reasons of vestedself-interest refuse to commit to the emission reductions and time frames that are necessary to address the urgency of climate change that discharge obligations under Article 2, of the UNFCCC for the “stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the

atmosphere must be at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.”

CONVINCED THAT there must be the political will to undertake immediate action to return earth’s temperature to its natural pre-industrial level by 2050.

(ii) Failing to discharge UNFCCC obligations

HAVING ADOPTED the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate change in 1992 by a 79% majority decision of the member States of the United Nations, the convention came into force in 1994 and is now ratified by 194 states. The Framework Convention on Climate Change is thus a legally binding document reflecting international peremptory norms;

CONVINCED THAT the Kyoto Protocol with the prominent market based scheme resulted in delaying and undermining the actions required by States to discharge their obligations under the UNFCCC. The Annex 1 developed states in the Kyoto Protocol were not even able to live up to the modest emissions reductions and targets.

BEARING IN MIND THAT the objective of the UNFCCC was to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and conserve carbon sinks, and that under Article 2, the signatories incurred the following obligation; “stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere must be at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.

DEEPLY CONCERNED THAT emerging science affirms that this dangerous level equates to a temperature below 1°C, which is the point at which global systems on land, water and air will be so affected as to create vicious

feedback cycles and destabilise many ecosystems and human societies.

RECALLING THAT under the UNFCCC, the signatories of the Convention were bound to invoke the precautionary principle that reads:

"Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing such measures, ..." To achieve this, such policies and measures should take into account different socio-economic contexts, be comprehensive, cover all relevant sources, sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse change should be carried out cooperatively by all Parties. (Article 3. Framework Convention on Climate Change).

This obligation to invoke the precautionary principle complemented the broader Rio Principle:

"Where there is the threat of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent the threat."

ALARMED THAT rather than interpreting "measures" to involve "prevention" (as was the case in the version of the precautionary principle in the Rio Declaration), many member states of the UN have embraced after-act "mitigation" - not preventing something from happening but anticipating or developing a clean-up technology, and then unfortunately, now, many member states are settling for adaptation being the primary focus of climate change negotiations. The primary focus should be prevention.

DEEPLY DISTURBED THAT often states are moving away from the imperative to prevent climate change to simply adaptation to climate change. Rectifying errors rather preventing them.

CONCERNED THAT often states are moving away from the imperative to prevent climate change to the

inadequate and illegal objective of simply adapting to climate change. Rectifying errors rather than preventing them

RECALLING THAT obligations were incurred in the Framework Convention on Climate Change "to protect the climate system for present and future generations" ; the rights of future generations will be violated if the global community fails to act now to prevent the devastating impacts of climate change, that could also threaten international

RECALLING that the signatories of the Convention on Natural and Cultural Heritage (UNCNCH) incurred the obligation to protect cultural and Natural Heritage for future generations

AFFIRMING THAT the fundamental principle of intergenerational equity includes the rights of future generations

DEEPLY DISTURBED THAT industrialized states have defied principle 7 of the 1992 Rio Declaration which was adopted by all states at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). This principle states that:

“States shall cooperate in a spirit of global partnership to conserve, protect and restore the health and integrity of the Earth's ecosystem. In view of the different contributions to global environmental degradation, States have common but differentiated responsibilities. (Principle 7, Rio Declaration)

AWARE THAT the common and differentiated principle and the principle of intergenerational equity were reaffirmed in the Article 3 of the UNFCCC:

“The Parties should protect the climate system for the benefit of present and future Generations of humankind, on

the basis of equity and in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. Accordingly, the developed country Parties should take the lead in combating climate change and the adverse effects thereof. “

AWARE THAT States had agreed to take into consideration `The specific needs and special circumstances of developing country Parties, especially those that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, and of those Parties, especially developing country Parties, that would have to bear a disproportionate or abnormal burden under the Convention, should be given full consideration. (Article 3 Principle 2 UNFCCC)

DEPLORING the fact that most states signatories of the UNFCCC have failed to live up to their obligations and that the signatories are currently in serious breach of their legal obligations to protect humanity and the environment. They spend more time devising devious strategies to avoid the emission reductions required for the prevention of dangerous interference with our climate

(iii) Dismissing the state of emergency

CONCERNED THAT there are entrenched immovable national interests that will serve to dismiss the state of emergency and block serious binding instruments

DEEPLY CONCERNED that the paper published in Nature (no. 458) on the 30 April 2009 which is the up to date current science on climate change emission thresholds states that in order to have an 8-37% chance of not

exceeding 2 Degrees we can only emit 886GT CO2 between 2000 and 2050. **FURTHER ALARMED THAT** between 2000 and 2011 we have used 363GT CO2 or 41% of the total budget for a high chance of exceeding 2 Degrees. **NOTING FURTHER THAT** we are currently at 0.78 Degrees above pre-industrial temperatures and committed to at least 0.6 Degrees of further warming. Even more concerned that, at 1.5 Degree, Lenton et al suggest that (The Tipping Points Report commissioned jointly by Allianz and WWF) forest dieback will emit an additional 100Gt of Co2. Reducing the 886 GT limit to 776GT.

ALARMED ABOUT the data from a recent paper by Turney and Jones (Does the Agulhas Current amplify global temperatures during super-interglacials?, Chris S.M. Turney, Richard T. Jones, Journal of Quaternary Science, Volume 25, Issue 6, pages 839–843, September 2010) suggests that at 1.9 Degrees there is a high risk of a rise in sea levels of between 6.6 and 9.4 m and serious disturbance to regional ocean circulations that can amplify warming effects.

DEEPLY CONVINCED that based on these facts it is clear that an agreement must be reached this year.

DEEPLY CONCERNED AS WELL THAT these facts suggest that less than a further 360GT of CO2 in the next 40 years can be emitted and **THAT** currently 36.3 GT a year is being emitted and that would mean that only ten years of emissions at current rates can be allowed.

AWARE THAT THE ABOVE current scientific understanding demands an immediate and all out agreement and urgent action. **AND AWARE** of other feedback mechanisms and tipping points such as a loss of albedo and further forest dieback and effects on regional climate systems. **AND AWARE** of the emergency being ignored and the weakness of current IPCC science.

DEEPLY DISTURBED THAT changes in world climate would have serious impacts on human health **AND THAT** concerns about the impacts on human health are mostly absent in the UNFCCC COP deliberations.

AWARE OF The World Health Organisation findings that estimated, in its "World Health Report 2002", that climate change was responsible in 2000 for approximately 2.4% of worldwide diarrhoea, 154 000 deaths and affected 5.5 million people's health. More than 84% of this burden occurred in developing countries

DEEPLY ALARMED that the Global Humanitarian Forum Climate Change Human Impact report that summarized data including that issued by WHO on the impacts estimates that in 2009, 325 million people were seriously affected by climate change (based on negative health outcomes), and there were 303,000 deaths as a result of climate change. It predicts that in 2030, 660 million people a year will be affected by climate change and that 471,500 people will die from climate change. These factual estimates invoke very serious legal obligations for immediate action based on the current science. Action that will knowingly cause deaths which number over 10 million must be treated as crimes related to humanity. Climate change could kill 250,000 children next year, and the figure could rise to more than 400,000 by 2030, according to a report by Save the Children, Feeling the Heat.

DEPLORING THAT there has not been a formal acknowledgement, from IPCC scientists submitted to the UNFCCC Secretariat, that the world is beyond dangerous climate interference and the world is facing a real and rapidly rising emergency with risks of (never ending) a global climate catastrophe- a state of dire planetary emergency – this is required to generate genuine political will to act to address the emergency;

(iv) Disregarding of peremptory norms

KEEPING IN MIND THAT Under Article 53 of the Convention on the Law of Treaties “Treaties conflicting with a peremptory norm of general international law (jus cogens) are null and void.

"A treaty is void if, at the time of its conclusion, it conflicts with a peremptory norm of general international law.

For the purposes of the present convention, a peremptory norm of general international law is a norm accepted and recognized by the international community of States as a whole as a norm from which no derogation is permitted and which can be modified only by a subsequent norm of general international law having the same character."

To be designated as a “Peremptory norm “the norm must be accepted and recognized as a peremptory norm by the internationally community of states as a whole. Peremptory norms can be extracted from years of international instruments agreed to by a broad group of states, from widely divergent geographical areas, functioning under a range of legal systems,

NOTING FURTHER THAT peremptory norms can be drawn from Conventions, Covenants and Treaties, which have been signed and ratified, and are in force; from Conference Action plans which have been adopted by Consensus, or from UN General Assembly Resolutions and Declaration adopted at the UNGA.

RECOGNIZING THAT these norms are derived from instruments that guarantee human rights including social and Economic and Cultural rights , civil and political rights, labour rights, women’s’ rights and indigenous rights; that ensure social justice, that protect and conserve the environment, move away from the overconsumptive model of development and reduce the ecological footprint and that prevent war and conflict

DEEPLY DISTURBED ABOUT the potential impacts of climate change on the world’s children who are not able

to defend their future rights during their childhood. These children will have to deal with the climate change issue that will have been left to them– the loathsome legacy of the negligent behaviours of those who have preceded them

NOTING THAT the transboundary principle has become a peremptory norm

The Transboundary principle has been found in different forms in the following international instruments:

(a) 1972 in the UNCHE in Stockholm; Principle 21

States have, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental policies, and the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other States or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction. UNCHE

(b) 1992 Convention on the Law of Seas

"states shall take all measures necessary to ensure that activities under their jurisdiction or control are so conducted as not to cause damage by pollution to other States and their environment, and that pollution arising from incidents or activities under their jurisdiction or control does not spread beyond the areas where they exercise sovereign rights

(c) 1992 Rio Declaration

Principle 2 States have, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental and developmental policies, and the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other States or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction. (Principle 2 Rio declaration)

(d) 1992 Preamble Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their

Disposal In addition, the liability in accordance with international law is recognized in relation to their international obligations concerning the protection of human health and protection and preservation of the environment, and are liable in accordance with international law (Preamble Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, 1992);

(e) 1994 Convention on the Environmental Impact assessment in a transboundary Context.

Mindful of the need and importance to develop anticipatory policies and of preventing, mitigating and monitoring significant adverse environmental impact in general and more specifically in a transboundary context (11.9.

Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context, 1994)

CONCURRING THAT the essence of the transboundary principle could be applied in some way to support the duty not to harm other states and could be applied to the transboundary impact of greenhouse gas emissions

(v) Omitting or minimising important considerations in the UNFCCC processes

water

RECOGNISING, the vital role of water as a contributor to and as a consequence of climate change must be included in the discussion on climate change

REGRETTING THAT the 1992 commitment to freshwater protection is being abandoned;

“Freshwater is a unitary resource. Long-term development of global freshwater requires holistic management of resources and a recognition of the interconnectedness of the elements related to freshwater and freshwater quality.

There are few regions of the world that are still exempt from problems of loss of potential sources of freshwater

supply, degraded water quality and pollution of surface and groundwater sources. Major problems affecting the water quality of rivers and lakes arise, in variable order of importance according to different situations, from inadequately treated domestic sewage, inadequate controls on the discharges of industrial waste waters, loss and destruction of catchment areas, ill-considered siting of industrial plants, deforestation, uncontrolled shifting cultivation and poor agricultural practices. This gives rise to the leaching of nutrients and pesticides. Aquatic ecosystems are disturbed and living freshwater resources are threatened. Under certain circumstances, aquatic ecosystems are also affected by agricultural water resource development projects such as dams, river diversions, water installations and irrigation schemes. Erosion, sedimentation, deforestation and desertification have led to increased land degradation, and the creation of reservoirs has, in some cases, resulted in adverse effects on ecosystems. Many of these problems have arisen from a development model that is environmentally destructive and from a lack of public awareness and education about surface and groundwater resource protection. Ecological and human health effects are the measurable consequences, although the means to monitor them are inadequate or non-existent in many countries. There is a widespread lack of perception of the linkages between the development, management, use and treatment of water resources and aquatic ecosystems. A preventive approach, where appropriate, is crucial to the avoiding of costly subsequent measures to rehabilitate, treat and develop new water supplies” (18.35., Freshwater, Agenda 21, UNCED, 1992)

Biodiversity

DISMAYED THAT biodiversity has been ignored in the analysis of impact from climate change

THAT “In-situ conservation” means the conservation of ecosystems and natural habitats and the maintenance and

recovery of viable populations of species in their natural surroundings and, in the case of domesticated or cultivated species, in the surroundings where they have developed their distinctive properties (Definition, Convention on Biological Diversity, UNCED, 1992)

RECALLING the obligation to Take action *where necessary* for the conservation of biological diversity through the in situ conservation of ecosystems and natural habitats, as well as primitive cultivars and their wild relatives, and the maintenance and recover of viable populations of species in their natural surroundings, and implement ex situ measures, preferably in the source country. In situ measures should include the reinforcement of terrestrial, marine and aquatic protected area systems and embrace, inter alia, vulnerable freshwater and other wetlands and coastal ecosystems, such as estuaries, coral reefs and mangroves;...(15.5 g. Biodiversity, Agenda 21 UNCED, 1992)

RECOGNIZINGthe close and traditional dependence of many indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles on biological resources, and the *desirability* [**necessity**] of sharing equitably benefits arising from the use of traditional knowledge, innovations and practices relevant to the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of its components (Preamble, Convention on Biological Diversity, UNCED, 1992)

Subject to its national legislation, respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and promote their wider application with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices and encourage the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge, innovations and practices (8j Convention on Biological Diversity, UNCED, 1992)

AWARE of the following obligation in the Convention on Biological Diversity

Subject to its national legislation, respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and promote their wider application with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices and encourage the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge, innovations and practices (8j Convention on Biological Diversity, UNCED, 1992)

MINDFUL THAT

The loss of biological diversity may reduce the resilience of ecosystems to climatic variations and air pollution damage. Atmospheric changes can have important impacts on forests, biodiversity, and freshwater and marine ecosystems, as well as on economic activities, such as agriculture (9.16., Atmosphere, Agenda 21, 1992)

DEEPLY CONCERNED THAT the importance of Traditional Knowledge and practices in developing strategies to address climate change has not been given prominence in the UNFCCC.

Human Rights

NOTING WITH DEEP CONCERN THAT the UNFCCC process has disregarded the fact that “climate change poses an immediate and far-reaching threat to people and communities around the world and has implications for the full enjoyment of human rights” (Human Rights Council Resolution 7/23)

BEARING IN MIND THAT a United Nations formed Human Rights Council panel has emphasized that a successful outcome of climate change negotiations matters for human rights. The human rights perspective is indispensable to the ongoing negotiations leading to the year-end WARSAW Climate Change Conference As it has been in all the Climate Change Conferences.

“As you engage in those negotiations, you must bear in mind the grave human rights consequences of a failure to take decisive action now,” said United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Deputy High Commissioner Kyung-wha Kang when she opened the panel on 15 June.

(www.ohchr.org)

“A successful outcome of ongoing climate change negotiations matters for human rights. A new climate change agreement must be fair, balanced and sufficiently ambitious to be effective.

“Climate change is related not only to environmental factors but also to poverty, discrimination and inequalities – this is why climate change is a human rights issue,” said Kang, adding that the human rights perspective is particularly well suited to analyzing how climate change affects people differently.

Women's Rights

DEPLORING THAT Continuing environmental degradation that affects all human lives often has a more direct impact on women. Women's health and their livelihood are threatened by pollution and toxic wastes, large-scale deforestation, desertification, drought, and depletion of the soil and of coastal and marine resources, with a rising

incidence of environmentally related health problems and even death reported among women and girls. Those most affected are rural and indigenous women, whose livelihood and daily subsistence depends directly on sustainable ecosystems (Art. 36 Advance draft, Platform of Action, UN. Conference on Women May 15)

Food Security

CONCERNED THAT the impact of climate change on hunger and food security has not been discussed sufficiently absent.

“Time is short. Urgent and sustained action is vital. The conference, therefore, calls upon all peoples expressing their will as individuals, and through their Governments, and non-governmental organizations to work together to bring about the end of the age old scourge of hunger. (Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition, 1974)

REGRETTING THAT the impact of climate change land use has not been addressed sufficiently at the UNFCCC negotiations. The longstanding commitment to ending inappropriate and uncontrolled land use is absent.

“Inappropriate and uncontrolled land uses are a major cause of degradation and depletion of land resources. Present land use often disregards the actual potentials, carrying capacities and limitations of land resources as well as their diversity in space. It is estimated that the world's population, now at 5.4 billion, will be 6.25 billion by the turn of the century. The need to increase food production to meet the expanding needs of the population will put enormous pressure on all natural resources, including land” (14.34., Agriculture, Agenda 21, UNCED, 1992)

Soil fertility

AND THAT

“Land degradation is the most important environmental problem affecting extensive areas of land in both developed and developing countries. The problem of soil erosion is particularly acute in developing countries, while problems of salinization, water logging, soil pollution and loss of soil fertility are increasing in all countries.

(14.44. Agriculture, Agenda 21, UNCED, 1992)

Vegetable protein

ALARMED THAT the contribution to greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the dependency on animal protein has not been sufficiently addressed in the UNFCCC and IPCC processes, and evidence indicates that the contribution of reliance on animal protein to the greenhouse gas methane is substantial.

RECALLING THAT at the DPINGO 2007 Conference on Climate Change DR Pachauri, Chair of the IPCC, in response to a question about a practical proposal to address Climate change responded that moving from a meat based protein diet to a vegetable based protein diet would be most *productive*

(vi) Eroding of the Commission on Sustainable Development

CONCERNED THAT the mandate of the Commission on Sustainable Development has been eroded. Its mandate was originally to ensure effective follow-up to Agenda 21, and other UNCED obligations and commitments. As such in light of the failure to address climate change at CSD should intervene and have been prevented from doing so by the current power structures and lack of NGO action. The Commission on Sustainable Development, in light

of the failures of its current format, should be upgraded to a Council, which would be able deal with new or emerging environmental threats, and with on-going threats, such as climate change, which requires continuous intervention. Also too often at the Commission on Sustainable Development, serious policies, which would address the urgency are thwarted by the requirement to reach consensus, and serious consideration must be given to a different negotiation process and requirements.

NOTING THAT the General Assembly Resolution A/RES/47/191 states that the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) should ensure effective follow-up to Agenda 21, and other UNCED obligations and commitments

DISMAYED THAT the CSD failed in this role in its current format as shown by the failure of negotiations at CSD15, especially to produce a negotiated outcome on climate change and other issues. This failure was also evident in the weak document emerging from CSD 17

DISMAYED THAT government and non-governmental organisations have embraced the backward-looking agreement made at WSSD and are building on this agreement which is not an appropriate mechanism for instituting a socially equitable and environmentally sound world

DISMAYED THAT since its conception in 1992, changes in how CSD functions have progressively affected its ability to fulfill its mandate in its original form

CONCERNED THAT at CSD 11 (UN E/2003/29, E/CN.17/2003/6) it was decided that in order to fulfill the CSD

mandate the work of the Commission will be organized in a series of two-year action-oriented implementation cycles, which will include an evaluation of progress in implementing Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, while focusing on identifying constraints and obstacles in the process of implementation with regard to the selected thematic cluster of issues for the cycle

MINDFUL THAT this two year rotation process has not worked because urgent issues wait for long periods of time to be addressed, this in itself is fundamentally flawed. For example climate change waited three years and in its two-year cycle no adequate agreement was reached. Now in the subsequent meetings on for example water any agreements may be undermined by the lack of action on climate. The current issues as they relate to sustainable development may be irreversible and this procrastination will only mean that the delay is more critical than it already is. This delay also prevents the CSD from performing its role as outlined in General Assembly Resolution A/RES/47/191.

(vii) Failing to address emerging and current science and tipping points

ALARMED THAT the 2007 IPCC report will still be the basis of the negotiations in 2010 and 2011. and the dire warnings in the emerging science will be disregarded because of the approach of the IPCC to not proceed with releases

Updated Report or Reliance on out-dated IPCC Report

The last Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's report is from 2007 IPCC Report that was based mostly on data from the years 2004 and 2005, and some data from 2006 and thus much of the research could be over six years

old. Most recent scientific evidence indicates that the impact of climate change is happening much more rapidly than expected. Apart from the serious concerns about the emerging data the fact that a new IPCC report was not ready for Copenhagen and will not be ready until September 14 2014 (ARS Synthesis Report) continues to be troubling. In the absence of this synthesis report, in WARSAW the current emerging data should be given the prominence that is deserved.

DEEPLY CONCERNED THATthe 2007 report itself states that” between climate and biogeochemical cycles. The areas of science covered in this report continue to undergo rapid progress and it should be recognised that the present assessment reflects scientific understanding based on the peer-reviewed literature available in mid-2006.”

DEEPLY CONCERNED THATthe 2007 IPCC Report presented a gradual and smooth increase in scale and severity of impacts with increasing temperature. The reality is that this is unlikely. There are a number of thresholds along the way that are likely to result in step changes of level of impacts once triggered. These ‘tipping points’, or small change can make a big difference.). For the report suggests that “Historical GHG emissions have already ‘committed’ us to at least 0.6 °C of further warming.” That takes us into a 1.5°C pre-industrial scenario which according to the report would result in an additional 100 GTCO₂ emissions from forest dieback. This is the equivalent to more than 20% of available emissions not considered in IPCC scenarios. Add to the feedback effects of the melting of the ice sheets and decrease albedo and the thresholds in the IPCC reports may become unsafe. Please see flow diagram 1 for an example of the possible feedbacks and tipping points.

Source: Major Tipping points in the Earth’s Climate System and Consequences for the Insurance Sector, 2009, Tim Lenton, UEA/Tyndall Centre, Anthony Footitt, UEA/Tyndall Centre, Dr. Andrew Dlugolecki, Andlug Consulting,

Deeply concerned that the tendency for the science of climate change is to suggest a worsening scenario. The “burning embers” shown in diagram 5 displaying the climate impacts for 5 categories, as taken from IPCC in 2001

(on the left) and updated in 2009 (on the right). (Paper by Smith et Al, 2009, Assessing dangerous climate change through an update of the IPCC PNAS)

Major changes from the 2001 to 2009 assessment are:

“**substantial or severe risks**” of extreme weather events at temperature at 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels are now present

“**Moderately significant**” - risks of “**large-scale discontinuities**” below 2 degrees are now present and these were “very low” in 2001”.

Diagram 5

This tendency is alarming

EQUALLY ALARMED THAT the new IPCC report will not be released until 2014 not only after the COP 19 in WARSAW but maybe beyond the point at which emission reductions can safely be reduced. The Working Group I report is scheduled to be finalized in September 2013, the Working Group II report in March 2014 and the Working

Group III report in April 2014. The scope and content of the AR5 Synthesis Report will be developed in the course of the year 2011. The Synthesis Report is scheduled to be finalized in September 2014.

EQUALLY ALARMED THAT the 2007 IPCC report states that the effects of increasing atmospheric CO₂ on large scale terrestrial uptake cannot be quantified reliably at present.

FULLY AWARE THAT scientists now know with total confidence that any global warming target above 0.8°C is planetary suicide because of events happening to the Arctic, the oceans and coral reefs today at today's warming of 0.78°C.

DEEPLY DISTURBED ALONG WITH Lenton et al WHO suggest that those historical Emissions have already committed us to at least 0.6C of further warming. And since the cut off for material reviewed in AR4 the Earth System has displayed some abrupt changes, especially in the Northern Cryosphere. Deeply disturbed that conceivably there could be tipping elements that have not been triggered yet but which we are already committed to being triggered and/or have already been triggered, but we have yet to fully realize. Although having the potential to affect very significant numbers of people such elements are virtually absent from policy and decision contexts concerning what changes in temperature or other variables constitute 'dangerous climate change'. Deeply disturbed that current commitment to climate change may be as high as 2 degrees, this is higher than some of the tipping points and as such the urgency of required targets is accentuated. Deeply disturbed that some tipping elements exhibit strong interrelationships.

Source: Major Tipping points in the Earth's Climate System and Consequences for the Insurance Sector, 2009, Tim Lenton, UEA/Tyndall Centre, Anthony Footitt, UEA/Tyndall Centre, Dr. Andrew Dlugolecki, Andlug

Consulting, The Tipping Points Report

AWARE THAT negotiation process for the international law on climate change has been undermined by the interaction of global economic and nation based power structures. **RECOGNIZING THAT** this has led to the adoption and justification of international agreements that are neither legal, realistic nor scientific with regards tackling the issue of global warming.

Today's warming is projected to double by today's atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations and last for over 1000 years. The published science for several years shows that additional methane is being emitted as carbon feedback to global warming from warming Northern peat lands thawing permafrost and melting subsea Arctic methane hydrates obviously. This methane Arctic carbon feedback is recognized as a major danger with regards atmospheric greenhouse elevation and global warming. Another reason we know this is the state of the world's coral reefs and the opinion from scientists that it may already be too late to prevent their practical total loss from global warming and acidification (N.B. irreversible damage to natural ecosystems under FCCC). Realistically it may be too late now to avoid losing the great coral reefs and to avoid runaway global heating. (Dr. Peter Carter, personal communication, 2009).

*(ix) Continuing the UNFCCC negotiating processes and other UN processes which impede change perpetuating
(x) institutional problems*

UNFCCC negotiating processes

MINDFUL THAT Article 18 of the Charter of the United Nations reads: “Decisions of the General Assembly on important questions shall be made by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting. These questions shall include recommendations with respect to the maintenance of international peace and security.” Undoubtedly, the impact of climate change could be deemed to fall under this category.

NOTING THAT the UNFCCC was adopted by 150 of the then 188 members of the United Nations

RECALLING THAT Papua New Guinea had proposed that at Copenhagen, states should not descend to the lowest Common denominator but strive for consensus with a fallback of 75%

RECALLING THAT under article 2 of the Montreal Protocol, it is stated that “the Parties shall make every effort to reach agreement by consensus. If all efforts at consensus have been exhausted, and no agreement reached, such decisions shall, as a last resort, be adopted by a two-thirds majority vote of the Parties present and voting representing a majority of the Parties”

DEEPLY DISTURBED THAT many politicians in developed countries “receive political donations” from the military, fossil fuel, nuclear, biofuel, large-scale - hydro etc. industries, and when no longer in politics sit on the boards of these industries

EQUALLY DISTURBED THAT developed nations exercise economic and political leverage on developing states to interfere with the international climate change prevention process

EQUALLY DISTURBED THAT in the build up to the COP WARSAW Climate Change 2011 talks and for the COP Copenhagen 2009 talks many BIG NGOs were asking and are still asking for inadequate emissions targets and time lines. There is a long history of compromising for coverage on the climate change issue for example in Copenhagen many NGOS including tcktcktck.org and their 250 partners asked for a reduction from developed nations of at least 40% by 2020 without even mentioning a baseline

Multistakeholder processes

NGOs

NOTING WITH CONCERN THAT many international NGOs are beholden to the military, fossil fuel, nuclear, biofuel, large-scale - hydro etc. industries through having corporate members on their boards and through receiving corporate funding

DEEPLY CONCERNED THAT many big international NGOs are not demanding what must be done and instead demand what is expedient or what is in their own self-interest; they are often more concern about sustaining themselves rather than in sustaining the planet. For example in Copenhagen, an umbrella NGO like tcktcktck.org , and many of its members such as 350.org and CAN had weak positions; and unfortunately overshadowed the NGOS

COGNIZANT THAT these NGOs undermined not only other NGOs that were willing to espouse stronger demands, but also States that were willing to lead. Compromising for coverage is a fundamental systemic

constraint preventing change. Also they have displayed ``marginalisation avoidance`` where Big NGOS are also reluctant to risk demanding what they perceive might be deemed to marginalize them and opt for the lowest common denominator. They take the strong position that they themselves even know is needed.

AWARE THAT There is substantial evidence of this within the big environmental movement often attaining and especially retaining charitable status involves limited political activity. Political activity is often perceived to be any position that seriously challenges the status quo. Institutes with charitable status, which support and advance the status quo, are not deemed to be engaged in political activity

CONCERNED THAT NGOS are not required to disclose their source of funding which might put them in a conflict of interest

CONCERNED THAT ALL NGOS, including industry front group participating at the UN Conferences, are not required to reveal sources of funding or to divulge, sources of corporate funding, or the corporate interests of any board members

Labour

BEARING IN MIND THAT labour often opposes for economic reasons strong recommendations to curb the phasing out of fossil fuel industries and that corporations and states have ignored labour demands to institute the fair and just transition principle and phase out fossil fuels

Business

AWARE AND CONCERNED THAT over the years at the UN many polluting industries have set up industry front NGOs

DISTURBED THAT after Rio many states set up a multisectoral round table consensus based- decision-making process which glorifies conflict of interest through the participation of corporate vested interests.

NOTING WITH INCREASING CONCERN THAT states have often devolved their power and responsibility by forming “public private partnerships” which often, through the profit motive, undermine the state obligations to the commons

RECOGNISING THAT the developing countries are aware that there are many barriers to transfer of technology to developing countries. Intellectual Property Rights are one such barrier particularly where the transfer involves development of domestic capacities to absorb, innovate based on the knowledge and commercialization of the results

CONCERNED ABOUT the influence of transnational corporations on the UNFCCC and about the current trend for public/private partnerships in United Nations sustainable development policy; this trend must be discontinued because it inherently compromises the public process. There must be public funds available for promoting socially equitable and environmentally sound practices and for these funds to be channelled into their appropriate international arenas.

In terms of climate change prevention, funds must be channelled into The Fund for the Implementation of the UNFCCC.

Science

EQUALLY CONCERNED THAT the many of the science representatives at the UN are beholden to corporate interests

(ix) Promulgating unsustainable patterns of consumption and disregarding conserving resources

Unsustainable consumption

DISMAYED THAT States, primarily the industrialised states, have not lived up to the years of commitments to move away from the current model of over-consumption;

TAKING INTO ACCCOUNT THAT one of the most serious problems now facing the planet is that associated with historical patterns of unsustainable consumption and production, leading to environmental degradation, aggravation of poverty and imbalances in the development of countries. (4.3 Changing consumption patterns, Agenda 21 UNCED)

DEEPLY DISTURBED THAT around the world many of the basic resources on which future generations will depend for their survival and well-being are being depleted and environmental degradation is intensifying, driven by unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, unprecedented growth in population, widespread and persistent poverty, and social and economic inequality (Preamble, 1.2. International Conference on Population and

Development, 1994)

Some patterns of consumption, production and development have the potential for increasing the vulnerability to natural disasters, particularly of the poor and socially disadvantaged groups. Convention for reducing disasters

REAFFIRMING THAT ...the major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment is the unsustainable pattern of consumption and production, particularly in industrialized countries, which is a matter of grave concern, aggravating poverty and imbalances. (4.3. Changing consumption patterns, Agenda 21. 1992)

Failing to conserve resources

CONVINCED THAT states and citizens around the world must conserve resources

RECALLING the committing to conservation of natural resources in the Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition, 1974)

To assure the proper conservation of natural resources being utilized, or which might be utilized, for food production, all countries must collaborate in order to facilitate the preservation of the environment, including the marine environment. (Sect. 8., Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition, 1974)

AND in on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order,

To promote international co-operation in research and development in exploration and exploitation, conservation

and the legitimate utilization of natural resources and all sources of energy (transfer of technology Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, 1974 IV e).

Recalling also the commitment InWorld Charter of Nature, 1982) World Charter of Nature*Man*

Humans can alter nature and exhaust natural resources by their actions or the consequences and, therefore, must fully recognize the urgency of maintaining the stability and quality of nature and of conserving natural resources and preserving nature (Preamble, UN Resolution, 37/7, World Charter of Nature, 1982) World Charter of Nature, 1982)

RECALLING AS WELLhe commitment in the law of seas to conserve the living resource in the sea The coastal State, taking into account the best scientific evidence available to it, shall ensure through proper conservation and management measures that the maintenance of the living resources in the exclusive economic zone is not endangered by over-exploitation. As appropriate, the coastal State and competent international organizations, whether subregional, regional or global, shall co-operate to this end. (Art. 61. 2. Law of Seas, Conservation of the Living Resource, 1982)

AWARE OF the commitment, in the ending of Deforestation Chapter in Agenda 21 to conserve forest

The present situation calls for urgent and consistent action for conserving and sustaining forest resources.

The greening of suitable areas, in all its component activities, is an effective way of increasing public awareness and participation in protecting and managing forest resources. It should include the consideration of land use and

tenure patterns and local needs and should spell out and clarify the specific objectives of the different types of greening activities (11. 13. Deforestation, Agenda 21, UNCED, 1992)

AWARE of the commitment in the chapter on agriculture to indigenous conservation practices. Collect and record information on indigenous conservation and rehabilitation practices and farming systems as a basis for research and extension programmes. (14.47 c., Agriculture, Agenda 21 UNCED 1992)

(x). Disregarding the plight of the most vulnerable

DISTURBED THAT it is estimated that 50 of the world's poorest countries collectively produce less than one per cent of the global greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change. These countries have undoubtedly been *Because of the global* disproportionately affected by climate change, and the responsibility must be on the shoulders of the developed states. (Humanitarian Forum)

DEEPLY CONCERNED THAT the report 'The Anatomy of a Silent Crisis (2009) by the Global Humanitarian Forum, led by Kofi Annan, the former UN Secretary-General, states that: "Developing countries bear over nine-tenths of the climate change burden: 98 percent of the seriously affected and 99 percent of all deaths from weather-related disasters, along with over 90 percent of the total economic losses. The 50 Least Developed Countries contribute less than 1 percent of global carbon emissions.

DISMAYED THAT The exploitation of human and natural resources by developed states, in developing states, and states in transition has undermined the ability of the latter states to address the impact of climate change

DEEPLY DISTURBED that the main victims of climate change will be the world's poorest nations and communities, and appalled that when per capita emissions are considered it is the high emitting rich who will suffer least while they inflict these emissions on the poor who emit less.

CONCERNED THAT when per capita state emissions are calculated, often a substantial part of the emissions in developing states have resulted from practices of transnational corporations based in developed states; these emissions in the developing states have served to benefit less the developing states than the developed states

CONCERNED THAT there is an unfulfilled climate debt owed by the developed states to the developing states

CONCERNED THAT the discrepancy in the carbon footprint between the industrialised and non-industrialised states continues to be ignore

ALARMED THAT states opposed to the Copenhagen Accord were pressured or coerced to adopt the accord

REAFFIRMING THAT the Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order (**NIEO**) in **calling for** Extension of active assistance to developing countries by the whole international community, free of any political or military conditions (4 k., Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, 1974)

AND REAFFIRMING THAT The solemn proclamation of our united determination to work urgently for the

Establishment of a New International Economic Order based on equity, sovereign equality, interdependence, common interest and co-operation among all States, irrespective of their economic and social systems which shall correct inequalities and redress existing injustices, make it possible to eliminate the widening gap between the developed and the developing countries and ensure steadily accelerating economic and social development and peace and justice for present and future generation... (Preamble, Declaration on the Establishment of a new international economic order, 1974)

AWARE OF the imperative to abide by principle 14 of the Rio Declaration

States should effectively cooperate to discourage or prevent the relocation and transfer to other States of any activities and substances that cause severe environmental degradation or are found to be harmful to human health. (Principle 14 Rio Declaration, 1992)

AWARE THAT Developed countries have an environmental debt to the world since they are responsible for 70% of historical carbon emissions into the atmosphere since 1750.

DEPLORING THAT the long standing commitment to transfer the peace dividend to developing countries has been disregarded:

In 1976 at Habitat 1, a UN conference in Vancouver member states of the United Nations affirmed the following in relation to the military budgets and armaments:

"The waste and misuse of resources in war and armaments should be prevented. All countries should make a firm commitment to promote general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, in

particular in the field of nuclear disarmament. Part of the resources thus released should be utilized so as to achieve a better quality of life for humanity and particularly for the peoples of developing countries" (II, 12 Habitat 1).

CONCERNED ABOUT the reluctance to invest in socially equitable and environmentally sound practices

PROCLAIMING THAT all States shall take measures to extend the benefits of science and technology to all strata of the population and **to both men and women** and to protect them, both socially and materially, from possible harmful effects of the misuse of scientific and technological developments... (Art. 6, Declaration on the Use of Scientific and Technological Progress in the Interests of Peace)

KEEPING IN MIND THAT the major greenhouse gas emitting states have inequitably occupied the atmospheric space of developing states; this occupation of atmospheric space arises as a result of many of the fossil fuel industries function in developing states primarily to benefit not the developing states but the developed ones.

Intellectual Property Rights

OBSERVING THAT that Intellectual property rights (IP) impede the transfer of socially equitable and environmentally sound

REGRETTING THE impact of IP In light of the imminent challenges posed by climate change and the patenting trend (with ownership of technology focused in industrialized nations, a trend likely to continue more robustly in coming years), UNFCCC to agree to measures that overcome the IP barriers and facilitate transfer of technology as well as associated skills and know-how.

ALARMED THAT states opposed to the Copenhagen Accord were pressured or coerced to adopt the accord

(xi) Proposing unconscionable and inequitable funding mechanisms

DEPLORING the failure of current funding proposals to begin to address in any way, the long standing climate debt

MINDFUL THAT the developed states have failed to act on the longstanding commitment to transfer .7 % of GDP for overseas development aid (ODA) to developing and that many developed states have, rather than fulfilling this commitment and adding 7% of the GDP to address the climate debt owed to developing states, These States are diverting or contemplating diverting ODA funds to service the climate debt.

MINDFUL THAT the Breton Woods Institutions, since their inception, have been responsible for unfortunate policies such as the IMF Structural Adjustment programmes and many unsustainable mega projects such as those funded by the World Bank)

DEEPLY CONCERN THAT in the UNFCCC deliberations the proposed funds are to be administered by the World Bank

NOTING WITH CONCERN AS WELL that the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) has failed to achieve its mandate which was to fund projects that would contribute to the discharging of the obligations under the UNFCCC.

REGRETTING THAT the Global Environmental Facility is involved in funding climate change projects, which involve biofuels, nuclear and crop (genetic) engineering. **AND THAT** the GEF is a developed world instrument, and it does not implement policies with the ultimate goals of the UNFCCC in mind, **AND THAT** the GEF is undermined by its being beholden in industry interests, and as such cannot function under its title as the funding mechanism for the UNFCCC.

OBSERVING THAT bilateral funding, often with funder-interest conditions, fails to serve the needs of the disenfranchised, of the vulnerable and of the poor and the objectives of the UNFCCC

RECALLING THAT at Habitat II all states made the following commitment; to ensure that corporations, including transnational corporations comply with ... and international law, including international environment law

(xii) Advocating false solutions and condoning institutions **that undermine the necessary change**

REMINDED OF the failure to act on the commitment made under Chapter 9 of Agenda 21 - the section on Atmosphere, which calls for environmentally sound renewable energy:

New and renewable energy sources are solar thermal, solar photovoltaic, wind, hydro,geothermal, ocean, animal and human power, as referred to in the reports of the Committee on the Development and Utilization of New and Renewable Sources of Energy, prepared specifically for the Conference 2? (See A/CONF.151/PC/119 and A/AC.218/1992/5)

AFFIRMING ALSO THAT nuclear energy is not a solution to climate change because, although promulgated by proponents, as "safe, clean, and cheap", there is clear and valid scientific evidence of its inherent dangers: lack of safety (emissions into both air and ground water), security-linked issues, unresolved (and likely irresolvable) waste disposal problems. And finally "there is the inextricable link between civil nuclear energy and the development of nuclear arms." (Dr. Fred Knelman, author of "Nuclear Energy: The Unforgiving Technology".)

NOTING WITH DISMAY THAT the serious equity, health, and security consequences, especially on the land of indigenous peoples and marginalized communities of large-scale biofuel large-scale hydroelectric projects, and ecologically, and socially unacceptable location of small-scale hydro projects

NOTING WITH DISMAY THAT Carbon offsetting schemes, instead of reducing emissions, undermine real measures to tackle climate change. Offsetting schemes encourage individuals, businesses and governments to emit dangerous carbon into the atmosphere and in effect results in the UNFCCC and especially the Kyoto Protocol to be used to emit rather than to cut emissions in breach of article 2.

APPREHENSIVE OF the use of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) as a means of discharging obligations in energy generation projects; the CDMs have been deemed neither to have benefited the developing countries nor to be in accordance with the principles of the UNFCCC.

CONCURRING WITH the developing states at the climate change meeting in Bangkok (Bangkok climate change talks: 28 September - 9 October 2009) that "market-based" or "market centre approaches, which are being proposed by developed states must be opposed because they will not serve the needs of development

CONVINCED That primary obstacle to the use of more sustainable forms of energy is the enormous amounts of government economic subsidies that perpetuate the myths of "cheap" fossil fuels and large-scale hydropower or "clean" nuclear power. (United Nations E/CN.17/2001/6/Add.5, Multi-Stake Holder Dialogue on Sustainable Energy and Transport)

CONVINCED THAT market-centre approaches are neither an efficient nor an equitable framework for the achievement of the UNFCCC objectives

CONCURRING WITH the Report prepared for the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues THAT The International Panel on Forests cites, among others, discriminatory international trade, trade distorting policies, structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), external debt, market distortions and market failure, perverse subsidies, undervaluation of wood and non-wood forest products, and poorly regulated investments as the international underlying causes of deforestation (2007: Report to Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues)

CONCURRING AS WELL with the Report prepared for the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues that “The environmental justice approach which strikes at the underlying causes of global warming was defeated when the Convention took a more market-based approach as seen in the proposals of the Kyoto Protocol.” Annex 1 countries (38 industrialized countries) pledged that by 2012 they will reduce their emissions by an average of 5.2 percent below the 1990 levels by buying “carbon credits” from less polluting countries or corporations and by investing in projects which “sequester” or “store” carbon. None of the three market-based “flexible mechanisms” tackle directly the physical root causes of global warming: the transfer of fossil fuels from underground, where they

are effectively isolated from the atmosphere, to the air”

AND WITH A FURTHER STATEMENTin the Report: The flexible mechanisms allow Northern countries to avoid or delay reducing their greenhouse gas emissions. The Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) allows Northern countries to finance projects in the South to mitigate climate change in return for credits, which are banked and ultimately used to license continued pollution at home. Joint Implementation means that Northern countries can finance projects aimed at mitigating climate change in other Northern (often Eastern European) and Southern countries, receiving credits accordingly. With these in place, traders and bankers have started establishing carbon exchanges in those countries where major stock exchanges are based. (2007: Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues)

CONCURRING WITH the Cochabamba People’s Agreement that “under capitalism, Mother Earth is converted into a source of raw materials, and human beings into consumers and a means of production, into people that are seen as valuable only for what they own, and not for what they are”. AND THAT “Capitalism requires a powerful military industry for its processes of accumulation and imposition of control over territories and natural resources, suppressing the resistance of the peoples”.

FULLY AWARE THATInternational Trade agreements, such as GATT, and the subsequent WTO, along with regional trade agreements, have undermined international resolve to seriously address unsustainable practices, and to enforce regulations that would advance and in many cases have been used to undermine development, by sovereign states, of socially equitable environmentally safe and sound renewable energy, transportation, agriculture,

AND THATgiven that all states have ratified the UNFCCC and are mutually bound by the UNFCCC, if an fossil

fuel exporting states wishes, for environmental reasons, to end production of fossil fuel, other importing states cannot take the exporter to the WTO Tribunal because the states are mutually bound by an existing instrument. (Presentation of the Monitoring section of the WTO at 2009 WTO Conference)

(xiii) Reneging on commitments to socially equitable, environmentally safe and sound transportation renewable energy, transportation, agriculture,

MINDFUL THAT in 1976 at the Habitat I Conference, there was a commitment to address the problem of transportation:

Consideration should be given to the radical reversal of current trends, both in terms of facilities for and modes of transport in order to prevent further deterioration of the situation where larger cities are congested with private vehicles which in most countries cater only to a minority while adequate public transport is unavailable to urban and rural residents. (Recommendation C 14 Transportation and communication, a Habitat, I 1976)

Policies on transportation and communication should promote desired patterns of development to satisfy the needs of the majority of the population, to assure the distribution of activities to favour mass transportation, and to reduce congestion and pollution by motor vehicles. (Recommendation C 14 Transportation and communication, b Habitat, I 1976)

STRESSING THAT at in 1996 at Habitat II Conference every member state made a commitment to move away from car dependency

CONCERNED THAToften labour engaged in non-renewable resource extraction, including the fossil fuel industry and the nuclear industry are reluctant to oppose the continued existence of industrial practices that are harmful to human health and the environment, and that labour would not be so reluctant if there were the implementation of the fair and just transition principle; and that often the call by labour for a fair and just transition to socially equitable and environmentally safe and sound energy is ignored by industry and governments.

It is crucial that nothing prevent governments from taking steps to deal with climate change, this includes intellectual property rights that pose an absurd barrier to the implementation of the UNFCCC

(xiv) Condoning deforestation and destruction of the forests through REDD

OBSERVING THATthe recognition, in UNCED, of the impact of deforestation has not been addressed;

Forests world-wide have been and are being threatened by uncontrolled degradation and conversion to other types of land uses, influenced by increasing human needs, agricultural expansion and environmentally harmful mismanagement, including, for example, lack of adequate forest-fire control and anti-poaching measures, unsustainable commercial logging, overgrazing and... the impacts of loss and degradation of forests are in the form of soil erosion, loss of biological diversity, damage to wildlife habitats and degradation of watershed areas, deterioration of the quality of life and reduction of the options for sustainable development [socially equitable and

FULLY AWARE THAT(i) unsustainable forest management is the main cause of forest degradation, while the conversion of forests into agricultural land is by far the main cause of deforestation. (ii)The expansion of large-scale agro-industrial monocultures for food, fibre and, increasingly, energy production is both an important direct cause of deforestation and an important underlying cause of forest loss(iii)The expansion of monocultures on existing arable land causes cattle ranching and other forms of agriculture to move towards forest areas**and other natural ecosystems.** (iv)Biodiversity i.e. Monoculture plantations are usually (not always) exotics therefore replacement (after cutting) creates problems for endemic species(v) Sustainable Livelihoods ARE IGNORED. Indigenous Peoples use their forests for food, shelter, water supply, medicines etc.(vi)Monocultures provide no protection for endemics or livelihoods and the risk from monocultures of indigenous species poses a potential threat to biodiversity (presentation, Sandy Gauntlett Pacific Indigenous

Peoples Environment Coalition: Presentation to the Peoples Conference, Cochabamba)

CONDEMNING the flawed REDD programme **AND CONCERNED THAT** there was a meeting, regarding the REDD programme, in Norway: While REDD is a UN programme under United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), only those states that have taken note or been coerced into taking note of the Copenhagen Accord had been invited to participate in the deliberations in Norway.

CONCERNED ALSO THAT corporations including transnational corporation have been granted concessions in forests in developing states and on Indigenous lands, to log or to plant bio-fuel plantations, which have been in violation of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The REDD program is being used to give carbon credits to transnational corporations to offset years of destructive practices supported or condoned by major industrialised states.

RECALLING THAT in 1996, at Habitat II, all states made a commitment to ensure that all corporations including transnational corporations comply with all international agreements, including international environmental agreements. These agreements would include the UNFCCC and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

(xv) Ignoring the impact of militarism on climate change

ALARMED THAT the IPCC and COP15 have not calculated the impact of militarism on greenhouse gas emissions

RECALLING THAT at the 1992 United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development, all agreed, in Chapter 33 of Agenda 21, to the reallocation of military expenses.

BECOMING more and more aware of the dangers related to climate change, and the potential security implications related to resource conflict, and militarism,

DEEPLY CONCERNED THAT foreign refusal to supply fossil fuel for the consumption of developed states

could be deemed to violate "strategic national interest" of developed states and result in military intervention,

DEEPLY CONCERNED THAT in violation of international law, some developed nations, in the pursuit of resources, are flagrantly engaging in war crimes under the guise of “human security”, “humanitarian intervention”, “responsibility to protect” or the “will to intervene”; these guises have been used to justify the policy of “preventive/pre-emptive military strikes which contravenes the ultimate international crime of aggression.

REAFFIRMING THAT warfare is inherently destructive of sustainable development" (Rio Declaration, Principle 24, UNCED, 1992), and that there must be rigorous adherence to and enforcement of the [1978] Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques (ENMOD),

REAFFIRMING THAT the commitment made in Chapter 33 of Agenda 21, to reallocate resources presently committed to military purposes, and the importance of implementing this commitment made, and to transfer part of the peace dividend to assist the developing states in the development of socially equitable environmentally safe and sound renewable energy, transportation, agriculture, forestry etc. These resources should be put into a fund for the implementation of the UNFCC.

NOTING THAT in Agenda 21, there was an estimate of the annual cost of implementing all the AGENDA 21 provisions each year, and that a reallocation of the GLOBAL military budget could begin to seriously facilitate implementation of these commitments,

AWARE THAT at the September, 2007 DPI/NGO Conference, the Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was presented with a declaration calling for the IPCC to include a full analysis of the contribution of militarism to greenhouse gas emissions.

AWARE THAT states adopted Principle 24 in the 1992 Rio Declaration, UNCED: this principle affirms that “Warfare is inherently destructive of sustainable development.” This principle confirms that military actions create a barrier to sustainable development.

(xvi) Defying international Law and Obligations

MINDFUL THAT the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the Chamber on Environmental Matters under the ICJ are competent organs to address the failure of states to comply with obligations incurred under the UNFCCC; Also the international Climate Justice Tribunal, under the UNFCCC, proposed by Peoples Conference held in Cochabamba will serve as an important new organ to advance compliance with the UNFCCC

CONCLUDING THAT, in the apparent absence of an international definition of what constitutes criminal negligence, there appears to be common components within national statutes of what constitutes criminal negligence.

Canadian common law provides useful guidance because Canada has a system of law drawn from both the Common Law and the Civil Code systems.

Under Canadian law: Environmental negligence suits focus on compensation for loss caused by unreasonable conduct that damages legally protected interests. Unreasonable conduct means doing something that a prudent or reasonable person would not do, or failing to do something that a reasonable person would do. The plaintiff must establish certain key elements of the tort— cause in fact and proximate cause, damages, legal duty, and breach of the standard of care. Note that fault may be found even in the case of *unintended* harm if it stems from *unreasonable* conduct.

The Criminal Code (Section 219) is even clearer that lack of intent to harm is no defence if damage results from conscious acts performed in careless disregard for others: “Everyone is criminally negligent who (a) in doing anything, or (b) in omitting to do anything that it is his duty to do, shows wanton or reckless disregard for the lives or safety of other persons” (where ‘duty’ means a duty imposed by law). Significantly, Section 222(5) (b) states that “a person commits homicide when, *directly or indirectly, by any means*, he causes the death of a human being, by being negligent (emphasis added) (Cited by Bill Rees in “is Canada criminally negligent”)

United Kingdom common law also provides similar guidance. Under United Kingdom Law: Criminal Negligence need only show that a person failed to act within the standards of a reasonable man. The WHO has confirmed that there are already large numbers of fatalities and will be many more as a result of the failure to act on climate change prevention. Manslaughter can be defined expressly In terms of negligence, but it must be gross. Additionally all statutory offences do not need to employ the word negligence but often impose liability for negligence. The minimum fault element should be based on the reasonable cause to believe. The AR4 IPCC report provides reasonable cause to believe and this is very significantly accentuated by the recent accepted science that things are actually far worse than stated in AR4. You are not required to prove a state of mind although the accused knowledge of the facts is relevant in determining reasonable cause. The offence is still committed if the accused has made an unreasonable mistake of fact and this is a limit to the defence that a person did not know. The need for a mistake to be reasonable as a defence is actually less relevant than before

since the *Minor v DPP* case in 2000. Parliament requires mistakes to be based on reasonable grounds as well. The Statutes often put the burden of proof on the accused such as within the Trade Description Act

Brazilian, US, Chinese, Spanish, and Indian codes to be reviewed and translated

CONVINCED THAT under the transboundary principle, that has become a peremptory norm, all states have the responsibility, when carrying out activities in their own jurisdiction- water air and land to not impact on other states, not only on adjacent states. It is clear that the activities in the major greenhouse gas emitting states have impacted on other states. States, as signatories of the UNFCCC, have a legal duty to keep greenhouse gas emissions below the dangerous anthropogenic level. It could be argued that by continuing to ignore their responsibility to other states and by not discharging their legal duty to seriously reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the major greenhouse gas emitting states, especially those with high per capita emissions, are guilty of gross negligence and even criminal negligence. Not acting to reduce greenhouse gases demonstrates dereliction of duty and unreasonable conduct because it is an action that a prudent or reasonable person would not do. A person may be considered to be criminally negligent when he/she does something or omits to do anything that it is his/hers duty to do, and shows wanton or reckless disregard for the lives or safety of other persons

The lack of intent to harm may not constitute a defence if damage results from conscious acts performed in careless disregard for others: The basis of the evaluations should be that “Everyone is criminally negligent who (a) in doing anything, or (b) in omitting to do anything that it is his duty to do, shows wanton or reckless disregard for the lives or safety of other persons” (where ‘duty’ means a duty imposed by law).

CONCERNED THAT climate change has not been perceived as a threat to peace and security and security is narrowly defined as military security and does not include environment; the United Nations has not adopted Olaf Palme’s concept of ‘common security’, which did include environmental security.

DEEPLY CONCERNED THAT climate change poses an environmental threat to peace and security on a scale not yet seen **AND THAT** there has not yet been a case, related to climate change as a peace and security issue, under Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter brought to the International Court of Justice

AWARE THAT under article 5 of the Rome statute of the International Criminal Court:

the International Criminal Court shall have jurisdiction limited to the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole and that these include, The crime of genocide, and Crimes against humanity;

DEEPLY CONCERNED THAT international legal instruments such as the Criminal Court have not been made available to all states in an equitable manner because of the condition imposed on persecution and prosecution of state leaders who are deemed to be guilty of crimes against humanity. In order for the criminal court to investigate the state must not have a legitimate legal system. What has resulted is that there is a biased determination of what constitutes a legitimate legal system;

this may be result of the effects of unbalanced power structures within the United Nations.

What must be done in WARSAW?

MEMBER STATES ARE URGED TO AFFIRM (AND TO ACT):

I. Committing to substantial reductions of greenhouse gas emissions, conserving sinks and Establishing Pathways and methodologies to achieve cuts

(1)THATif the obligation in Art 2 of the UNFCCC- stabilization of the greenhouse gas emissions below the dangerous level- is to be discharged emission pathways to eliminate CO₂ must arrive at the pre-industrial level of 278 ppm at least by 2050 and that the rise in temperature must remain below 1 °C temperature

Based on current knowledge and current changes happening to practically all ice masses, especially the Arctic, the goal as defined in the UNFCCC as dangerous should be to keep the global temperature below a 1c rise in temperature.

(2) THAT time frames should be imposed to exclude any risk of global climate catastrophe. These timeframes should give sufficient consideration to tipping point effects such as ice sheet melt, forest dieback and Arctic methane carbon and other feedback triggered mechanisms that will cause runaway global heating. This today means nothing less than an all-out global emergency response to reduce global emissions at the greatest possible speed to return to 278 ppm CO₂ by at the latest 2050. And that all states must embark immediately on time-bound phasing out of fossil fuel use and of subsidies for fossil fuel, nuclear energy and large scale hydro projects under all forms.

(3) THAT Because of the global urgency, there must be the political will to strive to return earth's temperature to its pre-industrial level. And strict time frames must be imposed, so that overall global emissions will begin to be reversed as of 2011. There must be a global target of at least 30% below 1990 levels by 2015, at least 50% below by 2020, at least 75% by 2030, at least 85% by 2040 and at least 100% below by 2050, while adhering to the precautionary principle, the differentiated responsibility principle, and the fair and just transition principle. Under the Framework Convention, every state signatory incurred the obligation to conserve carbon sinks; thus the destruction of sinks, including deforestation and elimination of bogs must end immediately. The ultimate goal is to return temperatures to pre-industrial levels and return atmospheric CO₂ back to 278ppm at least by 2050.

(4) THAT Baseline research has revealed that only if the CO₂ levels are not beyond 278 ppm will the rise in temperature be maintained below 1°C, which has been assessed by many scientists as being the danger level.

(5)

(5) THAT to succeed in being below the dangerous 1°C, member states of the United Nations must commit to remove between 1105.62GT CO₂ and 1842GT CO₂ these proposed numbers are based on initial research and would require further in detail analysis from the atmosphere (see tables 1 and 2). The initial removal phase should start in 2011 and run to 2020, with a research program to determine the required GT GHG to be removed to achieve 278ppm of CO₂ by 2050 and socially equitable and environmentally safe and sound methods of CO₂ reduction. By the latest in 2020, between 36.85 GT CO₂ yr⁻¹ and 61.42 GT CO₂ yr⁻¹ must be removed. In the period 2010-2020 natural carbon sinks must be restored.

Conserving Sinks

(6) THAT Destructive land use practices including in the rural; the urban and peri-urban environment must end.

Deforestation and all other depletion of sinks must end immediately and developing nations whose development will be affected must be compensated. There must be caps on yearly emissions of GHG as per table 1 and graphs 2 and 3 and as required for the less than 1°C target.

Establishing Pathways and methodologies to achieve cuts

(7) THAT emission reductions should be based on global caps for emissions of GHG and must follow a smooth path as shown in Graphs 1, 2 and 3. Carbon elimination must not be used to offset reduction targets, and must be done through socially equitable and environmentally safe and sound methods.

Advancing methodology to achieve required reductions within timeframes that allow climate change prevention

(8) THAT The emissions reduction required to avoid dangerous climate change and the small timeframes available to achieve this are so extreme that the methods used to achieve the required reductions must be based on the maximum achievable targets within the shortest timeframes as described in diagram .

Diagram 6 Source Richard Levicki

(9) that targets must be set based on current science; research indicates that current science supports the calculation of maximum emissions which we have calculated to be a maximum of 360GT CO₂.

ii. Discharging obligations

(10) THAT all member states of the United Nations must discharge the obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate and THAT the objective of the UNFCCC was to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and conserve carbon sinks, and that under Article 2, the signatories incurred the following obligation; “stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere must be at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.

(11) THAT states must respect the emerging and current science which affirms that this dangerous level equates to a temperature below 1°C, which is the point at which global systems on land, water and air will be so affected as to create vicious feedback cycles and destabilise many ecosystems and human societies. For the avoidance of doubt we repeat that this is:

A paper published in Nature (no. 458) on the 30 April 2009 which is the up to date current science on climate change emission thresholds states that in order to have a 8-37% chance of not exceeding 2 Degrees we can only emit 886GT CO₂ between 2000 and 2050. Between 2000 and 2011 we have used 363GT CO₂ or 41% of the total budget for a high chance of exceeding 2 Degrees. We are currently at 0.78 Degrees above pre-industrial temperatures and possibly committed to at least 0.6 Degrees of further warming (Lenton et al). At 1.5 Degree Lenton et al suggest that forest dieback will emit an additional 100Gt of CO₂. Reducing the 886 GT limit to 776GT. An important recent paper by Turney and Jones (Does the Agulhas Current amplify global temperatures during super-interglacials?, Chris S.M. Turney, Richard T. Jones, Journal of Quaternary Science, Volume 25, Issue 6, pages 839–843, September 2010) suggests that at 1.9 Degrees there is a high risk of a rise in sea levels of between 6.6 and 9.4 m and serious disturbance to regional ocean circulations that can amplify warming effects.

Based on these facts it is clear that an agreement must be reached this year.

(12) THAT all states must invoke the precautionary principle that states:

"Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing such measures, ..." To achieve this, such policies and measures should take into account different socio-economic contexts, be comprehensive, cover all relevant sources, sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases and adaptation, and comprise all economic sectors. Efforts to address climate change should be carried out cooperatively by all Parties. (Article 3. Framework Convention on Climate Change).

(13) THAT states must interpret "measures" to involve "prevention" rather than after-act "mitigation" - preventing something from happening and anticipating or developing a clean-up technology. And THAT adaptation - mitigation should not be the foci of climate change negotiations. The foci should be prevention. - preventing not just mitigating and adapting to errors

(14) THAT obligations were incurred in the Framework Convention on Climate Change "to protect the climate system for present and future generations" ;and THAT states must respect the rights of future generations by acting now to prevent the devastating impacts of climate change, which could also threaten international peace

and security

(15) THAT with any agreement, only mechanisms which lead to the reductions of all emissions will serve to discharge the obligation under article 2 of the UNFCCC.

(16) THAT the state must implement the principle in article 3 2 of the UNFCCC: The Parties should protect the climate system for the benefit of present and future generations of humankind, on the basis of equity and in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. Accordingly, the developed country Parties should take the lead in combating climate change

AND THAT the signatories of the UN Convention for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage (UNCNCH) incurred an obligation to respect the rights of future generation to their natural and cultural heritage

(17) THAT states must discharged the obligation under Article 3 Principle 2 UNFCCC) to take into consideration

The specific needs and special circumstances of developing country Parties, especially those that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, and of those Parties, especially developing country Parties, that would have to bear a disproportionate or abnormal burden under the Convention, should be given full consideration.

(18) THAT the obligation, to provide the right to a safe environment, incurred in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, must be discharged, all states must ratify the Convention and delinquent states must be compelled to comply with this obligation in the Convention **AND THAT** states must put in place a child advocate to facilitate children's ability to challenge states regarding their state's refusal to take action under international and national laws to protect the rights of future generations and to provide a safe environment

(19) THAT states must give children access to legal aid and advocacy services to facilitate children's ability to challenge states regarding their state's refusal to take action under international and national laws to protect the rights of these children and future generations and to provide a safe environment. It is important to note that by the age of 18 these children will no longer have the ability to seek remedy for the current breaches of their

rights to a healthy and bright future.

(20) THAT to prevent dangerous anthropogenic level of greenhouse gas emissions major greenhouse gas producing states signatories of the UNFCCC must no longer spend time on devising devious strategies to offset their emissions and avoid emissions

Committing to the conserving of carbon sinks

(21) THAT worldwide depletion of carbon sinks must end immediately, deforestation must end, including the logging of old-growth/original forests, which are major carbon sinks; and THAT all global carbon sinks such as peat bogs, the oceans etc. must be rigorously protected as a major priority

III. Declaring of a state of emergency

(22) THAT states must not succumb to entrenched immovable national interests that serve to dismiss the state of emergency and block serious legally binding instruments The actual and anticipated impacts of climate change as well as the unintended consequences of climate change, and the short-term and long-term effects that are known and yet to be known have all contributed to the state of emergency. Any denial of the state of emergency is eclipsed by the moral imperative and legal obligation to abide by the precautionary principle The time for procrastination about climate change has long since passed; the world is in a state of emergency and further inaction is gross if not criminal negligence.

(23) THAT there must be a formal acknowledgement from IPCC scientists submitted to the UNFCCC Secretariat that the world is almost beyond dangerous climatic interference and that the world is facing a real and rapidly rising risk of (never ending) global climate catastrophe. A state of dire planetary emergency must be declared and genuine political will must be summoned to address the emergency;

IV Adhering to peremptory norms

(24) THAT states must ratify the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties and must adhere to Article 53 and not enter any legally binding agreement that would be in conflict with a peremptory norm (jus cogens) of

general international law

(25) THAT states must accept that “Peremptory norm“ are international norms that can be extracted from years of international instruments agreed to by a broad group of states, from widely divergent geographical areas, functioning under a range of legal systems,

(26) THAT states must acknowledge that peremptory norms can be drawn from Conventions, Covenants and Treaties, which have been signed and ratified, and are in force; from Conference Action plans which have been adopted by Consensus, or from UN General Assembly Resolutions and Declaration adopted at the UNGA. **And THAT** these norms are derived from instruments that guarantee human rights including social and Economic and Cultural rights , civil and political rights, labour rights, women’s’ rights and indigenous rights; that ensure social justice, that protect and conserve the environment, move away from the overconsumptive model of development and reduce the ecological footprint and that prevent war and conflict

(27) AND THAT The Copenhagen Accord will lead to a violation of peremptory norms and as such must be declared null and void

V. Integrating important considerations in the UNFCCC processes

Water

(28) THAT states must include in the UNFCCC processes serious consideration of the vital role of the depletion of water as a both as a contributor to and a consequence of climate change must be included in the discussion on climate change

(29) THAT states must prevent destructive development processes resulting from large dams, river diversions, water installations and irrigation schemes, erosion, sedimentation, deforestation and desertification have led to increased land degradation, and the creation of reservoirs has, in some cases, resulted in adverse effects on ecosystems. Many of these problems have arisen from a development model that is environmentally destructive and from a lack of public awareness and education about surface and groundwater resource protection. Ecological and human health effects are the measurable consequences, although the means to monitor them are inadequate or non-existent in many countries. There is a widespread lack of perception of the linkages between the development, management, use and treatment of water resources and aquatic ecosystems.

(30) THAT states must adopt a preventive approach to avoid irreversibility or costly subsequent measures to

rehabilitate, treat and develop new water supplies”

(31) THAT the human right to water must be guaranteed, which would involve the mandatory conservation of water, the prohibition of the privatization of the water supply, and the ending of the depletion of water resources especially those linked to the fossil fuel industries and the spurious climate change solutions such as nuclear and biofuel. And consequently, the UN General Assembly Resolution Recognizing Access to Clean Water, Sanitation as a Human Right must be adopted and implemented by all states

Biodiversity

(32) THAT states must seriously consider the impact of climate change on biodiversity as well as the impact on climate change resulting from loss of biodiversity

(33) THAT In the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity, all member States of the United Nations should have signed and ratified the convention on biological diversity and implement the necessary legislation to ensure compliance. All states must end deforestation, preserve forests and protect biodiversity and states must recognize the vital processes in the forests – ones that have taken place over millions of years, upon which Indigenous peoples depend. All states must adopt the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and enact the necessary legislation to ensure compliance. States must seek and respect Indigenous knowledge.

(34) THAT the importance of Traditional Knowledge and practices not been given in developing strategies must be given prominence in the UNFCCC.

Human rights

(35) THAT the UNFCCC processes must integrate considerations about the impact of climate change on human rights including the rights of climate refugees.

“Climate change has many implications for the effective enjoyment of human rights, and for Nations human

rights obligations and commitments". (United Nations Human Rights Council Website October 2010, www2.ohchr.org)

(36) THAT the human rights perspective is indispensable to the ongoing negotiations leading to the year-end WARSAW Climate Change Conference As it has been in all the Climate Change Conferences.

Rights of women

(37) THAT States must consider that women, particularly rural and indigenous women will be disproportionately impacted by climate change

Hunger and food security

(38) THAT in the UNFCCC processes the impact of climate change on hunger and food security has not been sufficiently addressed at the UNFCCC negotiations. The longstanding commitment to eradicate hunger is absent.

“Time is short. Urgent and sustained action is vital. The conference, therefore, calls upon all peoples expressing their will as individuals, and through their Governments, and non-governmental organizations to work together to bring about the end of the age old scourge of hunger. (Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition, 1974)

Land use

(39) THAT the impact of inappropriate and uncontrolled land use on climate change or the impact of false climate change solutions on Land use has not been sufficiently addressed in the UNFCCC negotiations.

“Inappropriate and uncontrolled land uses are a major cause of degradation and depletion of land resources. Present land use often disregards the actual potentials, carrying capacities and limitations of land resources as well as their diversity in space. It is estimated that the world's population, now at 5.4 billion, will be 6.25 billion by the turn of the century. The need to increase food production to meet the expanding needs of the

population will put enormous pressure on all natural resources, including land'' (14.34., Agriculture, Agenda 21, UNCED, 1992)

AND THAT

''Land degradation is the most important environmental problem affecting extensive areas of land in both developed and developing countries. The problem of soil erosion is particularly acute in developing countries, while problems of salinization, water logging, soil pollution and loss of soil fertility are increasing in all countries. (14.44. Agriculture, Agenda 21, UNCED, 1992)

(40) THAT the serious equity, health, and security consequences, especially on the land of indigenous peoples and marginalized communities of large-scale biofuel and large-scale hydroelectric projects, and ecologically and socially unacceptable location of small-scale hydro projects **must end**

(41) THAT the mitigation and adaptation processes such as monocrop plantations and biofuel that are being proposed under the Kyoto Protocol are producing adverse impacts on indigenous people must end.

Vegetable protein

(42) THAT the contribution to greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the dependency on animal protein has not been sufficiently addressed in the UNFCCC and IPCC processes. And THAT evidence indicating the substantial contribution, to the greenhouse gases such as methane, of reliance on animal protein must be acknowledged. and there must be an international effort to move from animal based protein to vegetable protein.

VI Changing the Commission on Sustainable Development

(43) THAT that the Commission on Sustainable Development, in light of the failure in negotiations of CSD15 must produce a negotiated outcome on climate change and other issues, be upgraded to a Council, which would be able to convene at any time to deal with new or emerging environmental threats. This Council should be based outside the US, for example in Switzerland, and governments must send mandated experts to negotiate real solutions to the issues. It should be an umbrella organisation that oversees the sustainability debate monitoring and intervening where and when international negotiations are failing. In terms of climate change this is now a crisis issue requiring intervention. International agreements should be designed within the context of a prevailing philosophy that should be outlined within the context of a CSD umbrella agreement on

all the major issues. This document should be the basis of future negotiations at CSD, and should build on UNCED agreements and others pre-WSSD, which was a step backwards;

Additionally the Energy Caucus at CSD must immediately adopt a new policy position based on the targets stated in this petition. The current inactive members of the co-ordinating committee must allow others to take action in an active manor and this work as well as climatechangeWARSAW.org must be filtered into their mandate. Since COP organisations have failed to take action and have also tried to sideline CSD in terms of climate, the CSD energy Caucus must start to play an active role in the climate change debate and the CSD process, demanding for and taking action to introduce immediate adoptions of the actions, targets and timeframes outlined in this document.

All preparations and decisions to date for Rio +20 must be scrapped and a new agenda set. This must be to set the global human and environmental systems back on track to a sustainable future. With an open agenda dealing with the issues in a holistic fashion that truly attempts to manage the earth in a sustainable way that preserves the environment on which we all depend.

(44) THAT there should be no privileges and immunities for individuals serving on constituted bodies established under the Kyoto Protocol or any other protocols and GO or NGO bodies, in regards to dispensing their duties to society under the law. (Please refer to SUBSIDIARY BODY FOR IMPLEMENTATION, Thirtieth Session, Bonn, 1–10 June, 2009, Thirtieth Session, Item 14 (d) of the provisional agenda);

VII respecting the emerging and current science

IPPC

(45) THAT instead of waiting many years for an agreed document THE IPCC must use a system that is sensitive to the rapid changes in scientific understanding of climate change and not be constrained by the requirement to seek close to scientific certainty

(46) THAT the need for independence in matters of factual science on this crucial issue for humanity is essential. It is thus critical that the IPCC must be independent of national, economic or political vested interests and that an assessment of the independence of members must be carried out, and any member who has been shown to be currently funded by the fossil fuel, military, nuclear, biofuel industry must step down. Members of

the IPCC who do not base their analysis on planetary science and facts must be deemed to be negligent and in dereliction of duty and subject to legal recourse;

(47) THAT the mandate of the IPCC must change and IPCC scientists must be permitted to fully acknowledge the urgency and be able to prescribe solutions and proscribe spurious solutions;

(48) THAT there must be a formal acknowledgement from IPCC scientists submitted to the UNFCCC Secretariat that the world is beyond dangerous climate interference facing a real and rapidly rising risk of (never ending) global climate catastrophe which is a state of dire planetary emergency – this is required to generate genuine political will to act to address the emergency;

(49) THAT scientists, involved with climate change, must move away from the current tendency to be constrained by the political barriers that have delineated the criteria for their research, and return to advocating solutions based on the climate science. That would require agreement that the rise in temperature must remain below 1 °C temperature- the dangerous level- and that targets and time frames must follow the pathway to eliminate CO₂ by arriving at the pre-industrial level of 278 ppm at least by 2050 and

(50) THAT the issue of tipping points be considered integrally within any future agreement and IPCC Reports. The thresholds that are likely to result in steep changes of level of impacts once triggered must be addressed. This includes those relating to Amazonian forest dieback, ice melt, El Nino and Atlantic Thermohaline Circulation. Please see flow diagram 1. The IPCC Special Report on Emission Scenarios must include feedback effects.

(51) THAT not only the states must adhere to the precautionary principle but also the IPCC scientists must adhere to the principle and must ensure that the percentage of concurrence is not so high that it almost reflects scientific certainty

(52) THAT ‘after the fact mitigation’ of and ‘adaptation’ to climate change should not be used to justify inaction in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and in conserving of carbon sinks and in undermining the resolve to prevent the dangerous anthropogenic level of interference with the climate

(53) THAT there must be a formal acknowledgement, submitted to the UNFCCC Secretariat, from a group of climate scientists that the world is beyond dangerous climate interference and that the world is facing a real and rapidly rising risk of (never ending) global climate catastrophe- a state of dire planetary emergency. This acknowledgement will hopefully serve to finally move the political will to act.

(54) THAT the mandate of the IPCC must change and IPCC scientists must be permitted to fully acknowledge the urgency and be able not only to prescribe solutions and projects that are integrated into the local ecosystems, working within the structure of the natural environment but also to proscribe actions that could be socially inequitable and environmentally unsound;

VIII Discontinuing the UNFCCC negotiating processes which impede change

(55) THAT rather than descending to the lowest common denominator in assessing climate targets in all international negotiating arenas, the strongest percentage emission reduction and targets required to discharge the obligation article 2 of the UNFCCC must be agreed to in WARSAW **AND THAT** at COP 19 deliberations must be based on the current and emerging science

(56) THAT the entrenched immovable national interests that serve to block serious legally binding instruments in WARSAW; must be prevented from blocking the adoption, in the General Assembly, of a strong legally binding agreement on climate change. Article 18 of the Charter of the United Nations reads: "Decisions of the General Assembly on important questions shall be made by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting. These questions shall include recommendations with respect to the maintenance of international peace and security." Undoubtedly, the impact of climate change could be deemed to fall under this category. In WARSAW, given the urgency of the issue of climate change, and its potential effects on the global population and on the political, economic, ecological and social global systems, the requirement for consensus must be waived, and a binding agreement on all states will be deemed to exist, if 66 % of the states concur. It is possible that a majority of the member states could agree to a strong legally binding "WARSAW protocol" to the UNFCCC. A strong Protocol to the UNFCCC could then be used against the delinquent states, and a case could be taken to the International Court of Justice under the UNFCCC, which has been signed and ratified by 192 states. Even most of the delinquent states including Canada and the US, have signed and ratified the UNFCCC. If not 66%, then the proposal made by Papua New Guinea at COP 15 should be in place in WARSAW; the proposal was that the state parties to the Convention should strive

for Consensus with a fall back on 75%. It should be noted that the UNFCCC was adopted by 150 of the then 188 members of the United Nations (79%) and that under article 2 of the Montreal Protocol, Parties can if

all efforts at consensus have been exhausted, and no agreement reached, adopt decisions by a two-thirds majority.

(57) THAT the practice of anglocentricity at the United Nations must end, and full translation in the six official languages must be provided, not only in the plenary but also in all working and negotiating groups. In the working groups and in the plenary, the disproportion of interventions and domination by the umbrella Developed groups must no longer be permitted.

Revisiting NGO Accreditation and private

sector accreditation NGOs

(58) THAT the influence of transnational corporations on the UNCCC processes, as well as on international NGOs raises serious concerns.

(59) THAT the current trend for public/private partnerships in United Nations sustainable development policy be reversed since it inherently compromises participants and for these funds to be channelled into their appropriate international arenas. In terms of energy directed to The Fund for the Implementation of the UNFCCC.

(60) THAT if governmental and non-governmental organizations fail to advocate bold and adequate action and if they undermine efforts of states to address the issue of climate change they should face the appropriate charges under national and internal law;

(61) THAT Charters and licences of Transnational corporations which violate international laws related to guaranteeing human rights, ensuring social justice, preventing war and conflict, protecting and conserving the environment, and increasing the ecological footprint.

Must be revoked.

(62) THAT NGOs must disclose their source of funding and if NGOs are funded by corporations or foundations which might put them in a conflict of interest they must recuse themselves from the process

(63) THAT All NGOS, including industry front group participating at the UN Conferences, including COP 17 in WARSAW must reveal any sources of funding, such as that of corporate funding, or any board members that might jeopardise the willingness of the NGOS to take strong positions or that might seriously place the NGOS in conflict of interest

IX Moving from the overconsumptive pattern of development Embracing a different lifestyle and fostering conservation

Moving from overconsumption pattern of development

(64) THAT all states must act on the commitment to move away from the overconsumptive model of development

(65) THAT to achieve socially equitable and environmentally-sound and a higher quality of life for all people, Governments *should reduce and shall* eliminate unsustainable patterns of production and consumption (3.9., International Conference on Population and Development, 1994)

(66) THAT states must act on the years of commitments to conserve resources including energy forests, water, soil, biodiversity

(67) THAT not only states but also individual citizens must move towards and embrace a Conserver society

Fostering conservation

(68) THAT States and citizens around the world must conserve resources

(69) THAT states should collaborate on the proper conservation of natural resources which might be utilized, for food production

(70) THAT there must be conservation and the legitimate utilization of natural resources and all sources of energy

(71) THAT States must fully recognize the urgency of maintaining the stability and quality of nature and of conserving natural resources and preserving nature

(72) THAT states must conserve the living resource in the sea and coastal States, taking into account the best scientific evidence available to it, must ensure through proper conservation and management measures that the maintenance of the living resources in the exclusive economic zone is not endangered by over-exploitation.

X Addressing the plight of the most vulnerable

(73) THAT Developed countries have an environmental debt to the world since they are responsible for 70% of historical carbon emissions into the atmosphere since 1750.

(74) THAT all states must act on the fact that the poorest states have been disproportionately affected by climate change and that the major emitting states owe a substantial climate to the developing states.

(75) THAT emissions budgets should use a context of the carbon footprint of a nation and THAT all emissions should be linked to the country where the goods or services are used. Exporter manufacturing imports and overseas based business enterprises should all be linked to the originator countries' greenhouse gas emissions.

(76) THAT states must move towards an international economy based on equity, sovereign equality, interdependence, common interest and co-operation among all States, irrespective of their economic and social systems which shall correct inequalities and redress existing injustices, make it possible to eliminate the widening gap between the developed and the developing countries and ensure steadily accelerating economic and social development and peace and justice for present and future generation

(77) THAT active assistance to developing countries by the whole international community, must be free of any political or military conditions

(78) THAT states must abide by principle 14 of the Rio Declaration

States should effectively cooperate to discourage or prevent the relocation and transfer to other States of any activities and substances that cause severe environmental degradation or are found to be harmful to human health. (Principle 14 Rio Declaration, 1992)

(79) THAT States shall take measures to extend the benefits of science and technology to all strata of the population and **to both men and women** and to protect them, both socially and materially, from possible harmful effects of the misuse of scientific and technological developments... and States must provide socially equitable and environmentally sound technology. **AND THAT** Intellectual Property Rights must not impede the transfer of socially equitable and environmentally sound technology and there is need for action on the part of members negotiating at the UNFCCC to agree to measures that overcome the IP barriers and facilitate transfer of technology as well as associated skills and know-how.

(80) THAT the major greenhouse gas emitting states must compensate developing states for having inequitably occupied the atmospheric space of developing states; this occupation of atmospheric space arises as a result of many of the fossil fuel industries function in developing states primarily to benefit not the developing states but the developed ones.

(81) THAT industrialized states must no longer use the so-called principle of extra territorialism - that is what right to developed states have to impose their higher standards on developing states.

(82) THAT The transition to a zero carbon society should meet the needs of all nations and people in an equitable fashion and should be based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibility, human rights and social justice. (Principle 7 Rio Declaration)

XI Releasing and providing new and different sources of funding;

(83) THAT the industrialized states and major greenhouse gas producers must be prepared to enter into binding obligations not only through targets and time frames but also through funding mechanisms. This fund could be named Fund for the Implementation of the UNFCCC, and it would fund socially equitable and environmentally safe and sound energy renewable energy, transportation, agriculture and forestry. This fund would replace the GEF as the main source of funding for the UNFCCC.

(84) THAT the dominant greenhouse gas-producing and emitting states should be compelled to finance this international fund. Funds traditionally distributed not only through the GEF but also through the Bretton Woods institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and additional bilateral funds, such as those in the German Fund for International Climate Initiative, should be channelled through this global fund. This fund would be indispensable for preventing climate change, and for achieving the objectives of the UNFCCC.

(85) THAT additional funds must be derived from reallocation of global military expenses, including budgets and arms production and sales. Part of this fund could be allocated to compensate states damaged in any way by the failure of industrialized states to discharge obligations under the UNFCCC and other legal obligations.

(86) THAT other budgetary sources for this Fund would be the redirecting of subsidies from socially inequitable and environmentally unsound non-sustainable energy to socially equitable and environmentally safe and sound renewable energy, transportation, agriculture, forestry etc.

(87) THAT in addition, measures to alleviate the impacts of climate change must include the cancellation of the outstanding debt of developing states, and the implementation of the minimal long-standing commitment of 0.7% of GDP being transferred to Overseas Development (ODA). The 0.7% obligation for development must not be diverted to climate change; there must be an additional obligation of more than 7% of GDP specifically

designated for addressing, through socially equitable and environmentally sound practices, the climate debt and obligation owed to humanity, the poor the vulnerable and the disenfranchised. The ODA must serve the needs not of the developed states but of the developing states. Any shortfall in funding should be bolstered by increased ODA by nations that inequitably have gained an advantage from historical emissions or reduction scenarios that are not in line with the principle of equity.

(88) THAT all these funding measures could only just begin to compensate for the “emissions debt” owed, by the developed states to the developing states.

The impact, of climate change on the world's poor, on indigenous peoples, vulnerable communities, and especially low-lying states will be the greatest, and they must be assisted by Industrial states, which have incurred a legal and moral obligation, to provide funds for socially equitable and renewable energy, transportation, agriculture, forestry etc.

(89) THAT in addition, major greenhouse gas-producing states must be forced to implement the actions that would discharge the obligations incurred when they signed and ratified the UNFCCC (provisions of the UNFCCC have become international peremptory norms and as such are binding) and be forced to repay the emission debt. Historic emissions should be calculated and an assessment made of the degree of dereliction of duty in the implementation of the UNFCCC. From these assessments, provisions must be made to compensate the states that have been most damaged by the failure, of the major greenhouse gas emitting states, to discharge obligations under the Convention. In such cases, a fund should be set up to assist vulnerable states in taking delinquent states to the International Court of Justice, including the Chamber on Environmental Matters (<http://www.icjci.org/presscom/index.php?pr=106&p1;=6&p2;=1&search;=%22%22Composition+of+the+Chamber+for+Environmental+Matters>)

(90) THAT a Fund for the Implementation of the UNFCCC be established and financed by funds as suggested in this submission.

(91) THAT this fund would take a holistic and scientific approach to tackling climate change. It would have as its core an ideology of participatory planning, by local people, of locally adapted projects within an overarching framework of principles to undergird the implementation of the UNFCCC legal obligations "to protect the climate system for present and future generations". The fund would also have as a final objective to stabilize emissions, within mandatory time frames. To prevent dangerous anthropogenic interferences, while most importantly to protect the world's poor and the global ecosystem. The Fund will be governed not by market demands but by scientific facts which will dictate what needs to be done to achieve the implementation of these objectives;

(92) THAT funds must be redirected nationally from the subsidising of unsustainable practices, to supporting conservation and subsidising socially equitable environmentally safe and sound renewable energy, transportation, agriculture, forestry etc.;

(93) THAT funds from the subsidising of unsustainable energy generation practices, must be redirected internationally to the fund for the implementation of the UNFCCC for the purpose of assisting in the conservation of energy, and of subsidising socially equitable environmentally safe and sound renewable energy, transportation, agriculture, forestry etc.;

(94) THAT the Global Environmental Facility funding should be transferred into the proposed fund for the Implementation of the UNFCCC, whose purpose is to fund socially equitable and environmentally safe and sound renewable energy; this fund would never be used to fund nuclear, biofuels or crop (genetic) engineering, or large corporate hydro projects. The UNFCCC fund with the ultimate aims of the UNFCCC in mind would not base its philosophy on the markets but on planetary science and social needs of current and future generations;

(95) THAT funds from the IMF, World Bank, including the World Bank Climate Investment Fund, and FROM all bilateral and multilateral funds for

climate change such as the German Fund for International Climate Initiative should be transferred into the proposed fund for implementation of the UNFCCC, Fund, whose purpose is to fund socially equitable and environmentally safe and sound renewable energy; this fund would never be used to fund nuclear, biofuels or crop (genetic) engineering, or large scale corporate hydro projects;

(96) THAT the dominant greenhouse gas-producing states should be compelled to finance The Fund for the Implementation of the UNFCCC. This international fund should be used for socially equitable environmentally safe and sound renewable energy, transportation, agriculture, forestry etc. and for supporting energy conservation and projects in low-income areas of developing countries and economies in transition;

(97) THAT developed nations must act on the long-standing commitment to transfer 0.7% of GDP to Overseas Development. IN Addition, (ODA) funds should go to the Fund for the Implementation of the UNFCCC. The 0.7% obligation for development must not be diverted to climate change; there must be an additional obligation of 7% of GDP specifically designated for addressing climate debt. Any shortfall in

funding for implementation of the UNFCCC should be bolstered by increased ODA by developed nations;

(98) THAT Overseas Development Aid (ODA) must not be linked to political motivations BUT based on the need for a sustainable and equitable world.

(99) THAT to alleviate the impacts of targets and time frames on developing nations the outstanding debts of developing states must be cancelled immediately;

(100) THAT Developed countries should pay off their debt through payments to the Fund for the Implementation of the UNFCCC;

(101) THAT Military expenses must be reallocated. This reallocation could release over \$750/€507 billion per annum. These funds will be transferred to establish a fund for sustainable development, most importantly part of the resources should be directed to The Fund for the Implementation of the UNFCCC that will fund socially equitable and environmentally safe and sound renewable energy, transportation, agriculture, forestry etc.

(102) THAT funds for ODA should not be administered by World Bank or World Bank-type organisations; instead these should be managed by independently-minded bodies whose sole aim is to succeed in implementing a sustainable and equitable world social system. The basis of aid should be properly evaluated and be socially equitable and environmentally safe and sound, and be sustainability-need based;

(103) THAT the polluter pay principle must be enforced against dominant greenhouse gas-producing states and their “overseas” operations (military and corporate) and that charters and licences of transnational corporations that have contributed to greenhouse gas emissions, must be revoked to prevent further pollution. This principle should be retrospective. The polluter pays principle is one of the most significant environmental legal instruments used in developed countries, on that basis these countries cannot hide from the implementation of this same principle in their relations with the developing world.

Xii *Abandoning false solutions and spurious subsidies*

(104) THAT all states must embark immediately on time-bound phasing out of fossil fuels and of subsidies for fossil fuel. The unconventional extraction of oil from Bitumen, such as in the process in the tar/oil sands, is a major contribution to greenhouse gas and must be prohibited, and dangerous deep drilling in the oceans prohibited. In addition there must be an immediate end to subsidies for and an eventual phase-out of both (i) biofuel, which has resulted in seriously impacting food security, and (II) nuclear energy, which is too dangerous to be deemed a solution to climate change and an end to the subsidizing of biofuel and of nuclear energy, instead there must be a time-bound commitment to conservation, and to subsidizing and investing in socially equitable and environmentally safe and sound renewable energy, transportation, agriculture, forestry etc. options, that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

(105) THAT because of the serious health and environmental consequences, the use of genetically engineering technology, and biofuels, must be banned.

(106) THAT in some of the poorest regions agricultural land that should be used for local food production must not be used for biofuels or any other bio-resource to offset emissions from the developed world

(107) THAT the Anchorage Declaration that calls upon the Parties to the UNFCCC to recognize the importance of Traditional Knowledge and practices shared by Indigenous Peoples in developing strategies to address climate change must be respected and implemented

(108) THAT “market based” or “market centre approaches, which are being proposed by developed states must be opposed because they will not serve the needs of developing states. (Third World Network, 2009);

(109) THAT the advocating of nuclear energy, along with large-scale hydro, biofuel, carbon capture as a solution to climate change must be condemned - no proposed course of action should either continue or exacerbate serious environmental or health problems, and/or contribute to global destabilization by undermining disarmament;

(110) THAT nuclear energy is not a solution to climate change because, although promulgated by proponents, as "safe, clean, and cheap", there is clear and valid scientific evidence of its inherent dangers: lack of safety (emissions into both air and ground water), security-linked issues, unresolved (and likely irresolvable) waste

disposal problems.

(111) THAT states must not install large hydroelectric dams. And THAT states must not use large dams to generate energy for continuing to produce fossil fuels

(112) THAT states must dismantle the International Trade agreements, such as GATT, and the subsequent WTO, along with the regional trade agreements, that have undermined international resolve to seriously address unsustainable practices, AND THAT states must enforce regulations that would socially equitable environmentally safe and sound renewable energy, transportation, agriculture, forestry etc.

Xiii Committing to instituting support for socially equitable and environmentally safe and sound renewable energy, transportation, agriculture, forestry etc.

(113) THAT any agreement must only seek to implement energy sources which can realistically be considered new, renewable and clean energy sources. These are solar thermal, solar photovoltaic, wind, hydro,geothermal, ocean, animal and human power, as referred to in the reports of the Committee on the Development and Utilization of New and Renewable Sources of Energy, prepared specifically for the Conference 2? (See A/CONF.151/PC/119 and A/AC.218/1992/5).

(114) THAT the Fair and Just transition principle must be instituted to assist workers and communities in the transition from unsustainable to sustainable development. This principle holds that workers who are engaged in unsustainable practices that are harmful to human health and the environment, will not oppose the transition to socially equitable and environmentally safe and sound practices (SEESS), providing society offers them a fair and just transition to (SEESS).

(115) THAT all states must embark immediately on time-bound phasing out of subsidies for fossil fuel, for biofuel, for nuclear energy and other non-sustainable energy sources, and a time-bound commitment to conservation, and to subsidizing and investing in socially equitable and environmentally safe and sound renewable energy, transportation, agriculture, forestry etc. options, that will reduce greenhouse gas

emissions. These funds should flow into and out of the Fund for the Implementation of the UNFCCC. AND THAT The United Nations should establish by the end of 2011 transparent mechanisms to ensure the disclosure of detailed and accurate national GHG emissions data, including data related of greenhouse gas emissions from military activities. This data should be collected by independent UN appointed scientists, who should determine whether full disclosure has taken place. Where there has not been full disclosure then enforcement mechanism should be in place.

(116) THAT governments and international organizations must adopt at the national level, policies leading to timetables for progressively disclosing and phasing out the energy subsidies that inhibit sustainable development. And to establish by the end of 2011 transparent mechanisms within the United Nations system to receive and publicize annual reports from all governments and intergovernmental bodies, that would detail:

- a. data on all energy-related governmental and intergovernmental subsidies, and
- b. data on the phasing out of harmful subsidies to reflect their environmental impacts; and calls upon governments at the national level to establish transparent national mechanisms for collecting and reporting data on energy-related subsidies provided by all levels of government in that country;
- c. Data related to national greenhouse gas emissions including data related to greenhouse gas emissions from military activities must be disclosed, by 2011 and assessed by the United Nations. This data should be collected by independent UN appointed scientists, who should determine whether full disclosure has taken place. Where full transparency and disclosure have not occurred, enforcement mechanisms must be invoked.

(117) THAT states should reveal the disproportionate tax ‘relief’ given to major greenhouse gas producers, and exorbitant tax deferrals that have benefitted the major greenhouse gas emitting states

(118) THAT the member states should institute a fair and just transition program for workers and communities affected by the sunseting of fossil fuel, biofuel and nuclear industries. This program would involve re-training and compensation for workers;

(119) THAT there is need for action on the part of members negotiating at the UNFCCC to agree to measures that overcome the International Intellectual property barriers and facilitate transfer of technology as well as associated skills and know-how; AND nothing should prevent governments from taking steps to deal with climate change, this includes intellectual property rights that pose an unconscionable barrier to the implementation of the UNFCCC;

Intellectual property

(120) THAT all members of society and institutions must be called upon to invest in socially equitable and environmentally safe and sound renewable energy, transportation, agriculture, forestry etc. that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions. And that the concept of 'due diligence' has to be reversed so that rather than financial managers, of pensions and other funds, being deemed guilty for not exercising due diligence if they invest in socially equitable and environmentally safe and sound renewable energy and transportation and transportation, the financial managers will in the future be guilty of failure to exercise due diligence if they invest funds in the fossil fuel, nuclear, biofuel, and large hydro industries; AND there could be a new global transport system; in this system the use of roads for cars for individuals would be phased out, the roads would be replaced by natural habitats and much smaller surface areas used for communal transport mechanisms as far as is possible, these would be able to cater for all human needs . This would create a major carbon sink, considerably increase quality of life, protect biodiversity, increase the spread of transport from A to B and create major cost and efficiency benefits for nations and business, as well as having a major impact on greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally the recent breakthroughs in the use of solar flights must be built upon; the need to travel by air is counterbalanced by the need to preserve our climate. For long distance and over water transport systems sustainable clean renewable energy must be developed. This will require a dramatic move away from air transport to other methods of transportation.

XIV Instituting policies that prevent deforestation and destruction to replace the flawed REDD

(121) THAT Policy proposals to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries must be analysed within the framework of the equity dimension of the climate regime in general

(122) THAT the large-scale agro-industrial monocultures for food, fibre and, increasingly, energy production that

cause forest loss and deforestation must end

(123) THAT the exotic species must not replace endemic species

(123) THAT the Convention on Biological Diversity must be ratified by all states and provisions for enforcement

implemented

(124) **THAT**Sustainable Livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples who use their forests for food, shelter, water supply,

medicines etc. must be protected

(125) **THAT**In addition spurious arguments that, in the name of climate change, attempt to legitimize the replacement of old-growth forests by advancing the argument that there is a point where and when old-growth forests are no longer efficient sinks and that they should be replaced with fast-growing young trees must end.

environmental]development. (11.12. Deforestation, Agenda 21, UNCED, 1992)

(126) **THAT**the REDD program is flawed and must be abandoned. All developed states, in which the transnationals are registered, must be required to revoke the charters of the aforementioned transnational corporations for contributing to the violation of state obligations under the Biodiversity Convention, and for the destructions of forests; if developed states fail to do this, developing states must be urged to expropriate these transnational corporations for violation of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Furthermore, the UN fund should be used to give money to the state to conserve forests and for Indigenous and local peoples for their use, and for local communities to use for socially equitable and environmentally sound development.

(128) **THAT**the flawed REDD must be abandoned,

XV Acknowledging and addressing the impact of militarism on climate change

(129) **THAT** the long standing commitment to transfer the peace dividend to developing countries must be respected

In 1976 at Habitat 1, a UN conference in Vancouver member states of the United Nations affirmed the following in relation to the military budgets and armaments:

"The waste and misuse of resources in war and armaments should be prevented. All countries should make a firm commitment to promote general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, in particular in the field of nuclear disarmament. Part of the resources thus released should be utilized so as to achieve a better quality of life for humanity and particularly for the peoples of developing countries" (II, 12 Habitat 1).

(130) **THAT** Overseas Development Aid (ODA) must not be linked to military purchases, or to the acceptance of socially inequitable and environmentally unsound practices or technologies, and **THAT** foreign military bases, which in addition to all the other reasons for closure, they are major contributors to greenhouse gas emissions; they must be converted to

(131) peaceful purposes ;

(132) **THAT** the following is drawn from the Declaration that was prepared by members of the Peace Caucus and the Anti-militarisation Caucus at the DPI-NGO 2007 Conference on Climate Change:

- the member states of the United Nations must act on the commitment in Chapter 33 of Agenda 21, to reallocate military expenses.

- States must implement the commitment made in Agenda 21 to "the reallocation of resources committed to military purposes" (33.18), and to transfer the peace dividend to seriously address the urgent issue of climate change development issues
- the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change must investigate and estimate the full impact on greenhouse gas emissions by the military and demand that each state release information related to the greenhouse gas emissions from the production of all weapon systems, military exercises, from war games, weapons testing, military aviation, environmental warfare, troop transfer, military operations, waste generation, and reconstruction after acts of violent interventions etc.
- NATO, whose collective activities have contributed to not only the perpetuation of the scourge of war and the violation of international peremptory norms, but also the substantial release of greenhouse gas emissions, must be disbanded.
- The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) must discontinue its promotion of nuclear energy - the most hazardous and expensive form of energy known - as the solution to climate change

(133) **THAT**the agreement, of silence, between WHO and IAEA must end, and the World Health Organization (WHO) must acknowledge and address the short and long-term impacts on health of nuclear power generation.

Xvi Launching legal challenges under all other applicable law

Including a possible charge of criminal negligence

(134) **THAT**there exist an opportunity in WARSAW to be replace ``the take note`` Copenhagen Accord with a legally binding WARSAW Protocol based on credible emerging scientific and institutional data and on the

principle of differentiated responsibility and not on the vested economic interests of the fossil fuel emitting corporate states .

(135) **THAT**the process of coercing reluctant states to adopt the Copenhagen Accord must end; the Copenhagen Accord which ignored not only the pleas from the most vulnerable states but also the emerging science and fundamental peremptory norms must be deemed null and void, under Article 53 of the Vienna Convention on the Laws of Treaties.

(136) **THAT**there must be provisions for states to launch cases in the ICJ or in the Chamber on Environmental Matters within the ICJ against the egregious greenhouse gas-producing states that are signatories of the UN Convention on Climate Change, and its Kyoto Protocol;

(137) **THAT**the transboundary principle must be extended and applied to failure to take seriously the responsibility to not harm other states through the greenhouse gas emissions

(138) **THAT**delinquent states must be taken to the ICJ or the Chamber on Environmental Matters of the International Court of Justice (<http://www.icj-cij.org/presscom/index.php?pr=106&p1;=6&p2;=1&search;=%22%22Composition+of+the+Chamber+for+Environmental+Matters>)

the Chamber on Environmental Matters of the International Court of Justice (ICJ)which was set up to address the failure of states to comply with obligations incurred under the Environmental agreements such as UNFCCC ;

(139) **THAT** there should be an advisory opinion sought from the ICJ on what constitutes criminal negligence and

on whether the failure of many developed states to discharge their obligations under the UNFCCC constitutes criminal NEGLIGENCE. National and international courts should evaluate cause in fact and proximate cause, damages, legal duty, and breach of the standard of care for not acting on the risks of climate change. Fault may be found even in the case of *unintended* harm if it stems from *unreasonable* conduct. The lack of intent to harm may not constitute a defence if damage results from conscious acts performed in careless disregard for others: The basis of the evaluations should be that “Everyone is criminally negligent who (a) in doing anything, or (b) in omitting to do anything that it is his duty to do, shows wanton or reckless disregard for the lives or safety of other persons” (where ‘duty’ means a duty imposed by law). In Canadian law, significantly, states that “a person commits homicide when, *directly or indirectly, by any means*, he causes the death of a human being, by being negligent (emphasis added).” (Cited by Bill Rees in “is Canada criminally negligent”)

(140) **THAT** major greenhouse gas-producing states be forced to implement the actions that would discharge the obligations incurred when they signed and ratified the UNFCCC. In addition, historic emissions should be calculated and an assessment made of the degree of dereliction of duty in the implementation of the UNFCCC. From these assessments, provisions must be made to compensate the states that have been most damaged by the failure to discharge obligations under the Convention (the climate debt). In such cases, a fund should be set up to assist vulnerable states in taking delinquent states to the International Court of Justice. These resources should be put into a fund for the Implementation of the UNFCCC; and the proposal in the peoples Agreement from Cochabamba of setting up of an international Tribunal to process delinquent states must be provided for under the auspices of the UNFCCC.

(141) **THAT** the UN General Assembly must invoke article 22 ,of the Charter of the United Nations, and set up an

international tribunal to investigate the states that continue to engage in practices which will cause the global community to reach the dangerous anthropogenic level of interference with the climate change

(142) **THAT** the International Criminal Court should be able to extend its jurisdiction to cover crimes against
(143) humanity resulting from irreversible consequences of climate change

(142) **THAT** there should be set up an International Court of Compliance linked to the International Court of Justice, where citizens could take evidence of state and corporate non-compliance. And the proposal in the peoples Agreement from Cochabamba of setting up of an international Tribunal to process delinquent states must be provided for under the auspices of the UNFCCC.

(143) **THAT** the follow-up to the Kyoto Protocol or any other policy agreement/legal instrument directed towards reducing climate change related emissions should move towards an equitable international system that protects not prejudices the world's poor or politically disadvantaged men, women and children at risk;

**AT THE 2011 WARSAW CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE, THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY
MUST BE BOLD AND MOVE BEYOND NATIONAL STATE AND CORPORATE VESTED
INTERESTS TO PROVIDE A STRONG LEGALLY BINDING WARSAW PROTOCOL**

Background

Original: created by Joan Russow and Richard Levicki in December 2007, expanded in 2009 into a Statement to COP 15 Copenhagen; submitted to state negotiators, formulated into a Global petition for COP 15, and with Cory Morningstar used to create a Post-COP 15 Declaration <http://timetobebold.wordpress.com/> which was submitted to

the Peoples Conference in Cochabamba, Bolivia

*Expanded in 2010 by Joan Russow (Global Compliance Research Project, GlobalComplianceResearch@gmail.com Network, Richardlevicki@isdnet.co) as *Climate Change**

Cancun; Time to be Bold of Submission to Cancun;, <http://www.pej.org/html/modules.php?op=modload&name;=News&file;=article&sid;=8794>

Commented on in 2010; “from Copenhagen to Cancun- a Pathway of Errors that Discredits the United Nations Process; Joan Russow , prepared for the Watershed Sentinel BLOG<http://www.watershedsentinel.ca/documents/From%20Copenhagen%20To%20Cancun.pdf>

Joan Russow is the coordinator of the Global Compliance Research Project (GCRP), a project of the Ecological Rights Association, which was co-founded in 1991 by Joan Russow and David

White.

http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9485:era-ecological-rights-association-global-compliance-research-project-&catid=86:i-earth-news&Itemid=210.

The GCRP was founded in 1995 by Joan Russow, who wrote the "Charter of Obligations" - a 350 page compilation of strong statements reflecting obligations incurred through the Charter of the United Nations, expectations created through General Assembly Resolutions, and Declarations, and commitments made through Conference Action Plans. These Obligations, Expectations, and Commitments were related to;

- to achieve a state of peace, and disarmament; through reallocation of military expenses
- to create a global structure that respects the rule of law and the International Court of Justice;
- to enable socially equitable and environmentally sound employment, and ensure the right to development and social justice;
- to promote and fully guarantee respect for human rights including labour rights, civil and political rights, social and cultural rights- right to food, right to housing, right to safe drinking water and sewage, right to education and right to universally accessible not for profit health care system ,
- to ensure the preservation and protection of the environment, the respect for the inherent worth of nature beyond human purpose, the reduction of the ecological footprint e move away from the current model of unsustainable and overconsumptive

Last Updated on Saturday, 30 November 2013 12:43

[Jet-fuel Tank Farm on Fraser River to Supply YVR Compared to Atomic Bomb](#)



Posted by Dragonslayer

Sunday, 22 December 2013 23:32

VAPOR—A Society for Vancouver Airport Fuel Project Opposition for Richmond are focusing on:

1. the fact that no public hearings were held during a 1,000-day provincial review.
2. considering legal challenge to the project.
3. VAPOR director Jim Ronback, a retired safety systems engineer said the fuel storage area is clearly a "hazardous development" holding 80 million litres of kerosene-like propellant near the foot of No. 7 Road Richmond. It will contain an amount of stored energy equivalent to the **Hiroshima atomic bomb**.
4. government of B.C. has given conditional approval for the \$100-million undertaking
5. - large oceangoing tankers to south Richmond via the Fraser River
6. Port Metro Vancouver, a federal authority should have made a hazardous risk analysis of the shore based component prior to approval being given.
7. There wasn't a single day of public hearings," Langer said. "The process was unfair."
8. Vancouver Airport Fuel Facilities Corporation (VAFFC) wants a marine terminal that will support Panamax tankers up to 350 meters in length will located 400 meters from large Residential and entertainment complex and has left protecting public up to the City of Richmond.
9. Minimal specific fire protection requirements, no mandate for automated fire suppression system for both the tank farm and marine terminal. The BC EAO has not mandated a Hazardous Footprint Assessment, so it is unclear if it is even possible for Richmond to Protect it's citizens.

Check out the VAPOR website at <http://www.vaporbc.com/> and sign the petition : [VAPOR Petition](#)

Last Updated on Monday, 23 December 2013 00:03

132 readings

Twenty-Six Countries Ban GMOs—Why Won't the US [and Canada]?



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 22 December 2013 21:55

Analysis of foreign affairs and policy that emphasizes global cooperation and grassroots participation. [Walden Bello](#) and [Foreign Policy In](#)

Focus <http://www.thenation.com/blog/176863/twenty-six-countries-ban-gmos-why-wont-us>

on October 29, 2013 - 10:59 AM ET



Correction: At publication, this article incorrectly stated Monsanto's contribution to the World Food Prize Foundation from 1999 to 2011 was \$380 million. The correct figure is \$380,000.

The Nation and Foreign Policy In Focus are pleased to announce a new partnership to promote a more progressive US foreign policy. Each week, The Nation will post several FPIF articles on its website to provide greater visibility to progressive voices from around the world. Complementing The Nation's coverage of domestic and world events, the FPIF articles will provide in-depth analysis of the issues that demand greater public and policymaking attention such as global military spending, [climate change](#), human rights campaigns, economic [inequality](#) and ongoing conflicts in Syria, [Afghanistan](#) and elsewhere. The Nation/FPIF coverage will also highlight concrete alternatives that can make the world more peaceful, more just and more sustainable. Foreign Policy In Focus is a project of the Institute for Policy Studies, which is celebrating its fiftieth anniversary in 2013.

* * *

This article is a joint publication of TheNation.com and [Foreign Policy in Focus](#).

The GMO wars escalated earlier this month when the 2013 World Food Prize was awarded to three chemical company executives, including Monsanto executive vice president and chief technology officer, Robert Fraley, responsible for development of genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

The choice of Fraley was widely protested, with eighty-one members of the prestigious World Future Council [calling it](#) "an affront to the growing international consensus on safe, ecological farming practices that have been scientifically proven to promote nutrition and sustainability."

Monsanto's Man

The choice of Monsanto's man triggered accusations of [prize buying](#). From 1999 to 2011, Monsanto donated \$380,000 to the World Food Prize Foundation, in addition to a \$5 million contribution in 2008 to help renovate the Hall of Laureates, a public museum honoring Norman Borlaug, the scientist who launched

the Green Revolution.

For some, the award to Monsanto is actually a sign of desperation on the part of the GMO establishment, a move designed to contain the deepening controversy over the so-called biotechnological revolution in food and agriculture. The arguments of the critics are making headway. Owing to concern about the dangers and risks posed by genetically engineered organisms, many governments have instituted total or partial bans on their cultivation, importation, and field-testing.

A few years ago, there were sixteen countries that had total or partial bans on GMOs. Now there are at least twenty-six, including Switzerland, Australia, Austria, China, India, France, Germany, Hungary, Luxembourg, Greece, Bulgaria, Poland, Italy, Mexico and Russia. Significant restrictions on GMOs exist in about sixty other countries.

Restraints on trade in GMOs based on phyto-sanitary grounds, which are allowed under the World Trade Organization, have increased. Already, American rice farmers face strict limitations on their exports to the European Union, Japan, South Korea and the Philippines, and are banned altogether from Russia and Bulgaria because unapproved genetically engineered rice “escaped” during open-field trials on GMO rice. Certain Thai exports—particularly canned fruit salads containing papaya to Germany, and sardines in soy oil to Greece and the Netherlands—were recently banned due to threat of contamination by GMOs.

The Case against GMOs Gains Strength

The case against GMOs has strengthened steadily over the last few years. Critics say that genetic engineering disrupts the precise sequence of a food’s genetic code and disturbs the functions of neighboring genes, which can give rise to potentially toxic or allergenic molecules or even alter the nutritional value of food produced. The Bt toxin used in GMO corn, for example, was recently detected in the blood of pregnant women and their babies, with possibly harmful consequences.

A second objection concerns genetic contamination. A GMO crop, once released in the open, reproduces via pollination and interacts genetically with natural varieties of the same crop, producing what is called genetic contamination. According to a study published in *Nature*, one of the world’s leading scientific journals, Bt corn has **contaminated** indigenous varieties of corn tested in Oaxaca, Mexico.

Third, a GMO, brought into natural surroundings, may have a toxic or lethal impact on other living things. Thus, it was found that Bt corn **destroyed the larvae of the monarch butterfly**, raising well grounded fears that many other natural plant and animal life may be impacted in the same way.

Fourth, the benefits of GMOs have been oversold by the companies, like Monsanto and Syngenta, that peddle them. Most genetically engineered crops are either engineered to produce their own pesticide in the form of *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) or are designed to be resistant to herbicides, so that herbicides can be sprayed in massive quantities to kill pests without harming the crops. It has been shown, however, that insects are fast developing resistance to Bt as well as to herbicides, resulting in even more massive infestation by the new superbugs. No substantial evidence exists that GM crops yield more than conventional crops. What genetically engineered crops definitely do lead to is greater use of pesticide, which is harmful both to humans and the environment.

A fifth argument is that patented GMO seeds concentrate power in the hands of a few biotech corporations and marginalize small farmers. As the **statement** of the eighty-one members of the World Future Council put it, “While profitable to the few companies producing them, GMO seeds reinforce a model of farming that undermines sustainability of cash-poor farmers, who make up most of the world’s hungry. GMO seeds continue farmers’ dependency on purchased seed and chemical inputs. The most dramatic impact of such dependency is in India, where 270,000 farmers, many trapped in debt for buying seeds and chemicals, committed suicide between 1995 and 2012.”

Some studies have sought to counter these accusations against GMOs, but they have been discredited by revelations that they were funded by biotechnology firms or conducted by researchers close to them.

The Philippines as GMO Battlefield

The key battleground in the battle over GMOs has shifted, over the years, from the developed to the developing world. The GMO advocates have deployed their big guns to convince African, Asian and Latin American governments to shift to GMOs. Among them are Bill and Melinda Gates, Columbia University economist Jeffrey Sachs, and Oxford economist Paul Collier, who argues that Africa needs a new “**Green**

Revolution” based on genetically engineered seeds because it missed out on the first one, which was promoted by chemical-intensive agriculture.

The Nation is facing a crippling postal rate hike—donate by October 31 to help us foot this \$120,272 bill.

The Philippines is one such battleground. Even as many other countries have tightened their controls over GMOs, the Philippine government has become more and more liberal in its granting of licenses for GMO production. According to Greenpeace Southeast Asia, it has allowed the importation of sixty genetically modified plants and plant products for direct use as food and feed or for processing, an additional eight GM plant varieties for propagation, and twenty-one modified plant varieties for field testing in Philippine soil. Despite concerns about its impact on the environment, Bt corn now has 750,000 hectares of Philippine land devoted to it. According to Greenpeace Southeast Asia spokesman Daniel Ocampo, no GMO application has ever been rejected, which is rather shocking given the controversy over their use.

A key reason for the liberal treatment of GMOs is the revolving door among government, academia and corporations. For instance, three of the most recent directors of the prestigious Institute of Plant Breeding of the University of the Philippines at Los Banos have either joined biotech multinationals or gone to work on projects funded by them. They also serve as members of or advisers to government bodies that oversee biosafety.

Judicial Restraints on GMOs

Anti-GMO activists and farmers have nevertheless made headway. Even as some make direct action forays like uprooting Bt eggplant field experimental sites, others have worked on the legal front. This paid off recently when the Philippine Court of Appeals—acting on a petition brought before it by Greenpeace, the NGO Masipag and several individuals—**stopped the field testing** of Bt eggplant on the grounds that there was no scientific consensus or legal framework for the introduction of Bt products. Importantly, the court also ruled that all stakeholders—not just industry or government scientists—should get to provide input on the introduction of GMOs like Bt eggplant.

In a sign of desperation, the University of the Philippines at Los Banos, one of the respondents in the case, argued that a ban on field testing of Bt eggplant would “violate academic freedom.” The court ruling **stated**, however, that, “Like any other right, the right to academic freedom ends when the overriding public welfare calls for some restraint. The right to academic freedom does not, in any way, give the respondent UPLB unbridled freedom to conduct experimentation, studies and research that may put to risk the health of the people and the environment which are equally protected under our fundamental law.”

It is unlikely, however, that this victory will discourage the GMO lobby from making the Philippines **into a springboard** for the introduction of Bt crops to the rest of Southeast Asia. Aside from Bt eggplant, the GMO advocates are pushing genetically altered “Golden Rice,” potatoes, soybeans, canola, cotton, sugarbeet and alfalfa. There’s big money in these crops, and the only thing that stands between the transnational corporations and big money are those pesky farmers, environmentalists and consumers.

Unfortunately for the biotech corporations, more people are listening to the words of scientists like Dr. Oscar Zamora, vice chancellor of the University of the Philippines at Los Banos, who says: “For every application of genetic engineering in agriculture in developing countries, there are a number of less hazardous and more sustainable approaches and practices with hundreds, if not thousands, of years of safety record behind them. None of the GE applications in agriculture today are valuable enough to farmers in developing countries to make it reasonable to expose the environment, farmers and the consumers to even the slightest risk.”

Last Updated on Sunday, 22 December 2013 22:01

[Nevis Embarks on Geothermal Energy](#)

[Journey](#)

185 readings

Nevis Embarks on Geothermal Energy



Journey

Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 22 December 2013 16:39

By Desmond Brown

Mount Nevis sits at the centre of the volcanic island of Nevis, which has reserves of geothermal energy.
Credit: Desmond Brown/IPS

CHARLESTOWN, Nevis, Dec 19 2013 (IPS) - The tiny island of Nevis in the northern region of the Lesser Antilles is one of the few remaining unspoiled places in the Caribbean. It is now seeking to become the greenest, joining a growing list of Caribbean countries pursuing clean geothermal power.

Last month, legislators on the volcanic island selected Nevis Renewable Energy International (NREI) to develop a geothermal energy project, which they said would eventually eliminate the need for existing diesel-fired electrical generation by replacing it with renewable energy.

In January 2014, NREI will begin to construct a geothermal power plant and injection and production wells on Crown Land leased from the Nevis Island Administration.

Acting Premier Mark Brantley said the island, with a population of 9,000, plans to remain "how the Caribbean used to be" while striving to earn the title of "greenest place on earth".

"Nevis is committed to beginning this journey on the path to greener living," Brantley told IPS. "The use of renewable energy will result in a reduction of emissions of pollutants and greenhouse gases, thus advancing Nevis' commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change."

The **UNFCCC** is an international environmental treaty negotiated in June 1992 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), informally known as the Earth Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro. The treaty's objective is to "stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system."

The treaty itself, which set no binding limits on greenhouse gas emissions for individual countries and contains no enforcement mechanisms, is legally non-binding. Instead, the treaty provides a framework for negotiating specific international treaties (called "protocols") that may set binding limits on greenhouse gases.

The parties to the convention have met annually from 1995 in Conferences of the Parties (COP) to assess progress in dealing with climate change. In 1997, the Kyoto Protocol was concluded, establishing legally binding obligations for developed countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

The 2010 Cancún agreements state that future global warming should be limited to a two-degree Celsius increase from pre-industrial levels. The twentieth COP will take place in Peru in 2014.

Related IPS Articles

- [Eastern Caribbean Seeks Funds for Green Growth](#)
- [Over a Barrel, Caribbean Seeks Finance for Clean Energy](#)
- [Five Caribbean States Join Pilot for Energy Efficiency](#)

Utilities Minister Alexis Jeffers said Nevis currently imports 4.2 million gallons of diesel fuel annually, at a cost of 12 million dollars, a bill the island hopes to cut down significantly. Nevis consumes a maximum of 10 mw of energy annually.

"The use of geothermal energy will not only make Nevis a greener place in the future, but also make it less vulnerable to volatile oil prices, as the cost of geothermal energy is stabilised under a long-term contract," Jeffers told IPS.

"In addition to providing lower cost, cleaner electricity for Nevis, this can potentially be expanded to include

St. Kitts and other islands in the future,” Premier Brantley said. St. Kitts, which lies two miles northwest of Nevis, uses a maximum of 46 mw of energy each year.

Nevis is the smaller island of the pair, known as the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis. It is home to active hot springs and a large geothermal reservoir. Seven volcanic centres have been identified on Nevis and drilling at three sites has indicated that the geothermal reservoir is capable of producing up to 500 mw of constant baseload power year round.

Dominica recently launched its own geothermal project with the construction of a small power plant for domestic consumption and a bigger plant of up to 100 mw of electricity for export to the neighbouring French islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique.

The nearby island of St. Vincent subsequently announced the launch of a 50-million-dollar project, funded by the Bill, Hillary & Chelsea Clinton Foundation, the St. Vincent and the Grenadines government, Barbados Light and Power Holdings and Reykjavik Geothermal.

Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves said a contingent of Icelandic scientists had arrived on the island and would remain until the end of the year investigating the mountainous nation’s geothermal potential, estimated at 890 mw.

Barbados is also making a major shift away from fossil fuels, aiming for 29 percent of its power generation from renewable sources by 2029. An electric light and power bill was passed with bipartisan support in parliament on Dec. 17.

Opposition leader Mia Mottley said the most significant thing the government can do for residents is to reduce the cost of electricity to 29-30 cents a kilowatt-hour as soon as possible.

“We have said consistently that the most important thing the government can do is to reduce the cost of electricity next month. Not two years from now; not five years from now; not 10 years from now,” Mottley said.

“If we understand how the costs are incurred, we then understand it can only be unacceptable for the government to preside over the Barbados National Oil Company profiteering to the tune of 53 million dollars last year, and ordinary people in this country in households and business are struggling to pay electricity bills.”

Barbadians currently pay 41-42 cents per kilowatt-hours.

Prime Minister Freundel Stuart said that as part of the drive to make Barbados more sustainable, the government had entered a partnership with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), which would help develop a framework to diversify the country’s energy mix and reduce its heavy dependence on fossil fuels.

127 readings

The Arc of Justice and the Long Run Hope, History, and Unpredictability



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 22 December 2013 16:33

By [Rebecca Solnit](http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175788/) <http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175788/>

North American cicada nymphs live underground for 17 years before they emerge as adults. Many seeds stay dormant far longer than that before some disturbance makes them germinate. Some trees bear fruit long after the people who have planted them have died, and one Massachusetts [pear tree](#), planted by a Puritan in 1630, is still bearing fruit far sweeter than most of what those fundamentalists brought to this continent. Sometimes cause and effect are

centuries apart; sometimes Martin Luther King' s arc of the moral universe that bends toward justice is so long few see its curve; sometimes hope lies not in looking forward but backward to study the line of that arc.

Three years ago at this time, after a **young Tunisian** set himself on fire to protest injustice, the Arab Spring was on the cusp of erupting. An even younger man, a rapper who went by the name El Général, was on the verge of being arrested for “**Rais Lebled**” (a tweaked version of the phrase “head of state”), a song that would help launch the revolution in Tunisia.

Weeks before either the Tunisian or Egyptian revolutions erupted, no one imagined they were going to happen. No one foresaw them. No one was talking about the Arab world or northern Africa as places with a fierce appetite for justice and democracy. No one was saying much about unarmed popular power as a force in that corner of the world. No one knew that the seeds were germinating.

A small but striking aspect of the Arab Spring was the role of hip-hop in it. Though the U.S. government often exports repression -- its **billions in aid** to the Egyptian military over the decades, for example -- American culture can be something else altogether, and often has been.

Henry David Thoreau wrote books that not many people read when they were published. He famously said of his unsold copies, “I have now a library of nearly 900 volumes over 700 of which I wrote myself.” But a South African lawyer of Indian descent named Mohandas Gandhi read Thoreau on civil disobedience and found ideas that helped him fight discrimination in Africa and then liberate his own country from British rule. Martin Luther King studied Thoreau and Gandhi and put their ideas to work in the United States, while in 1952 the African National Congress and the young Nelson Mandela were collaborating with the South African Indian Congress on civil disobedience campaigns. You wish you could write Thoreau a letter about all this. He had no way of knowing that what he planted would still be bearing fruit 151 years after his death. But the past doesn' t need us. The past guides us; the future needs us.

An influential **comic book** on civil disobedience and

Martin Luther King published by the [Fellowship of Reconciliation](#) in the U.S. in 1957 was translated into Arabic and distributed in Egypt in 2009, four decades after King's death. What its impact was cannot be measured, but it seems to have had one in the Egyptian uprising which was a dizzying mix of social media, outside pressure, street fighting, and huge demonstrations.

The past explodes from time to time, and many events that once seemed to have achieved nothing turn out to do their work slowly. Much of what has been most beautifully transformative in recent years has also been branded a failure by people who want instant results guaranteed or your money back. The Arab Spring has just begun, and if some of the participant nations are going through their equivalent of the French Revolution, it's worth remembering that France, despite the Terror and the Napoleonic era, never went back either to absolutist monarchy or the belief that such a condition could be legitimate. It was a mess, it was an improvement, it's still not finished.

The same might be said of the South African upheaval Mandela catalyzed. It made things better; it has not made them good enough. It's worth pointing out as well that what was liberated by the end of apartheid was not only the nonwhite population of one country, but a sense of power and possibility for so many globally who had participated in the boycotts and other campaigns to end apartheid in that miraculous era from 1989 to 1991 that also saw the collapse of the Soviet Union, successful revolutions across Eastern Europe, the student uprising in Beijing, and the beginning of the end of many authoritarian regimes in Latin America.

In the hopeful aftermath of that transformation, Mandela [wrote](#), "The titanic effort that has brought liberation to South Africa and ensured the total liberation of Africa constitutes an act of redemption for the black people of the world. It is a gift of emancipation also to those who, because they were white, imposed on themselves the heavy burden of assuming the mantle of rulers of all humanity. It says to all who will listen and understand that, by ending the apartheid barbarity that was the offspring of European colonization, Africa has, once more,

contributed to the advance of human civilization and further expanded the frontiers of liberty everywhere.”

Congo Square

The arc of justice is long. It travels through New Orleans, the city I’ ve returned to again and again since Hurricane Katrina. It’ s been my way of trying to understand not just disaster, but community, culture, and continuity, three things that city possesses as no place else in the nation. Hip-hop comes most directly from the South Bronx, but if you look at the 1970s founders of that genre of popular music, you see that some of the key figures were Caribbean, and if you look at their formative music, it included the ska and reggae that were infused with the influence of New Orleans. (In addition, that city’ s native son and major jazz figure, Donald Harrison, Jr., was a mentor to seminal New York City rapper Notorious B. I. G.)

If you look at New Orleans, what you see is an astonishing example of the survival of culture -- and of the culture of survival.

Maybe you’ d have to do what I was doing in early 2011 -- poke around in the origins of American music in New Orleans -- to be struck by the way so many essential parts of it came from Africa in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and some of it returned to that continent again in recent years. I was looking at maps, making maps, thinking about how to chart the unexpected ways immaterial things move through time and space.

The saddest map I have ever seen is the oft-published one of the triangle trade, a vicious circle that isn’ t even a circle. It depicts the routes of the eighteenth and nineteenth century European traders who brought manufactured goods from their continent to West Africa to exchange for human beings who were then transported to the United States and the Caribbean to be exchanged for raw materials, especially sugar, rum, and tobacco. It’ s a map that tells of people made into tools and commodities, but it tells us nothing of what the enslaved brought with them.

Stripped bare of all possessions and rights, they carried memory, culture, and resistance in their heads. New Orleans let those things flourish as nowhere else in the United

States during the long, obscene era of slavery, while the **biggest slave uprising** in U.S. history took place nearby in 1811 (its participants including two young Asante warriors who had arrived in New Orleans on slave ships five years earlier). From the mid-eighteenth century to the 1840s, the enslaved of New Orleans were permitted to gather on Sundays in the plaza on the edge of the old city known then and now as **Congo Square**.

"On sabbath evening," the visitor H.C. Knight famously wrote in 1819, "the African slaves meet on the green, by the swamp, and rock the city with their Congo dances." The great music historian Ned Sublette observes that this is the first use of rock as a verb about music, and in his marvelous book **The World That Made New Orleans** notes that what is arguably the first rock and roll record, Roy Brown's 1947 "**Good Rocking Tonight**," was recorded **a block away**.

In between, what Africans had brought with them continued its metamorphosis in the city: jazz famously arose from black culture near Congo Square, as did important rhythm and blues strains and influences, as well as performers, then funk, and eventually hip-hop. Funk arose in part from Afro-Cuban influences and from the African-American tradition of the Mardi Gras Indians -- not Native Americans, but working-class African Americans. Their elaborate outfits and rites officially pay homage to the Native Americans who sheltered runaway slaves (and sometimes intermarried with them), but have a startling resemblance to African beaded costumes. The Mardi Gras Indians still parade on that day and other days, chanting and singing, challenging each other through song. One of the recurrent chants **declares**, "We won't bow down."

Though New Orleans is mainly famous for other things, it has also been a city of resistance -- from the slave revolts of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to late nineteenth century segregation-breaker Homer Plessy to Ruby Bridges, the six-year-old who in 1960 was the first Black child to integrate a white school in the South. The span of time is not as long as you might think: Fats Domino, one of the founding fathers of rock and roll, is still alive and has a home in the Lower Ninth Ward. The midwife at his birth

a few blocks away was his grandmother, who had been born into slavery.

New Orleanian Herreast Harrison, a woman in her seventies, mother of jazzman Donald Harrison Jr., widow of a [Mardi Gras Indian chief](#), cultural preserver, and a dynamic force in the city, said to me of Mardi Gras Indian culture:

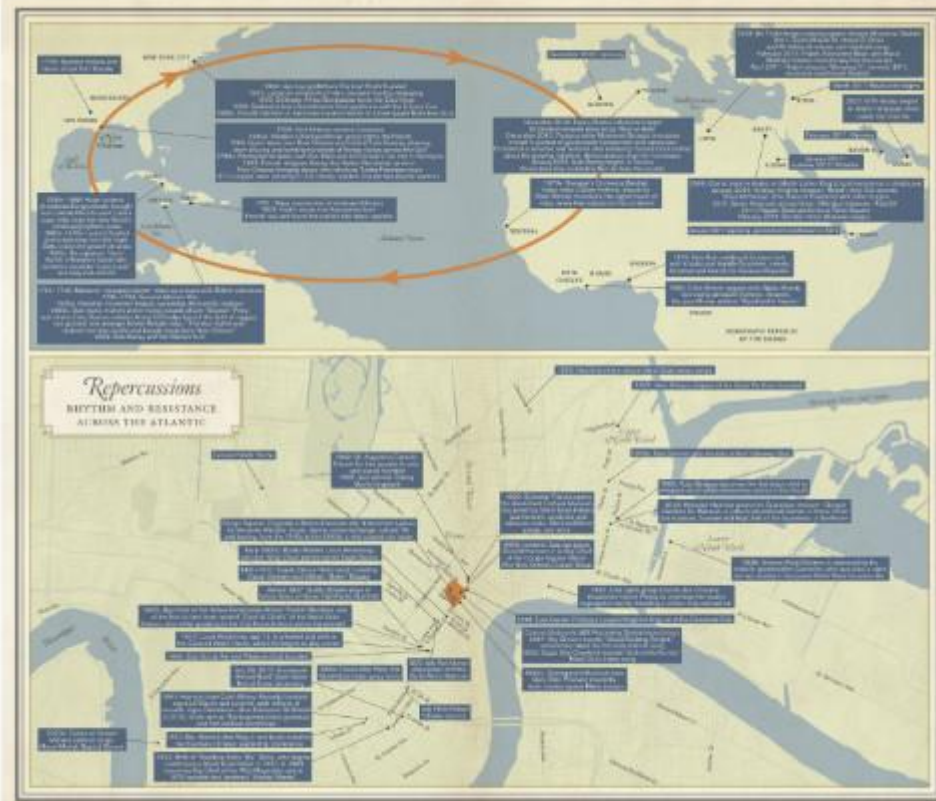
“But those groups remembered their cultural heritage and practiced it there, that memory, they had this overarching memory of their pasts. And when they were there, they were free. And their spirits soared to the high heavens. They were themselves. In spite of limitations in every aspect of their lives. Where they should have felt like, ‘we are nothing,’ because you get brainwashed constantly about the fact that you’re a nobody... but they didn’t, they brought back. And now it’s part of the world, that music.”

And her son, [Donald Harrison, Jr.](#), added:

“ One other very important thing that Congo Square represented in the culture was that no matter what’s going on in life you transcend the culture and Congo Square helps you. It transcends and puts you into a transcendental state so that you are free at that moment. Even today, that’s the power of the music and that’s why it brings us together. You have a moment of freedom where you transcend everything that’s going on around you. Berthold Auerbach said it so eloquently: ‘Music washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life.’ At that moment you become free, which is why the music is part of the world now. Everybody wants a moment to transcend. It goes inside of you and you know where you can go to be free. No matter if you’re in Norway, South American, or Beijing, you know, ‘this music sets me free.’ So Congo Square set the world free, basically. It gives freedom to everyone around it.”

In my latest project, [Unfathomable City: A New Orleans Atlas](#), I tried to convey what New Orleans music gave the world in a map labeled “Repercussions: Rhythm and Resistance Across the Atlantic.” Those involuntary émigrés brought by slave ship were said to have nothing, but what they had still reaches and spreads and liberates.

[Click here to see a larger version](#)



Repercussions: Rhythm and Resistance Across the Atlantic. Map concept and research: Rebecca Solnit. Cartography: Shizue Seigel. Design: Lia Tjandra. c Univ. of CA Press, 2013.

What we call the Arab Spring was first of all the North African Spring -- in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya -- and hip-hop was already there. It has, in fact, become a global means of dissent, from indigenous Oaxaca, Mexico, to Cairo, Egypt. Which does not mean that everything is fine (or that hip-hop can't also be used for consumerism or misogyny). It's a reminder, however, that even in the most horrific of circumstances, something remarkable more than survived; it thrived and grew and eventually reached around the Earth.

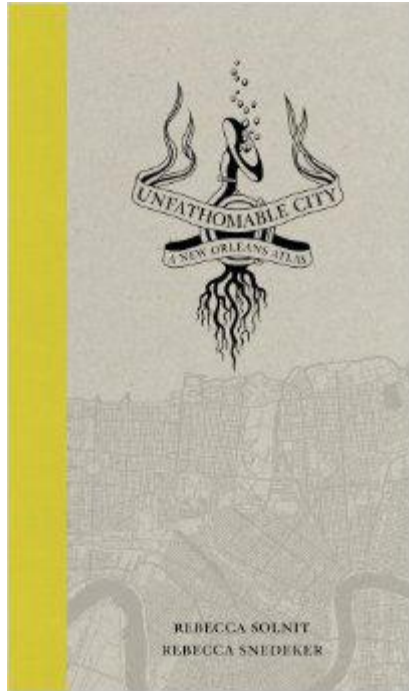
Nearly three years after the first sparks of the Arab Spring began, it's wiser to consider it, too, barely begun rather than ended in failure. More than two years after the first members of Occupy Wall Street began decamping in Zuccotti Park in lower Manhattan, that movement is not over either, though almost all the encampments have subsided and the engagement has new names: [Occupy Sandy](#), [Strike Debt](#), and

more. That everything continues to metamorphose seems a better way to think of social upheavals than obituaries and epitaphs.

Maps of the Unpredictable

Whenever I look around me, I wonder what old things are about to bear fruit, what seemingly solid institutions might soon rupture, and what seeds we might now be planting whose harvest will come at some unpredictable moment in the future. The most magnificent person I met in 2013 quoted a line from Michel Foucault to me: “People know what they do; frequently they know why they do what they do; but what they don’t know is what what they do does.” Someone saves a life or educates a person or tells her a story that upends everything she assumed. The transformation may be subtle or crucial or world changing, next year or in 100 years, or maybe in a millennium. You can’t always trace it but everything, everyone has a genealogy.

In her forthcoming book [The Rise: Creativity, the Gift of Failure, and the Search for Mastery](#), Sarah Lewis tells how a white teenager in Austin, Texas, named Charles Black heard a black trumpet player in the 1930s who changed his thinking -- and so our lives. He was riveted and transformed by the beauty of New Orleans jazzman Louis Armstrong’s music, so much so that he began to reconsider the segregated world he had grown up in. “It is impossible to overstate the significance of a 16-year-old Southern boy’s seeing genius, for the first time, in a black,” he [recalled](#) decades later. As a lawyer dedicated to racial equality and civil rights, he would in 1954 help overturn segregation nationwide, aiding the plaintiffs in [Brown v. Board of Education](#), the landmark Supreme Court case ending segregation (and overturning [Plessy v. Ferguson](#), the failed anti-segregation lawsuit launched in New Orleans 60 years earlier).



Buy the book

How do you explain what Louis Armstrong's music does? Can you draw a map of the United States in which the sound of a trumpeter in 1930s Texas reaches back to moments of liberation created by slaves in Congo Square and forward to the Supreme Court of 1954?

Or how do you chart the way in which the capture of three young American hikers by Iranian border guards on the Iraq-Iran border in 2009 and their imprisonment — the men for 781 days — became the occasion for secret talks between the U.S. and Iran that led to the interim nuclear agreement signed last month? Can you draw a map of the world in which three idealistic young people out on a walk become prisoners and then catalysts?

Looking back, one of those three prisoners, Shane Bauer, wrote, "One of my fears in prison was that our detention was only going to fuel hostility between Iran and the U.S. It feels good to know that those two miserable years led to something, that could lead to something better than what was before."

Bauer later [added](#):

"The reason our tragedy led to an opening between the United States and Iran was that many people

were actively working to end our suffering. To do so, our friends and families had to strive to build a bridge between the U.S. and Iran when the two governments were refusing to do it themselves. Sarah [Shourd, the third prisoner] is not a politician and she has no desire to be, but when she was released a year before Josh and me, she made herself into a skilled and unrelenting diplomat, strengthening connections between Oman and the U.S. that ultimately led to these talks.”

A [decade ago](#) I began writing about hope, an orientation that has nothing to do with optimism. Optimism says that everything will be fine no matter what, just as pessimism says that it will be dismal no matter what. Hope is a sense of the grand mystery of it all, the knowledge that we don’ t know how it will turn out, that anything is possible. It means recognizing that the sound of a trumpet at a school dance in Austin, Texas, may resound in the Supreme Court 20 years later; that an unfortunate hike in the borderlands might help turn two countries away from war; that Edward Snowden, a young NSA contractor and the biggest surprise of this year, might revolt against that agency’ s sinister invasions of privacy and be surprised himself by the vehemence of the global reaction to his leaked data; that culture which left Africa more than 200 years ago might return to that continent as a tool for liberation -- that we don’ t know what we do does.

That Massachusetts pear tree is still bearing fruit almost 400 years after it was planted. The planter of that tree also helped instigate the war against the Pequots, who were massacred in 1637. “The survivors were sold into slavery or given over to neighboring tribes. The colonists even barred the use of the Pequot name, ‘in order to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth,’ as the leader of the raiding party later wrote,” [according to](#) the New York Times.

For centuries thereafter, that Native American nation was described as extinct, erased, gone. It was written about in the past tense when mentioned at all. In the 1970s, however, the Pequots achieved federal recognition, entitling them to the rights that Native American tribes have as “subject

sovereign nations” ; in the 1980s, they opened a bingo hall on their reservation in Connecticut; in the 1990s, it became the biggest casino in the western world. (Just for the record, I’ m not a fan of the gambling industry, but I am of unpredictable narratives.)

With the enormous income from that project, the tribe funded a Native American history museum that opened in 1998, also the biggest of its kind. The new empire of the Pequots has been on rocky ground since the financial meltdown of 2008, but the fact that it arose at all is astonishing more than 150 years after Herman Melville stuck a ship called the Pequod in the middle of his novel Moby Dick and mentioned that it was named after a people “now extinct as the ancient [Medes](#).” Are there are longer odds in New England than that a people long pronounced gone would end up profiting from the bad-math optimism of their neighbors?

Meanwhile, that pear tree continues to bear fruit; meanwhile, hip-hop continues to be a vehicle for political dissent from the Inuit far north to Latin America; meanwhile, diplomatic relations with Iran have had some surprising twists and turns, most recently away from war.

I see the fabric of my country’ s rights and justices fraying and I see [climate change advancing](#). There are terrible things about this moment and it’ s clear that the consequences of climate change will get worse (though how much worse still depends on us). I also see that we never actually know how things will play out in the end, that the most unlikely events often occur, that we are a very innovative and resilient species, and that far more of us are idealists than is good for business and the status quo to acknowledge.

What I learned first in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina was how calm, how resourceful, and how generous people could be in the worst times: the “Cajun Navy” that came in to rescue people by boat, the stranded themselves who formed communities of mutual aid, the hundreds of thousands of volunteers, from middle-aged Mennonites to young anarchists, who arrived afterward to help salvage a city that could have been left for dead.

I don’ t know what’ s coming. I do know that, whatever it

is, some of it will be terrible, but some of it will be miraculous, that term we reserve for the utterly unanticipated, the seeds we didn't know the soil held. And I know that we don't know what we do does. As Shane Bauer points out, the doing is the crucial thing.

Rebecca Solnit co-directed [Unfathomable City: A New Orleans Atlas](#), the sequel to her 2010 [Infinite City: A San Francisco Atlas](#). A [TomDispatch](#) regular, she has written the final article of the year for that site for the last nine years.

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117 readings

Oil industry 'devastating' for Amazon communities, warns UN rapporteur



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 22 December 2013 13:46

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[Dan Collyns](#) in Lima

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[theguardian.com](#), Friday 20 December 2013 17.11 GMT

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<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/dec/20/oil-industry-amazon-communities-un-rapporteur>

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James Anaya says oil companies have affected health and food sources of indigenous people in the Peruvian rainforest



Aerial view of the Amazon rainforest in Peru. Photograph: Design Pics Inc / Rex Features

Aerial view of the Amazon rainforest in Peru. Photograph: Design Pics Inc / Rex Features

Indigenous people in Peru have suffered "devastating consequences" as a result of extractive industries in the Amazon rainforest, according to the United Nations' Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Rights.

During a week-long trip to the country, James Anaya visited indigenous communities in Loreto, an Amazon region which has been heavily contaminated over the last 40 years by oil companies. In particular he visited an oil concession known as **Block 192 (formerly Block 1AB)**.

"I have been able to personally confirm the serious environmental problems that exist in this zone due to the oil industry," Anaya said. "This includes the contamination of the body of waters and the soil used by the indigenous people in this region, which has affected their food sources and their health."

Last month, Peru's environmental regulator **OEFA** fined Argentine oil and gas company Pluspetrol \$7.2m (£4.4m) for contaminating a lake to such an extent that it effectively disappeared. **It said** the company caused irrecoverable ecological loss to the Shanshacocha lake and had failed to report the incident.

Pluspetrol blamed the contamination on the previous operators, Occidental Petroleum. The company owes millions of dollars in unpaid fines and, in March, **sparked an environmental emergency** in the same northern Amazon region.

"An example of the various negative experiences of natural resources in Peru is the situation of indigenous people in the Pastaza, Tigre, Corrientes and Marañon river basins," Anaya said. "These people, for more than four decades, have been affected by oil exploitation in Block 1-AB."

He called on the Peruvian government and Pluspetrol to increase environmental remediation efforts and said the indigenous people in the area should be compensated for the decades of environmental contamination.

"The indigenous leaders repeatedly made clear to me that they do not oppose development, but that the development must be in keeping with their rights, including their rights over their lands, natural resources and their own aspirations and priorities for development," he added.

Conflicts over natural resources are common in Peru. Anaya last visited the country in 2009 following **the violent clashes in Bagua** in which more than 30 police officers and indigenous protesters were killed.

The special rapporteur said since then progress had been made with the congressional approval of law on the **prior consultation of indigenous peoples** in 2011, but its implementation had been slow and it was unclear if it would help resolve disputes.

Anaya said decades of suffering the negative impact of extractive industries had caused a "deterioration of relations between indigenous people and the state that still needs to be overcome."

"The challenge now is to ensure that prior consultation is implemented according to the relevant international standards," he said.

He also urged the Peruvian state to act with "extreme caution" in the proposed extension of Block 88, part of the Camisea gas fields, which already overlaps the Nahua-Kugapakori indigenous reserve, where nomadic groups live in a situation of **"voluntary isolation and initial contact"**.

Last Updated on Sunday, 22 December 2013 13:52

100 readings

Seed smuggling a 'serious threat' to national security, says Beijing



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 22 December 2013 08:02

BY chunxiao.li@scmp.com

<http://www.scmp.com/news/china-insider/article/1386569/seed-smuggling-serious-threat-national-security-says-beijing>

An investigation into the smuggling of GM seeds into the mainland following the failure of corn crops in Hunan provokes the authorities in Beijing to condemn the illegal practice

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Farmers dry the harvested corn at a grain depot in Heilongjiang Province. Photo: Xinhua

Hunan farmers who had planted genetically modified corn seeds smuggled from Thailand and Hong Kong were stunned last autumn after the more than 133 square metres of crops they planted yielded nothing.

After months of investigation, Hunan police under the supervision of Chinese Ministry of Public Security, had arrested suspects involved in the smuggling chain.

The case has sounded alarms for Beijing authorities who in a conference this week called seed smuggling a "serious threat" to national security.

The 29 households in Hunan's Tongdao county had spent several thousands yuan purchasing the 100 kilograms of "golden seeds" from a Guangdong vendor, [China's National Business Daily \(NBD\) reported on Friday.](#)

Zou Jianming, the head of a seed company in Guangdong, and Li Zhenyao, Zou's supplier, were both arrested.

Li later confessed that he had smuggled into China more than 50 tonnes of corn seeds since 2003, produced by Monsanto and Syngenta. Both are world leading producers of GM seeds.

Li said he would usually bribe Hong Kong truck drivers or Chinese tourists returning from abroad into helping him smuggle the seeds into mainland China.

Duan, a spokesperson from Tonghua's police department, told the South China Morning Post in a phone interview on Friday that local farmers had received more than 400,000 yuan (HK\$510,803) in compensation from Zou's company. He said local officials would continue educating farmers on risks of buying smuggled seeds.

"We discovered that seed smuggling has been going on for a long time and has posed a national risk to security," Liu Yuejin, a professor at Beijing's University of International Relations who assisted with the investigation, told NBD.

The world's second largest corn consumer, China has yet to allow commercial plantation of GM staple crops. Its national **quarantine authority** said on Friday that the country has rejected a total of 545,000 tonnes of corn from the US this month as of Thursday, after detecting unapproved GM strains, **according to a Reuters report**.

Last Updated on Sunday, 22 December 2013 08:11

[China rejects unapproved U. S. corn](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 21 December 2013 20:33

[English.news.cn http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-12/04/c_132940805.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-12/04/c_132940805.htm)2013-12-04

BEIJING, Dec. 4 (Xinhua) -- China's quality watchdog announced on Wednesday that China has recently rejected 120,643 tonnes of corn imports from the United States which contain unapproved transgenic content.

Local entry-exit inspection and quarantine bureaus in the southern port city of Shenzhen, Fujian and Shandong Provinces found MIR162, a type of insect-resistant transgenic corn, among five batches of over 120,643 tonnes of corn imported from the United States, according to the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ).

Last Updated on Saturday, 21 December 2013 21:23

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Unethical Journal Retraction Fuels Mistrust in GMO Science



PEJ Events

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 21 December 2013 20:15

By Dr. Mercola

<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2013/12/17/seralini-gmo-study-retracted.aspx>

December 17, 2013 | 180,616 views

In September of last year, the first-ever **lifetime feeding study** assessing the health risks of genetically engineered (GE) Roundup Ready corn (NK603) was published in Reed Elsevier's peer-reviewed journal, Food and Chemical Toxicology.

The two-year long study¹ led by Gilles-Eric Seralini revealed shocking health effects, including massive

tumors and early death.

Rats given glyphosate in their drinking water also developed tumors. **Glyphosate** is the active ingredient in Monsanto's herbicide Roundup, which has recently been implicated as a major contributor to chronic disease. Needless to say, Séralini's findings set off a fire-storm of opposition from the industry.

Last month, the publisher retracted the study saying it "did not meet scientific standards." While no errors or misrepresentation of data were found, the study had too small a sample size to make any definite conclusion about health effects, Elsevier said.^{2, 3, 4, 5}

According to Reuters:⁶

"The journal said that while it received many letters expressing concerns about the validity of the findings, the proper use of animals and even allegations of fraud, its own investigation found 'no evidence of fraud or intentional misrepresentation of the data.'

'However, there is a legitimate cause for concern regarding both the number of animals in each study group and the particular strain selected,' it said."

Séralini Defends His Research

Séralini vehemently defends his research, and according to some sources may end up taking the issue to court.⁷ He's certainly no stranger to legal battles. A mere two years ago, he won a libel case against the French Association of Plant Biotechnologies. As reported by GM Watch in January 2011:⁸

"Séralini sued for libel following a smear campaign... This was part of a furious response from the GM industry to a number of papers by Seralini and colleagues which demonstrated serious statistical and other shortcomings in the Monsanto research dossiers submitted in support of applications for the approval of three GM varieties.

The papers had not argued that the Monsanto GM maize lines were actually dangerous, but had simply argued that there were no grounds for assuming them to be completely harmless. They asked for further research and longer animal feeding studies than those that had been conducted."

The research team issued the following statement⁹ on GMOSeralini.org:

"We, authors of the paper published in FCT more than one year ago on the effects of Roundup and a Roundup-tolerant GMO, and having answered to critics in the same journal, do not accept as scientifically sound the debate on the fact that these papers are inconclusive because of the rat strain or the number of rats used.

We maintain our conclusions. We already published some answers to the same critics in your Journal, which have not been answered."

It's quite noteworthy that after an intense year-long review by the publisher—in addition to being reviewed by twice the typical number of referees prior to publication—the study was not retracted due to errors, fraud, or even the slightest misrepresentation of data.

It was retracted because the strain and number of animals used allegedly rendered the findings inconclusive. However, since when are studies retracted for showing inconclusive findings?

Inconclusive Findings Are Not a Valid Ground for Retraction

As noted by GM Watch,¹⁰ inconclusiveness of findings is not a valid ground for retraction. According to the guidelines for scientific retractions set out by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), the only grounds for a retraction are:

- Clear evidence that the findings are unreliable due to misconduct (e.g. data fabrication) or honest error
- Plagiarism or redundant publication

- Unethical research

Clearly, the retraction is in violation of COPE guidelines. On his website,¹¹ Séralini defends the use of Sprague Dawley rats, stating this strain of rats is routinely used in studies investigating toxicological and tumor-inducing effects, including in some of Monsanto's own toxicology studies.

One main difference is that Monsanto ended their feeding study at 90 days, and Séralini's team discovered that tumors and other devastating health effects occurred AFTER the 90-day mark. What's more, contrary to Séralini's paper, Monsanto's study actually contains errors, yet it was never retracted. As reported by ISIS:¹²

"[A] study published by Monsanto in the same journal in 2004 does contain errors if not outright fraud, basically because the effect of GMOs was not compared with matched isogenic non-GMO controls, while the feed for controls was most likely contaminated with GMOs. That paper should be considered for retraction, but the issue was never even raised."

Séralini also explains and defends the number of animals used, stating that while standard research guidelines call for 20 animals per group in carcinogenicity studies, the team was not performing a carcinogenesis study. They were assessing long-term chronic toxicity, and tumors just happened to be part of the outcome; hence they were reported. As noted by GM Watch:¹³

"It is important that scientists do not overstate their findings or draw conclusions that are not justified by the data, but Prof Séralini's paper does not do this. Because Prof Séralini's study was a chronic toxicity study and not a full-scale carcinogenicity study, which normally requires larger numbers of rats, He conservatively did not do a statistical analysis of the tumors and mortality findings. Instead he simply reported them, without drawing definitive conclusions. This is in line with the OECD chronic toxicity protocol, which requires that any 'lesions' (including tumors) observed are recorded."

The Controversy Deepens

Interestingly, according to one report, Séralini may be planning an experiment that could throw serious doubt on virtually all previous **GMO** research.¹⁴ According to Séralini, all experimental animals are routinely exposed to pollutants and (most likely) GMOs via their chow. This makes it impossible to properly distinguish spontaneous, natural tumors from tumors developed in response to GMOs and other toxic contaminants, and it doesn't matter how many animals you use in your tests... As stated by Sustainable Pulse:¹⁵

"In short, the ultimate defense [of Seralini's 2012 GM maize study] is to cast doubt on the relevance of the studies done so far. This statement – which would need to be seriously supported – will undoubtedly cause a wave of protest. The editors of the journal Food and Chemical Toxicology were perhaps hoping to extinguish the controversy, but instead they may have fanned the flames."

Indeed, the chemical technology industry, led by Monsanto, is not sitting so pretty right now, and victory shouts of "I told you so" in response to the retraction of Séralini's hotly contested research falls flat when you consider that the GMO industry just lost one of its own primary scientific figure heads to a string of embarrassing study retractions. I'm talking about Pamela Ronald,¹⁶ of course, the public face of GMO research. Two of her scientific papers (published in 2009 and 2011 respectively) were retracted this year, and questions have been raised about a third paper. Her work was correctly retracted due to errors, which included mislabeled samples and failure to use replicable experimental conditions, and more.

What many don't realize is that even a small number of retracted studies can wreak absolute havoc with the science-based paradigm. Other scientists, who have based their research on the results from studies that for whatever reason end up being retracted, are now perpetuating flawed science as well. In this case, Dr. Ronald's retracted GMO studies have been cited by at least 121 times.^{17, 18} That's a large cleanup job in a field that's already heavily criticized for its preponderance of lousy science. This probably added pressure to even the playing field by removing some of the worst evidence of harm from the table. With Séralini's findings dismissed, they've managed to at least slow down the GMO industry's demise.

Mistrust in Science Grows as Conflicts of Interest Become the Norm

As if Elsevier wasn't in enough hot water, the retraction of Séralini's research comes on the heels of the installation of a Monsanto employee on the publisher's editorial staff. Earlier this year, they created a brand new editorial position, Associate Editor for Biotechnology and filled it with Richard E. Goodman,¹⁹ who was a Monsanto scientist for seven years. Goodman is also an affiliate of the GMO industry-funded group, the International Life Sciences Institute.

While on Monsanto's payroll, he assessed GE crops for allergenicity and published papers on the safety of GE food. While there's no proof that Goodman was responsible for the retraction, the timing and obnoxiously blatant appearance of conflicts of interest are hard to ignore. As stated by the Institute of Science in Society (ISIS):²⁰

"The journal and its publisher are operating a double standard in retracting a paper reporting adverse health impacts for which no fraud or error was found, as opposed to one claiming no health impacts where serious error at least is involved. This is not just a blatant violation of publishing ethics, it means conspiring to remove from the public record results that could be of great importance for public health. Furthermore, **it is an abuse of science and amounts to corporate terrorism on independent science and scientists. It strikes at the very heart of science and democracy, and the aspiration of scientists to work for the public good.**" [Emphasis mine]

Indeed, regardless of Goodman's level of involvement, the bizarre justification for retracting Séralini's study is enough to indicate that "corporate terrorism" has seized the field and is actively undermining science as we know it. Science used to be a field held in the highest of esteem, and all of modern medicine is built on the foundation of "science-based" treatments.

Now, it is abundantly clear that the preferred business model of an industry is created first, and "scientific evidence" is then concocted, sometimes almost like an afterthought, to support the established business model—not the other way around, which is how most people understand the fundamental role of science. This is precisely why the scam has worked this long. Everyone just assumes that scientific integrity is somehow assured; that there are safeguards along the way...

The Rise of Corporate Terrorism

"Corporate terrorism" is perhaps one of the most apt descriptions I've seen so far to describe what's happening here. Again and again, papers assessing the prevalence scientific fraud and the impact of conflicts of interest with industry show that the situation is dire and getting worse. In short, we have lost scientific integrity. Without integrity, science is dead.

Instead of evidence-based decision making, we now have decision-based evidence making.

This is creating a tremendous mistrust of science, and rightfully so. The Séralini case reveals just how gaping a gulf this problem has become. If we don't have real, independent and unbiased science, how are we to make well-informed decisions about anything—be it related to the medical, chemical, or genetic engineering industries? The entire notion of "science-based"—anything goes right out the window! Where does that ultimately leave us, and how do we proceed?

Ever since the introduction of genetically engineered (GE) seeds in the mid-1990s, the market for these chemical-dependent crops have spawned a multibillion dollar industry. Funding for the development of more varieties of GE crop varieties has come primarily from the privately-owned chemical technology industry itself. Over the last 15 years, conflicts of interest within science have exponentially increased, and at this point, it's blatantly obvious that financial conflicts of interest play a major role when it comes to what research is done; what gets published, and what doesn't. According to one 2011 study published in the journal *Food Policy*:²¹

"In a study involving 94 articles selected through objective criteria, it was found that the existence of either financial or professional conflict of interest was associated to study outcomes that cast genetically modified products in a favorable light. While financial conflict of interest alone did not correlate with research results, a strong association was found between author affiliation to industry (professional conflict of interest) and study outcome. "

Here's another example of corrupted science. As noted in a 2012 paper published in the journal *Nature*,²² when researchers looked into the reproducibility of what were considered to be "landmark" cancer studies, they were absolutely shocked to realize that scientific findings could only be confirmed in 11 percent of these "groundbreaking" research cases! Unless a finding can be successfully reproduced, the

hypothesis doesn't hold water.

Conflicts of interest are also at the heart of yet another round of controversy revolving around genetically engineered foods. Corinne Lepage, a Member of the European Parliament and former French environment minister recently called for the resignation of Anne Glover, chief scientific adviser to the European Commission. Glover, a GMO-advocate, was appointed to her position two years ago. Now, all of a sudden—for the first time since 1996—the commission is considering authorizing the cultivation of GM corn in Europe.²³ Coincidence? Lepage doesn't think so.

Other scientists have also spoken out about the abuse and intimidation they suffer simply for publishing findings that point to problems relating to genetically engineered foods. Some of them are addressed in Emily Waltz's 2009 report "GM crops: Battlefield," published in *Nature*.²⁴

Take a Stand Against Unethical Science

As stated by Corinne Lepage at a November 28 press conference, Séralini's paper raised valid questions about the safety of GMOs and Roundup, and retracting the paper "will not make these questions disappear."²⁵ Joël Spiroux de Vendômois, physician and co-author of the Séralini paper called the retraction "a public health scandal," noting that the journal had already scrutinized the study more closely than other papers prior to publishing. And the European Network of Scientists for Social and Environmental Responsibility issued a statement²⁶ calling the retraction "a travesty of science" that "looks like a bow to industry."

It sure does look like it, and Elsevier has the history to support such suspicions as well. Many may have forgotten this, but it was only four years ago that Elsevier was found to have created no less than six "science journals" that were nothing of the sort.²⁷ The journals were designed to look like peer-reviewed medical journals—little did doctors know that the magazines were sponsored by unnamed pharmaceutical companies and contained reprints of favorable studies and single-source reviews. In short, it was "undercover corporate propaganda."

The publisher has also drawn enough ire from academics fed up with Elsevier's business practices, especially its pricing. According to ISIS, more than 13,970 academics from all subjects have signed a boycott against the publisher, pledging not to publish, referee, or do editorial work for them.

Now, a group of scientists have drafted an open letter requesting Elsevier reverse its retraction of the Séralini paper, and to issue a public apology to the authors. "Until this is done, we will boycott Elsevier, decline to purchase Elsevier products, submit papers for publication, review papers or do editorial work for Elsevier," the letter states. The letter may be signed by scientists and non-scientists alike. In the time it took me to write this article, the letter received another 15 signatures by scientists. Please take a moment to sign the letter, and forward it as widely as possible.

Vote with Your Pocketbook, Every Day

The food companies on the left of this graphic spent tens of millions of dollars in the last two labeling campaigns—in California and Washington State - to prevent you from knowing what's in your food. You can even the score by switching to the brands on the right; all of whom stood behind the I-522 Right to Know campaign. Voting with your pocketbook, at every meal, matters. It makes a huge difference.

3301 readings

If you don't leave crude oil in the soil Coal in the hole and tar sands in the land I will confront and denounce you

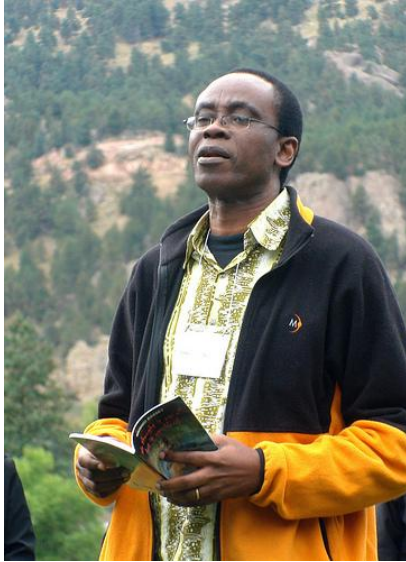


Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 21 December 2013 16:47

(a poem by Nnimmo Bassey)



From the 2010 Cochabamba Conference - Speech by Nnimmo Bassey at the Opening Ceremony of the conference

Nnimmo Bassey represented Friends of the Earth and Africa at the Conference. After his opening remarks he recited the following poem. I will not dance to your beat (a poem by Nnimmo Bassey)

I will not dance to your beat

I will not dance to your beat
If you call plantations forests
I will not sing with you
If you privatise my water
I will confront you with my fists
If climate change means death to me but business to you
I will expose your evil greed

If you don't leave crude **oil in the soil**
Coal in the hole and **tar sands in the land**
I will confront and denounce you
If you insist on carbon offsetting and other do-nothing false solutions
I will make you see red
If you keep talking of REDD and push forest communities away from their land
I will drag you to the Climate Tribunal
If you pile up ecological debt
& refuse to pay your climate debt
I will make you drink your own medicine
If you endorse genetically modified crops
And throw dust into the skies to mask the sun
I will not dance to your beat
Unless we walk the sustainable path
And accept real solutions & respect Mother Earth
Unless you do
I will not &
We will not dance to your beat
- Cochabamba/Tiquipaya
20 April 2010
Read at the opening ceremony of the World Peoples Climate Conference Summit
- Show quoted text -

Last Updated on Saturday, 21 December 2013 18:10

313 readings

Quebec Ban lawsuit:Fracking must be banned across Canada



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 21 December 2013 14:10

by Joan Russow

Global Compliance Research Project



http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2013/10/03/quebec-fracking-ban-lawsuit_n_4038173.htm

UNDER NAFTA; A PROJECT CAN BE ENDED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL REASONS

Under 1106 in Nafta There is the following provision;

6. Provided that such measures are not applied in an arbitrary or unjustifiable manner, or do not constitute a disguised restriction on international trade or investment, nothing in paragraph 1(b) or (c) or 3(a) or (b) shall be construed to prevent any Party from adopting or maintaining measures, including environmental measures:

- (a) necessary to secure compliance with laws and regulations that are not inconsistent with the provisions of this Agreement;
- (b) necessary to protect human, animal or plant life or health; or
- (c) necessary for the conservation of living or non-living exhaustible natural resources.

APPLICATION OF THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE

Canada has signed and ratified legally binding Convention on Biological Diversity, whereas the US has signed it but not ratified it. Under Article 18 of the Convention on the Law of treaties, in the interim between the signing and ratifying there is an obligation not to defeat the purpose of the Convention; The purpose of the Convention on Biological Diversity is to conserve Biodiversity.

One of the key provisions in the convention is the precautionary principle.

In the Convention on Biological Biodiversity, the precautionary principle read;

where there is a threat of significant reduction or loss of biological diversity, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to avoid or minimize such a threat

The World Health Organization has also adopted the precaution Principle

SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE OF HARM TO HUMAN HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT

There has been numerous studies indicating the threat of the process of Fracking and as more and more evidence arises, states have been calling for banning.

1.

ERIE COUNTY BANS HYDROFRACKING

Investigative Post-by [dan telvock](#)-Dec 12, 2013

The Erie County Legislature today *banned* high volume *hydraulic fracturing* on ... *Hydrofracking* supporters say there is plenty of *evidence* that ...

2.

3.

EXTENDED FRACKING BAN 'A WIN FOR PEOPLE POWER'

ABC Online-Nov 21, 2013

Extended *fracking ban* 'a win for people

power' ... attention to short-term politics than science-based *evidence* by extending its *ban* on *fracking*.

4.

5.



DALLAS PASSES DE FACTO BAN ON FRACKING

Salon-Dec 12, 2013

There's no *evidence* that even 1,500 feet is enough to prevent ... or 3,280 feet, of *hydraulic fracturing* wells had six times the methane and 23 ...

+

Show more

6.

7.

DALLAS MAY HAVE BANNED HYDRAULIC FRACTURING

CleanTechnica-Dec 14, 2013

Dallas May Have *Banned Hydraulic Fracturing* ... There's no *evidence* that even 1,500 feet is enough to prevent chemical leakage into drinking ...

8.

Keep up to date with these results:

Create an email alert for EVIDENCE FOR BANNING FRACKING

1234567

Hormone-Disrupting Chemicals Linked to Fracking Found in Colorado River

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court **overturned** parts of a controversial 2012 state law, called Act 13, which allowed gas companies to drill anywhere in the state without regard to local zoning laws. The Court's decision upholds the ability of local governments to establish quality-of-life protections their constituencies want.

THERE IS SUFFICIENT SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE TO JUSTIFY INVOKING A CANADA-WIDE BAN OF FRACKING

To assist Quebec, Canada must invoke the precautionary principle and institute a ban across Canada, then Canada cannot be accused of causing a disguised restriction to trade under Nafta and instead Canada can demonstrated that it is complying with international law.

Last Updated on Saturday, 21 December 2013 16:45

1204 readings

Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 19 December 2013 13:41

By Joan Russow Global compliance Research Project



Given the potential threats to the environment and to the land of first nations, under no condition should the Enbridge pipeline Proceed

In my presentation to the EnbridgePanel, I cited the importance of the precautionary principle:

A.THREATS AND THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE

Canada is bound by the precautionary principle which reads

Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent the threat." (Rio Declaration, UNCED1992).

This principle is also contained in

In the Convention on Biological Biodiversity, the precautionary principle read;

where there is a threat of significant reduction or loss of biological diversity, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to avoid or minimize such a threat

in the UN Framework Convention on climate change

and in1995 agreement "relating to the Conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks ...is the obligation to invoke the precautionary principle.

There is sufficient evidence that there could be serious irreversible damage, loss of significant biological diversity, adverse effects of climate change, and harm to marine life to justify invoking the precautionary principle and end the fossil fuel triad.

CONCLUSION

If the Enbridge pipeline is permitted to proceed, Canada will demonstrate yet again its defiance of international law.

I raise these issues of international law because from my experience at international UN conferences, the Harper government has caused Canada to be perceived as an international pariah because of its obsession with profiting from the tarsands at any cost, while being willing to disregard its duty to guarantee fundamental indigenous and ecological rights and to discharge obligations under international law

If the panel, respects the issues raised, by the interveners at the August 2010 review panel, and wishes to abide by international obligations and norms, the panel must reject, unconditionally, the Enbridge pipeline.

Proceeding with the pipeline and the tankers would be grossly negligent. There is sufficient evidence of precedents, such as Enbridge spills, regional earth quakes, potential tsunamis, grounding of a drilling rig and widespread pollution of land and water bodies.

that a prudent or reasonable person would not permit the Enbridge pipeline and tanker traffic . :

Everyone is criminally negligent who (a) in doing anything, or (b) in omitting to do anything that it is his duty to do, shows wanton or reckless disregard for the lives or safety of other persons" (where 'duty' means a duty imposed by law). (Section 216, Canadian Criminal Code)

Presentation link http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8792:global-compliance-presentation-to-the-northern-gateway-review-panel-&catid=75:cjustice-news&Itemid=218

B.FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS HAVE MISCONSTRUED THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE

In April 2013, I filed a petition with the Commissioner on the Environment and raised the issue of Canada's failure to abide by the precautionary principle . I referred to 14 issues, two of which were related to the tarsands and pipelines

QUESTION 1. There is sufficient scientific evidence that the continued exploitation of the tar sands will cause Canada to fail its obligations under the United Nations Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Under Article 2. Of the Convention

Under Article 2 of the legally binding UN Framework Convention on Climate change, states are "to stabilize greenhouse gases below a level of dangerous anthropogenic emissions."

The Department of Natural Resources responded that the Government takes the issue of climate change seriously, and under the 2009 Copenhagen Accords, Canada has committed to reducing its greenhouse gas (ghg) EMISSIONS BY 17 % FROM 2005 LEVELS BY 2020.

At Copenhagen, Canada agreed to far less than the EU that agreed to 20% below 1990 levels by 2020 and would have been prepared to go as far 30% if other states had been willing.

QUESTION 2. There is sufficient evidence that accidents on pipelines have occurred and that pipelines are proposed through sensitive environmental areas in British Columbia and through First Nations' land; Why will the precautionary principle not be invoked to prevent pipelines and tanker from Enbridge and

Kinder Morgan Proposals.

In the response from the Department of Natural Resources gave their definition of the precautionary approach as the following:

"The Framework outlines guiding principles for precautionary measures and their application in science-based decision making in areas of federal regulatory activity for the protection of health, safety and the environment, as well as the conservation of natural resources. It also addresses the issue of terminology and definition directly in the introduction which states:

The application of "precaution", "the precautionary principle" or "the precautionary approach" recognizes that the absence of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing decisions where there is a risk of serious or irreversible harm.

I interpret this in the following way the application of "precaution", "the precautionary principle" or "the precautionary approach" recognizes that the absence of full scientific certainty [that it is safe] shall not be used as a reason for postponing decisions where there is a risk of serious or irreversible harm.

[If the emphasis is on science that demonstrates that it is safe; it is easy to ignore evidence that it is unsafe.]

On the Other hand the version in the Convention on Biological Diversity reads

"where there is a threat of significant reduction or loss of biological diversity, lack of full scientific certainty [that it is unsafe] should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to avoid or minimize such a threat"