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751 readings

[VANCOUVER WOMEN'S FORUM ON PEACE AND SECURITY ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 09 January 2018 18:36



VANCOUVER WOMEN'S FORUM ON PEACE AND SECURITY ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA

On January 16, 2018, as Foreign Ministers from twenty nations gather in Vancouver to discuss security and stability on the Korean Peninsula, an international delegation of sixteen women representing feminist peace movements from Asia, Europe and North America will convene in Vancouver to ensure that civil-society perspectives are included in the official talks.

The objective of the women's peace delegation is to urge the Foreign Ministers to prepare the table for a diplomatic peace process that moves away from war and increased militarization, and towards peace, reconciliation, and genuine security. Through the Vancouver Women's Forum and other actions, the women delegates will remind government leaders of overwhelming global public opinion that favors a peaceful diplomatic resolution as the only option on the table for resolving the Korean crisis. The outcome of the official summit must support the recent breakthroughs in inter-Korean rapprochement, not derail it. [Read more here.](#)



Women's Forum on Peace and Security Events

CANDLELIGHT VIGIL FOR PEACE – JAN 15 – Martin Luther King Day! – 6:30 pm – Art Gallery, 7 pm Convention Centre

<https://www.facebook.com/events/198500577370254/permalink/198557274031251/>

WITNESS FOR PEACE – JAN 16 – 8 am – East Side of West Convention Centre

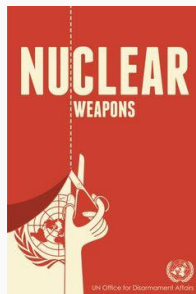
<https://www.facebook.com/events/167767017328226/permalink/167903273981267/>

FORUM FOR PEACE - Wosk Centre for Dialogue, SFU – Jan 16 – 2 - 5 pm, – [3300 - 515 West Hastings Street](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/events/149751372412658/>

Note:

These events are initiated by Women Cross DMZ and supported by VOW, Nobel Women's Initiative, the United Church of Canada, and WILPF. If you are in Vancouver, contact Lyn Adamson at lyn.adamson9@gmail.com



Please Sign This Official Petition on the Government's Official Website.

Please take a moment to sign the petition to express the desire for Canada to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons – the nuclear ban treaty that was adopted by 122 nations in July 2017 and opened for signature and ratification on September 20.

<https://petitions.ourcommons.ca/en/Petition/Details?Petition=e-1402>



Olympic Truce

An Olympic Truce - Sign this Petition and More

1) Sign this petition calling for an Olympic truce: https://act.rootsaction.org/p/dia/action4/common/public/?action_KEY=13181 .

2) Write to elected officials and media outlets to let them know about efforts to de-escalate the threat of war on the Korean peninsula. (Share copies of your letters with Bill Geimer at tarheel@shaw.ca or janslakov@shaw.ca .)

3) Plan a public vigil or other solidarity action, preferably when the Vancouver meeting is being held. Send notice of your event to vipdn@googlegroups.com so your event can be posted on the VIPDN.org website.

Sources:

- Petition to

sign: https://act.rootsaction.org/p/dia/action4/common/public/?action_KEY=13181

- Bill Geimer's article: <http://warisacrime.org/2017/08/15/will-koreans-count-this-time/>

- On Martin Luther King Day: <http://www.thekingcenter.org/meaning-king-holiday>

- CBC article on upcoming Vancouver meeting: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/rex-tillerson-ottawa-visit-1.4456579>

- NYT article on perils of mixing machismo with missiles <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/05/opinion/security-masculinity-nuclear-weapons.html>

- MLK speech linking militarism, social injustice, spiritual death: http://kingencyclopedia.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/documentsentry/doc_beyond_vietnam/



Renew your membership today. Donate and your donation will be matched up to \$6000.

Please donate today by sending a single gift or by starting your monthly donation to help us reach our fundraising goal. Donations of \$50 or more will automatically include membership.

[Click here to donate](#) or send a cheque by mail to Canadian Voice of Women for Peace, [125- 579 Kingston Road, Toronto, ON M4E 1R3](#). Questions? email info@vowpeace.org or telephone [416-603-7915](tel:416-603-7915)

621 readings

[14-point rebuttal to Keith Baldrey after he praises John Horgan for kicking Site C dam critics to the curb](#)
[Earth News](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 13 January 2018 12:20

by [Charlie Smith](#) *on January 13th, 2018 at 9:08 AM*

<https://www.straight.com/news/1018766/14-point-rebuttal-keith-baldrey-after-he-praised-john-horgan-kicking-site-c-dam-critics>



Keith Baldrey is not only a political journalist with Global B.C., he's also a syndicated columnist for Glacier Media and a commentator on CKNW Radio. [KEITH BALDREY](#)

Baldreydash.

That's probably what some opponents of the Site C dam are thinking after reading a tweet from Global B.C. reporter Keith Baldrey defending Premier John Horgan's decision to complete the \$10.7-billion Site C dam.

The man with the most Twitter followers in the B.C. press gallery chortled "Oh boo hoo. Boo hoo hoo" to those who believe media coverage was a factor in the government's evaluation on whether to proceed.

"Media coverage had VERY LITTLE to do with final decision," Baldrey declared to critics of the massive hydroelectric project. "Horgan has kicked you to the curbside, which is smart politics (given your tiny constituency)."



[Keith Baldrey](#)

✓ [@keithbaldrey](#)

Oh boo hoo. Boo hoo hoo. There has been a TON of media coverage of Site C, quoting at length the anti voices. You lost. Media coverage had VERY LITTLE to do with final decision. Horgan has kicked you to the curbside, which is smart politics (given your tiny constituency). [#bcpoli](#)

<https://twitter.com/RegimeChangeBC/status/952046366322077696>

...

[9:43 PM - Jan 12, 2018](#)

•

• [_2626 Replies](#)

•

• [_1717 Retweets](#)

-

- [9999 likes](#)

[Twitter Ads info and privacy](#)

It was reminiscent of a recent Martyn Brown column hectoring the NDP's so-called "[Angry Birds](#)" to return to the nest rather than keeping up the fight against the Site C decision.

Here's the long-term political problem for the NDP that some press gallery members don't seem to be concerned about:

1. The Site C dam was a voting decision for this so-called tiny constituency whom Baldrey has berated.
2. Many of these people voted for NDP candidates across the province because they believed, in their hearts, that a government led by John Horgan would halt the project.
3. This belief was rooted in the repeated pre-election criticism of the project from Horgan, Energy Minister Michelle Mungall, and Environment and Climate Change Strategy Minister George Heyman.
4. These Site C voters were confident that an independent evaluation by the B.C. Utilities Commission would show that the power from the Site C dam wasn't needed. Moreover, anyone following the renewable-energy field knew that clean power could be generated less expensively and with far more job creation through methods other than the Site C dam. And this fact would provide these NDP politicians with the justification to halt construction.
5. Indeed, the B.C. Utilities Commission review provided NDP politicians with these justifications. Domestic demand for electricity has been flat in B.C. for a decade.
6. Critics of the project are fully aware that some of the brightest progressive minds in the province think the decision to proceed with the Site C dam was stunningly stupid. These critics believe a major factor in the decision was [more than \\$120,000 in political donations](#) to the NDP from the union representing the operating engineers in the period leading up to the 2017 election.
7. Moreover, the NDP promised to follow the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which has never been an issue of much concern to Baldrey and some of his friends in the press gallery.

8. The hypocrisy of proceeding with completion of the dam while professing fealty to UNDRIP is, in the view of some, even worse than the B.C. Liberal approach, which was to simply pay no heed to UNDRIP and let the chips fall where they may in court. Writer Andrew Frank summed it up best when he referred to the NDP cabinet as "[heavy-hearted colonizers](#)".

9. Tremendous advances are being made in the storage of renewable power, which has always been the knock against investing in solar and wind energy. These advances in the storage of renewable power have gone largely unnoticed in the press gallery, but they were given a fair amount of attention in a recent book, [Just Cool It! The Climate Crisis and What We Can Do](#), by David Suzuki and Ian Hanington. Anyone who's curious to learn more can read [this article](#). The mainstream media's failure to cover this issue was a serious shortcoming in its overall approach to the Site C dam. Had this been fully explored, perhaps the NDP government would not have chosen to complete the dam.

10. Municipal and regional governments are making enormous strides in generating their own renewable electricity. Much more can be done in this area at a lower cost than producing Site C power. This point has often been made by one of the foremost critics of the Site C dam, Richmond councillor Harold Steves.

11. Steves has argued that the premier's decision to complete the dam is to provide the energy to power the liquefied-natural-gas industry. If he's right, this will bring the world one step closer to climate-change hell. Anyone who believes Steves on this point can only conclude that the NDP government wasn't being truly honest with the public in explaining why it was going to complete the dam.

12. The NDP's decision to flood massive amounts of farmland in the Peace River Valley is seen by critics as especially foolish, given that there's been no increase in domestic demand for the electricity. [Farmland is the new gold](#), according to former CIBC World Markets chief economist Jeff Rubin.

13. Site C dam critics believe that B.C. Hydro will have trouble servicing its [ballooning debt](#) in a world where renewable energy becomes far cheaper and far more plentiful. This debt will then be transferred from ratepayers to provincial taxpayers, crowding out spending for hospitals, schools, and other necessary public services.

14. Some critics of the Site C dam believe that the changes taking place in the energy industry are akin to the transformation in telecommunications from landlines to cellphones. That was a dramatic and quick transition, making the old technology far less appealing. Hydroelectric dams are so 1950s. Distributed renewable-energy generation and storage, including in people's homes and businesses, will be the way of the world in the 21st century. The unions will hate this, but they won't be able to stop it from happening.

Keith Baldrey might think it's smart politics for Horgan and his NDP

colleagues to get B.C. Hydro to complete the Site C dam. I disagree.

But even if Baldrey is right, it's still irredeemably terrible public policy.

1025 readings

["Your Silence and Amnesia Is Complicity": Booker Blasts Nielsen for "Shithole" Memory Failure](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 16 January 2018 14:02

Published on

Tuesday, January 16, 2018

by

[Common Dreams](#)



Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen arrives for a hearing held by the Senate Judiciary Committee January 16, 2018 in Washington, DC. Sen. Patrick Leahy and Sen. Richard Durbin both questioned Nielsen about derogatory language reportedly used by U.S. President Donald Trump during a meeting last week on immigration. Nielsen said 'I did not hear that word used', when asked about the word 'shithole'. (Photo: Win McNamee/Getty Images)

"Your silence and your amnesia is complicity," Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ) said to Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen Nielsen during an exchange while she testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee on Tuesday.

Booker's charge [followed testimony Nielsen gave under oath during earlier questions](#)

[by Sen. Dick Durbin](#) (D-Ill.) in which she denied hearing Trump use the phrase "shitholes nations" while also saying she could not remember the exact kind of "tough language" the president did use during a meeting in the Oval Office last week.

Booker admitted to Nielsen that he "had tears of rage" and was "seething when anger" when he first learned that Trump had made those remarks at the meeting she also attended. "And for you not to feel that hurt and that pain and to dismiss the questions of my colleagues, with tens of millions Americans hurting right now because they're worried about what happened in the White House," Booker continued. "When the commander in chief speaks or refuses to speak, those words don't just dissipate like mist in the air. They fester. They become poison. They give license to bigotry and hate in our country."

Unsatisfied and disappointed with the response given to Durbin, Booker suggested to Nielsen that those who offer cover to those speaking bigoted and racist words are helping to perpetuate a hatred that has a long and destructive history. "When ignorance and bigotry is allied with power," said Booker, "it's a dangerous force in our country. Your silence and your amnesia is complicity."

Watch the exchange:

[joanrussow](#)

[1m](#)

Excellent article Trump must be prevented from persisting with the Nazi dictum (Goebbels' speech Nov. 27, 1925) ...we can see the ... If you repeat a lie often enough, people will believe it, and you will even come to believe it yourself. With trump it could be if he lies often enough soon even the complicit Republicans will never believe him even when perchance he says something that is true

The kind of complicity contained in Nielsen's testimony, Booker told reporters after leaving the hearing room, is actually worse than the original racist and vulgar term used by the president.

[joanrussow](#)

[1m](#)

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be if he lies often enough soon even the complicit Republicans will never believe him even when perchance he says something that is true

Last Updated on Wednesday, 17 January 2018 15:17

658 readings

[US, Led by an Erratic Trump, Seeks to Undermine UN Justice News](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 18 January 2018 12:52



US president Donald Trump addressing the UN General Assembly in September 2017. Credit: UN Photo/Cia Pak

UNITED NATIONS, Jan 18 2018 (IPS) - The continued erratic and outrageous comments by President Donald Trump – and his attempts to undermine the United Nations – are threatening to cause irreparable damage to the world body.

The signs are ominous: the US withdrawal from the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); the threats against member states voting for anti-Israeli resolutions; slashing funds to a 69-year-old UN agency for Palestinian refugees; withdrawal from the 2016 Paris climate change agreement; threats to “totally destroy” a UN member state, North Korea; a US-inspired \$285 million reduction in the UN’s regular budget for 2018-2019, and the insidious attempts to wreck the 2015 Iranian nuclear agreement.

And more recently, Trump triggered a global backlash when he singled out Haiti and African nations as “shithole countries” eliciting protests from the 55-member African Union (AU).

Trump has also come under fire for his insulting statements that “all Haitians have

AIDS” and Nigerians who visit the US “would never go back to their huts.”

But running notoriously true to form, he has reversed himself again and again — and denied making any of these statements, despite credible evidence.

In its editorial last week, the New York Times rightly declared that Trump “is not just racist, ignorant, incompetent and undignified. He’s also a liar.”

That’s quite a mouthful to characterize the supreme leader of the free world: a crown which he may lose, paradoxically, to President Xi Jinping of totalitarian China.

James A. Paul, Executive Director of Global Policy Forum (1993-2012), an NGO monitoring the work of the United Nations, told IPS the Trump administration poses a grave threat to the future of the UN and to the development of international cooperation more generally.

“But we have to ask: how much does the present differ from the past and how close are we to a collapse of the UN under assault from Washington?.”

Every day, there appears new confirmation of the problem, whether it is President Trump’s crude statements about world leaders, his harsh commentary and stereotypical remarks about other countries and peoples, his upsetting of carefully-constructed international agreements, and his utter disregard for the tactfulness of diplomacy, said Paul.

“In terms of the UN as an institution, we see such blows as the US withdrawal from the Climate Change Agreement, looming US defunding of the UN’s Palestinian refugee aid, and US-led slashing of the regular UN budget.”

Crude blackmailing to enforce favorable votes in UN bodies, said Paul, has also been practiced by Washington more than ever.

“At the same time, there is an increasingly-harsh US government rhetoric about the UN as a useless bureaucracy, undeserving of respect and support.”

Paul said “right-wing nationalism has arisen in many lands in recent years, of course, and we should remember that the US has often in the past acted towards the UN and the international community with condescension and domination”.

Recent developments, he argued, are therefore not so much unique as they are extreme, posing deeper-than-ever threats to the viability of the UN in an extremely unstable and dangerous time.

Meanwhile, the US has already announced it will cut about \$65 million in funding for the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) which provides sustenance to millions of Palestinian refugees in the West Bank, Jordan and Lebanon.

Responding to a question at a press conference January 16, UN Secretary-General

Antonio Guterres said he was “very concerned” about the US funding cuts.

“I strongly hope that, in the end, it will be possible for the United States to maintain the funding of UNRWA, in which the US has a very important share.”

And he made it clear that UNRWA, contrary to a misconception, is “not a Palestinian institution. UNRWA is a UN institution created by the General Assembly.”

Last December, US Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley, who has hinted at linking America’s financial leverage as the biggest single donor, to Washington’s political demands, claimed the US had successfully negotiated the \$285 million reduction of the UN budget for 2018-2019.

And it was Haley who threatened to “take down names” and cut US aid to countries that voted for a resolution last December condemning US recognition of Jerusalem as the new Israeli capital.

Ian Williams, UN correspondent for Tribune and Senior Analyst, Foreign Policy in Focus, told IPS “Trump’s ignorance and arrogance makes a dangerous compound mixed with Nikki Haley’s ambitions and her pro-Israeli prejudices.”

Her job as Permanent Representative of the UN includes letting the US government know the views of the rest of the world, but it is clear from her counterproductive threats that she does not really care, he said.

Sarah Palin (a former Republican Vice Presidential candidate), announcing her foreign policy credentials, once remarked she could monitor Russia from her backyard in her home state of Alaska.

“And it is clear that Haley can only see Israel from the US mission on First Avenue,” said Williams, author of “UNtold: The Real Story of the UN in Peace and War,” recently released by Just World Books.

That seems to reflect some deep prejudices as well as blatant domestic political ambition. While Bush appeased his right wing by letting John Bolton bluster, Washington and the White House made sure that he did not break up the playground, he added

“Trump shows no signs of restraining the damage that Haley is doing to the UN and international law – nor indeed to American diplomacy which Haley even more than some of her predecessors is making an oxymoron.”

But unlike earlier times, a newly involved, and newly affluent China is waiting to pick up the balls that Haley and Trump throw out, said Williams who has been covering the United Nations since 1989.

Mouin Rabbani, Contributing Editor, Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP), told IPS history is demonstrating once again that there is an inherent threat to international peace and security “when powerful states are led by volatile

airheads.”

The United Nations is as exposed to these risks as any other state or institution, and arguably more so given its dependency on not only American funding but also US engagement, he added.

“At the same time, it would be a little unfair to assign blame solely to Trump and his diplomats, in this case led by the extraordinarily vulgar Nikki Haley.”

This is because UN-bashing has become something of a national sport if not civic requirement in the US for decades, fed by a ceaseless stream of morbid, utterly fantastical conspiracy theories of the type that Americans excel at concocting and revel in ingesting, he noted.

“We are witnessing, in real time, what happens when powerful states cease to properly invest in the education of their children.”

The problem for the UN is that making the world body a more effective organization is the one item not on the agenda of its US critics, he declared.

With Trump, they smell a unique opportunity to administer permanent and irreparable damage to the UN (and for that matter pretty much everything else they identify with modern civilization).

“It will be for the international community to decide whether to yet again roll over and play dead or prevent the lunatics from taking over the asylum,” Rabbani declared.

Paul told IPS that to get perspective and avoid idealizing earlier years at the UN, “we should remember the negative effects of the Cold War on the UN, including the proxy wars, the fierce battles over decolonization, and the negative pressure constantly brought to bear on UN budgets.”

The Congo crisis in the early 1960s had a deadly effect on the UN in more ways than one. Recent information points to the assassination of UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld in 1961, showing how far Washington and its allies were prepared to go to weaken the UN so as to protect mining and other interests in Congo and throughout Africa, he noted.

“Today, the budget cuts may be the UN’s most serious danger. In the previous biennium, the Obama Administration already forced budget reductions but this time the cuts have been deeper and more fundamental.”

After years of “doing more with less,” the UN system is desperately short of funds for basic programs. Still, the Trump people in Washington have declared that cuts must go deeper and further shrinkage is necessary.

“Beyond the Regular Budget, Washington is imposing deep austerity on UN agencies, funds and programs. Will the Trump administration simply strangle the UN

with steadily more draconian under-funding?," he asked.

This has apparently been the Trump plan for US government agencies as well, from Environmental Protection to the State Department. "Kill the Beast!" chant the alt-right ideologues to the applause of their neo-liberal corporate backers. said Paul, author of the newly-released book "Of Foxes and Chickens: Oligarchy & Global Power in the UN Security Council."

To assess the danger, "we need to go beyond calculations about whether Trump will be voted out of office in 2020." Such possibilities, he noted, are a reminder that Trump's own peculiarly odious politics could be short-lived.

"But they do not answer the larger question: what is happening in the world that has given rise to so many thuggish right-wing populists and so many corrupt, rightward-leaning centrists as well?"

Could it be the rising hegemony of the multinational corporations and their owners, who think they can rule over the global system with a minimum of interference, from old-fashioned states and ineffective intergovernmental bodies?, asked Paul, a former editor of the Oxford Companion to Politics of the World.

"We, the peoples," the globe's citizens, have been lured into this trap, to the surprise of so many intellectuals, globalists, and internationalists. This, not Trump, is the existential threat that the UN faces.

"Can a new leadership arise, with new ability to bring the public to its senses? Can the climate crisis stimulate a new transnational political movement? Can a global constituency for a revived national politics and a new and transformed UN come soon into being?," he asked.

"The UN's future almost certainly depends on it", he said.

Comment sent to Thalif Deen

I do not understand why Russia and China abandoned their original demand that the US end their provocative war games off the Korean peninsula, and agreed to UN Security Council Sanctions against North Korea

In the recent Vancouver conference of representatives of twenty states the following was affirmed ``China Russia urged to get tough``

Instead, the twenty allies of South Korea should have urged the US to end their provocative war games off the Korean Peninsula. Annual war games that simulate an attack on North Korea. and propose a freeze.

Perhaps the UN General Assembly should seek an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice on whether the United States, under Trump, is in

violation of article 20 of the legally binding International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights:

1. Any propaganda for war shall be prohibited by law.
2. Any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law.

Joan

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Last Updated on Wednesday, 07 February 2018 22:11

964 readings

['Morally Bankrupt' Budget: After \\$1.5 Trillion Gift to Rich, Trump Demands \\$1.7 Trillion in Safety Net Cuts](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 17 February 2018 10:05

"Millions of Americans will lose access to life-saving programs because the GOP gave \$1.5 trillion in tax cuts to the rich." After \$1.5 Trillion Gift to Rich, Trump Demands \$1.7 Trillion in Safety Net Cuts



Staff members display recently released printed copies of U.S. President Donald Trump's fiscal year 2019 budget at the House Budget Committee on Capitol Hill February 12, 2018 in Washington, D.C. (Photo by Win McNamee/Getty Images)

Those wondering how President Donald Trump plans to pay for the \$1.5 trillion in tax cuts for the rich he [signed into law](#) last year got their answer on Monday, when the White House unveiled its [2019 budget](#) (pdf) blueprint that calls for [\\$1.7 trillion](#) in cuts to crucial safety net programs over the next decade—including \$237 billion in cuts to Medicare alone.

"Millions of Americans will lose access to life-saving programs because the GOP gave \$1.5 trillion in tax cuts to the rich."

—Tax March

While imposing "[severe austerity](#)" on domestic programs that primarily benefit poor and middle class Americans, Trump's proposal also aims to hike the Pentagon's budget to \$716 billion—a [seven percent increase](#) from his 2018 request—and

provide \$18 billion for "the wall."

"The Trump budget is morally bankrupt and bad economic policy," Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) [wrote](#) on Twitter Monday shortly after the White House proposal was made public

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Last Updated on Sunday, 18 February 2018 13:16

505 readings

[‘Deck Stacked’ Against First Nations Seeking Site C Injunction, Experts Say](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 21 January 2018 13:43

Deck Stacked’ Against First Nations Seeking Site C Injunction, Experts Say

Sarah Cox • Friday, January 19, 2018 - 11:47

Can the Site C dam still be stopped?

It all boils down to one B.C. Supreme Court judge who will decide whether or not to grant First Nations an injunction against the project this spring, according to legal scholars who are keenly watching a new legal case against the \$10.7 billion dam.

This week West Moberly First Nations and Prophet River First Nation filed notices of civil action claiming that the Site C dam — along with two existing dams on the Peace River — infringes on rights guaranteed to them in Treaty 8, which promised they could continue their traditional way of life.

The nations requested the court declare approvals for Site C issued by the B.C. and federal governments “unconstitutional,” and asked for an injunction to halt work on a project that will destroy traditional hunting, trapping and fishing grounds, as well as areas rich in berries, herbs and medicines.

But gone are the days of the “war in the woods” in places like Clayoquot Sound and South Moresby, when Indigenous peoples were more easily able to obtain injunctions against resource projects such as industrial logging on their traditional territories.

Today it’s a much tougher slog for First Nations to get an injunction against a

resource project, say aboriginal law experts Gordon Christie and John Borrows.

“There’s something really troubling about the whole situation,” Christie, a UBC law professor, told DeSmog Canada. “Looking at this as a legal scholar it just seems like a game has been built that makes it impossible for First Nations to win.”

Borrows, a Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Law at UVic’s law school, said “the deck is stacked” against First Nations in injunction hearings because now “economic interests are often given greater weight than justice issues.”

A shift began in the 1990s, said Christie, when courts became much more likely to determine that the benefits of continuing with a project lay in favour of industry proponents who were creating jobs, rather than in the favour of First Nations striving to maintain a way of life on their traditional lands.

In legal terms, it’s called a “balance of convenience” — an analysis of the costs and benefits of either continuing with an industrial project or halting it, with a single judge deciding which argument carries more merit.

“Is the British Columbian government going to suffer the biggest harm because of all the money they’ve poured into [Site C]?” asked Borrows.

“Or is the court going to say, ‘oh no, actually the greater harm is the loss of the treaty rights and the Crown’s honour?’ It’s really hard to make that calculation because you have to choose between harms and find one that’s worse than the other.”

What happens after the injunction hearing?

If West Moberly First Nations and Prophet River First Nation are denied an injunction, their “important” and “precedent setting” case will most likely eventually wind its way through the B.C. Court of Appeal and then to the Supreme Court of Canada, a process that could take three to six years, the legal experts said.

Christie said the nations ultimately have “a very good chance” of showing that Site C infringes on their treaty rights, but at that point the damage will already have been done and “they’ll get compensation” for a “moral victory.”

Lawyers for the two nations have said a settlement could be in the order of \$1 billion, based on precedents set by cases such as the 1975 settlement awarding \$225 million (roughly \$1 billion today) to Indigenous groups affected by the massive James Bay hydro project.

“Governments are happy just to wait and have the courts tell them down the road well, that wasn’t right and then to have to pay compensation, which really means taxpayers pay,” said Christie. “The government officials don’t pay. They don’t lose. Nothing hurts them.”

Tim Thielmann, a Victoria lawyer who is part of the new legal team assembled by the two Treaty 8 nations, said the last thing the First Nations want is to be

compensated for the loss of the land.

“What they really want is the land,” Thielmann said in an interview. “We don’t think that when the indigenous signatories entered treaty that the idea would be that the Crown could continue destroying the land as long as they paid them a bunch of money after they were through with it.”

What is Treaty 8 and why does it matter?

Treaty 8 was signed in 1899 at Lesser Slave Lake in central Alberta. It covers a huge geographical area of Canada, including B.C.’s northeast.

In May 1900, eight Dunne-Za (Beaver) leaders signed the treaty in Fort St. John, including Chief Bigfoot, whose direct descendants include First Nations members like Helen Knott who are fighting Site C.

First Nations viewed a treaty with the federal government as a way to guarantee they could continue to practice their way of life as European settlers moved into their traditional territory and competition for land and resources intensified.

The federal government, for its part, was intent on opening up northern lands for agriculture, settlement, resource extraction and transportation routes to the Klondike gold rush.

First Nations were only willing to agree to the treaty if it spelled out their right to continue their hunting and fishing traditions and way of life.

In the words of the Treaty 8 Commissioners, “... we had to solemnly assure them that only such laws as to hunting and fishing as were in the interest of the Indians and were found necessary in order to protect the fish and fur-bearing animals would be made, and they would be as free to hunt and fish after the treaty as they would be if they never entered into it.”

What happened next?

Over the next century, B.C.’s Treaty 8 nations saw vast tracts of their traditional territory taken up by industrial development.

The Dunne-Za lost the heart of their homeland in 1968 when the W.A.C. Bennett dam flooded an area the size of Kuwait. The Peace Canyon Dam, which became operational in 1980, flooded a further stretch of the Peace River Valley.

Now the rest of the valley is threatened by Site C, which would inundate 145 kilometres of the Peace River and its tributaries, destroying dozens of areas of cultural importance to First Nations, including burial sites known through oral history.

“The cumulative impact of the Bennett, Peace Canyon and Site C Dams is to turn the

Peace River into a series of reservoirs, destroying the unique cultural and ecological character of the Peace, severing the physical, practical, cultural and spiritual connection the Prophet [and West Moberly] have with the Peace, and infringing Treaty Rights,” the civil action states.

Didn’ t the First Nations go to court already over Site C?

West Moberly First Nations and Prophet River First Nation lost previous court cases against Site C that sought to overturn federal and provincial approvals and permits for the project.

The courts ruled that neither the B.C. cabinet nor the federal cabinet had the expertise to determine whether or not Site C violated treaty rights before green-lighting the project and issuing permits.

The rulings found that only the courts could answer the question of potential treaty rights violations from Site C.

So, until now, the courts have never examined the issue of whether or not Site C violates treaty rights.

The door opened for a civil action following the NDP government’s December announcement that it will continue with Site C because the Liberals pushed it past the “point of no return,” a rationale disputed by project finance and energy experts who said the NDP’s math was sadly lacking.

“There’s a very compelling case by multiple expert economists to suggest that the cost of terminating the project is far less than completion,” said Thielmann.

What does this have to do with me?

Christie pointed out that all Canadians are parties to Treaty 8, a relationship in which the Crown is supposed “to act honourably.” Treaties, he said, “made Canada possible.”

“We’re the other side of the coin, the other party. Can we pressure the Crown to act honourably instead of waiting for a court to tell them after the fact ‘well, that wasn’t honourable?’ ”

“Is it really honourable to flood one of the last remaining stretches of the valley that has had such an important role in the lives of Treaty 8 nations?”

In an e-mailed statement, the B.C. Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation told DeSmog Canada that the government remains “steadfastly committed” to adopting and implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which states that resource projects should only proceed with the

“free, prior and informed consent” of affected peoples.

The ministry also said it respects the right of West Moberly First Nations and Prophet River First Nation to seek redress through a legal claim, and that it will respond to their claims in court.

The Premier’s office, asked if the government is prepared to add another \$1 billion to Site C’s price tag, said in an e-mail that it cannot comment on a matter before the courts.

Borrows said it is possible that a last-minute ruling will be made in favour of the First Nations.

“Even if it happens at the eleventh hour that could still see the dam built but not operationalized. That’s always a possibility.”

Image: Chief Roland Willson

COMMENT BY joan Russow

Global Compliance Research project

In the BC Litigation publication, Justice J.A. Norris described the nature of the injunctive remedy in British Columbia Law in the following way: The remedy [of injunction] of course, is an equitable one. The exercise of the equitable jurisdiction is not to be restricted by the straitjacket of rigid rules but is to be based on broad principles of justice and convenience, equity regarding the substance and not merely the facade or the shadow. It moves with time and circumstances. (Justice J.A. Norris, B.C. Litigation, 1991) Time and circumstances have changed; Canada has finally adopted the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This Declaration has now embodied peremptory norms such as Article 19 `free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). Treaty 8 has not given its FPIC. The courts in Canada should heed the International interpretation of FPIC. Over the years International Commissions, such as the one on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights have reprimanded Canada for its treatment of indigenous peoples. Also it should be noted that Canada`s interpretation is out of sync with the international interpretation. Site C: Canada`s Interpretation of Free prior Informed Consent is out of Sync with the International Interpretation

Last Updated on Wednesday, 07 February 2018 21:37

563 readings

[Vancouver Women's Forum on Peace and Security on the Korean Peninsula](#)



[Peace News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 23 January 2018 15:17

Vancouver Women's Forum on Peace and Security on the Korean Peninsula

For immediate release, January 16, 2018

Christine Ahn, Women Cross DMZ, Vancouver Women's Forum Lead , + 1 310 482 9333

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The Vancouver Summit on Korea missed a critical opportunity for peace. Instead of supporting the reduction of tensions in the Korean peninsula that began with the inter-Korean dialogue and the Olympics truce, the Foreign Ministers chose to further isolate and threaten North Korea.

We urged Foreign Ministers to prepare the table for dialogue with North Korea. Instead, they chose to obstruct the path for peace being laid by North and South Korea.

The US-led "maximum pressure" approach has utterly failed to halt North Korea's nuclear and missile program. Seventy years of sanctions and isolation of North Korea have only furthered the DPRK's resolve to develop its nuclear arsenal.

A maximum pressure campaign is not diplomacy that will lead to peace. Increased sanctions hurt ordinary people.


Secretary Tillerson's depiction today of commercial airline flights as potential targets of North Korea's missile tests is reminiscent of Colin Powell's UN presentation about Iraq's "so-called" weapons of mass destruction. This provocative effort to demonize North Korea sets up justification for even more extreme measures against DPRK, such as a naval blockade, which will be viewed by North Koreans as a war-like action.

We are profoundly disappointed by the Foreign Ministers representing countries with a commitment to peaceful diplomacy and feminist foreign policies. At a time of great global instability, we looked to them for leadership for true global peace and security.

We are resolved to build a global campaign to challenge sanctions that we know have cruel and punishing effects on ordinary North Koreans, to strengthen our feminist peace movements to challenge the drive for war, and to work towards the formal resolution of the Korean War.

Our commitment to peace is unshaken

589 readings

[Site C Summit - Accountability and Action](#) 

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 31 January 2018 20:51

Site C Summit – Accountability and Action - Published January 26 and 27, 2018

Victoria BC - Over 400 delegates attended the Site C Accountability and Action Summit to un-package the BC NDP's Site C decision, uphold Indigenous rights and Treaty 8, examine the ongoing Site C train wreck, and to develop action plans to stop Site C.

Experts with over 100 years of collective experience in energy economics concluded that the NDP government knew their decision to continue Site C was based on erroneous advice. Contrary to the words of Premier Horgan and Attorney General David Eby, the facts are:

- Cancellation of Site C will not trigger an immediate 12% rate increase.
- Cancellation will not incur a \$3 to \$4 billion write down.
- Cancellation will not mean \$125 to \$150 million in new annual debt service and postponement of needed capital spending.
- Cancellation will not cause a bond rating downgrade.
- **Cancellation will save \$3.5 billion for other infrastructure.**

The Summit was advised that the cost of renewable energy has plummeted since the December 11th 2017 decision to proceed with Site C making any further attempt by the NDP to justify proceeding with Site C an exercise in futility. The Summit was briefed on the clear and massive breach of West Moberly, Prophet River, and Blueberry Indian Band Treaty Rights and other Indigenous Rights that will occur upon flooding of the Peace Valley if Site C proceeds.

The Summit expressed its strong support for Treaty 8 First Nations and First Nations in Alberta and the Northwest Territories impacted by Site C and the strategies, including legal action to stop Site C as soon as possible and before any flooding of the Peace Valley.

The Summit concluded with a number calls for action. The most urgent are listed here:

1. The Province of BC must honour and uphold our treaties with Indigenous peoples, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).
1. In response to the civil suits brought by the West Moberly First Nations, the Prophet River First Nation and the Blueberry First Nations, the Province of BC must instruct BC Hydro to stop work on Site C and walk away from the project.
1. The Province of BC must release publicly the information relied upon by the Province of BC in making its decision to proceed with Site C on December 11, 2017.
1. The Province of BC must direct that no public works contracts be granted to AECOM if this corporation is to become a state-owned enterprise of the Government of China.
1. The Province of BC must replace those responsible at BC Hydro for the mismanagement of the Site C project as described by Premier Horgan in his December 11, 2017 announcement to continue Site C.
1. The Province of BC must release all geo-technical studies, memos and emails relied upon to brief the Premier prior to his December 11, 2017 announcement to continue Site C as well as release any information on the geotechnical challenges held by BC Hydro that contradict the Premier's public assurances that these challenges are not expected to be significant with regard to cost and delay.
1. The Province of BC must release immediately its plan in relation to the Site C megaproject to preclude human trafficking and the violence against and murder and/or disappearance of women and children.
1. BC Hydro must drop its strategic lawsuit against public participation (SLAPP) suit filed against individuals allegedly involved in peaceful protest against Site C on the banks of the Peace River in 2016.
1. The Province of BC must pass anti-SLAPP suit legislation in the Spring 2018 sitting of the Legislature.
1. The BC NDP Provincial Council meeting on February 2-4, 2018 must condemn the Government's decision to proceed with Site C based on NDP values and commitments (given the information presently available to the public).

Media availability:

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Last Updated on Wednesday, 07 February 2018 21:58

553 readings

[Martyn Brown: Justin Trudeau declares war on British Columbia](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 03 February 2018 16:23

2:38 PM Georgia Strait

Martyn Brown: Justin Trudeau declares war on British Columbia"

Alberta premier Rachel Notley and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's alliance on pipelines could cause federal Liberal fortunes to crash in B.C.

"That pipeline is going to get built," Justin Trudeau on Edmonton's CHED radio.

"We will stand by our decision. We will ensure that the Kinder Morgan pipeline gets built."

With that, Canada's prime minister has declared war on British Columbia's efforts to stop that widely unwanted project, which our provincial government has taken new actions to frustrate, further to its other announced and ongoing efforts.

In pandering to the all-powerful interests of Big Oil—and to the voters of Alberta—yet another Trudeau has given British Columbians the finger.

It is an appalling political intervention, aimed at placating the increasingly antsy shareholders of Kinder Morgan and the other wealthy purveyors of dirty fossil fuels, whose industry is choking our planet and threatening our oceans.

"We can't be simply trapped in the American market and that's why getting this pipeline built, which has been waited for a long time, is something that this government is serious about," Trudeau brayed. The environment, Aboriginal rights and title, and B.C.'s coastal communities be damned.

Think of it as his own new national energy program—one that stands his father's NEP on its head.

In contrast to Pierre Elliott Trudeau's NEP plan, the son-of-P.E.T.'s own pet project is more about selling out to international oil interests and helping Canadian oil prices and profits soar than about capping those cost burdens or newly protecting Canada's oil reserves for Canadians.

This time, young Trudeau is gunning for British Columbia, ironically, largely to curry favour with Alberta and to win more seats in that province, which was for so long a Liberal wasteland.

He is determined to push through a pipeline that stands to threaten the very fabric of Super, Natural British Columbia, which our provincial government is rightly trying

to protect with long overdue regulatory reforms that accord proper protections for our environment.

I expect that Trudeau will get a very rocky ride at his town hall meeting tomorrow in Nanaimo. And deservedly so.

Though if his reception in Winnipeg was any indication, he won't much care, confident as he is that his security detail will rapidly silence any dissenting voices. Out of "respect" for everyone else in the audience, don't you know?

The federal Liberals are about to get a rude awakening. The great thing about living in a democracy is it allows us all to get vocal and actively engaged in shouting back at those who would silence our voices.

Trudeau has laid down the gauntlet to all those who oppose the Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion project and Kinder Morgan's plan to turn Metro Vancouver into a major exporting hub for unrefined bitumen.

He has irresponsibly implied that British Columbia's opposition to that project, and to the shockingly deficient National Energy Board approval process—currently the subject of Federal Court of Appeal challenge—is basically irrelevant to him.

Damn us all to hell, it will be built, he pledges.

He deems it to be a project that is required "in the national interest", one that he will presumably support with all the constitutional muscle available to his federal government.

Them's fighting words, I suggest, figuratively speaking.

They beg for a swift and ardent political response from B.C. premier John Horgan that is equally bold and unequivocal as his friend Alberta premier Rachel Notley's response was to the measures announced by B.C. Environment and Climate Change Strategy Minister George Heyman.

Horgan's initial response today to Notley was a good start, but with respect, the prime minister's vow to impose the Kinder Morgan project goes way beyond her "sabre rattling", as Horgan characterized it.

It should be answered directly as the dismissive assault it is on B.C.'s autonomy, presuming as it does that nothing we say or do will stand in the way of that dubious enterprise.

It is clearly not in the national interest for the prime minister to personally draw the line in the sand that he has. Least of all, in the midst of a monumental court challenge, which B.C.'s provincial government has engaged as an intervenor.

It is frankly wrong of him to say what he did, in the face of an ongoing legal challenge from seven First Nations, the City of Vancouver, the City of Burnaby and

environmental organization to the NEB process that approved that project.

It is absolutely not in the national interest to put Big Oil's desire for higher profits ahead of all the needed shift to renewable energy that our country must support if it is to have any hope of meeting Trudeau's own Paris climate accord commitments.

To suggest that the Kinder Morgan project and its implicit vision for massive new oil sands development is in any way consistent with Canada's climate action imperatives is duplicitous and also dangerously deceptive to all Canadians.

A seven-fold increase in oil supertanker traffic in the Salish Sea that would further threaten Canada's coastal communities and marine wildlife is clearly not in the national interest.

Especially without the due scientific research about the true nature of heavy oil spills that the B.C.'s NDP government has now rightly committed to undertaking, along with new regulatory environmental safeguards for oil spill prevention, response, remediation, and compensation.

It is not in the national interest for the federal government to run roughshod over Aboriginal Canadians' constitutional rights and title, by declaring as a "done deal" a project that is so vehemently opposed by the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs and First Nations fighting it in court.

This is exactly the same attitude that recently resulted in the Federal Court of Appeal ruling against the federal government and Kinder Morgan on the Coldwater Indian Band case. It was wrong then, as it is wrong now, morally, if not also legally.

Is Trudeau really so young, reckless, or insensitive to those Aboriginal Canadians' legitimate concerns and passionate opposition to that project that he would use whatever might it might take to impose it in the face of their legal, moral, political, and – heaven help us—even physical resistance?

All Canadians should take a long overdue trip down memory lane, to see the havoc that "my way, or the highway" attitude from senior governments produces.

These 16 snapshots on CBC News should help to jog Trudeau's decidedly lacking memory.

They should remind us all of the lengths that Aboriginal Canadians have gone to in years past, to protect their interests from myopic governments that discount their rights and resolve.

Is Trudeau really so contemptuous of his government's obligations under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples that he would sanction a pipeline built over the objections of so many Indigenous Canadians, come what may?

Let us pray that's not the case.

Yet for a guy who claims to be against bullying, his salvo on Kinder Morgan as our country's highest elected official is a slap in the face to all Canadians who view that project as an affront to so much of what they hold dear about this country.

Trudeau may think it is national interest to ram through that pipeline that would see up to 890,000 barrels a day of diluted bitumen shipped to tidewater, whatever its risks to our sensitive terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.

He may think it is in the national interest to saddle Canadians with added carbon taxes that will be needed to offset the massive greenhouse gas emissions associated with that project—which the NEB failed to even consider in its approval process.

He may believe it is in Canada's interest and in the planet's interest to pad the pockets of Big Oil with a project that would generate more than 100 million tonnes of greenhouse gases into our atmosphere, as its dirty oil is burned for filthy energy.

British Columbians, by and large, do not.

We say, it is not in our province's interest, or indeed in the national interest, to build that pipeline and expanded heavy oil export facility.

It stands to threaten B.C.'s sensitive land and marine environment, to undermine British Columbia's tourism economy, and to destroy Vancouver's global "brand".

It makes a mockery of Vancouver's "Greenest City" vision and action plan. Even a single bitumen spill resulting from that project could impose incalculable economic costs that Trudeau's government has refused to properly contemplate or prevent.

In short, by so overtly siding with Big Oil in assuaging Alberta on this issue, Canada's prime minister has exposed himself and his government for what it really is: a gutless wonder, with more brute power than brains or common sense.

Perhaps it is all bravado and nothing more than a stalling tactic, of short-sighted appeasement, to calm Canada's energy markets and to reassure the big-monied interests to which the federal Liberal party is also so beholden.

I sure hope so.

But if Trudeau is as serious as he would have us all believe about his unswerving commitment to Kinder Morgan, Canada's investment climate is about to get a whole lot rockier, not the opposite.

If he is as really dug-in on this fight as his words would suggest, so are we, who oppose this project for the dire menace it really is—to our economy, to our environment, to reconciliation, and above all, to our national interest.

Back off, Trudeau. We mean it.

Last Updated on Wednesday, 07 February 2018 21:11

872 readings

[Our Enemy, Ourselves Ten Commonsense Suggestions for Making Peace, Not War](#)



[Peace News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 04 February 2018 20:35

Ten Commonsense Suggestions for Making Peace, Not War - By William J. Astore

Whether the rationale is the need to wage a war on terror or renewed preparations for a struggle against peer competitors Russia and China (as Defense Secretary James Mattis suggested recently while introducing America's new National Defense Strategy), the U.S. military is engaged globally. A network of military bases spread across 172 countries helps enable its wars and interventions. By the count of the Pentagon, at the end of the last fiscal year about 291,000 personnel (including reserves and Department of Defense civilians) were deployed in 183 countries worldwide, which is the functional definition of a military. Lady Liberty may temporarily close when the U.S. government grinds to a halt, but the country's foreign military commitments, especially its wars, just keep humming along.

As a student of history, I was warned to avoid the notion of inevitability. Still, given such data points and like them, is there anything more predictable in this country's future than incessant warfare without a true victory in sight? Indeed, the last clear-cut American victory, the last true "mission accomplished" moment in a war of any significance, came in 1945 with the end of World War II.

Yet the lack of clear victories since then seems to faze no one in Washington. In this century, presidents have regularly boasted that the U.S. military is the finest fighting force in human history, while no less regularly demanding that the most powerful military in today's world be "rebuilt" and funded at ever more staggering levels. Indeed, while on the campaign trail, Donald Trump promised he'd invest so much in the military that it would become "so big and so strong and so great, and it will be so powerful that I don't think we're ever going to have to use it."

As soon as he took office, however, he promptly appointed a set of generals to key positions in his government, stored the mothballs, and went back to war. Here, then, is a brief rundown of the first year of his presidency in war terms.

In 2017, Afghanistan saw a mini-surge of roughly 4,000 additional U.S. troops (with [more to come](#)), a [major spike](#) in air strikes, and an onslaught of munitions of all sorts, including [MOAB](#) (the mother of all bombs), the never-before-used largest non-nuclear bomb in the U.S. arsenal, as well as precision weapons fired by [B-](#)

52s against suspected Taliban drug laboratories. By the Air Force's own count, 4,361 weapons were "released" in Afghanistan in 2017 compared to 1,337 in 2016. Despite this commitment of warriors and weapons, the Afghan war remains -- according to American commanders putting the best possible light on the situation -- "stalemated," with that country's capital Kabul currently under siege.

How about Operation Inherent Resolve against the Islamic State? U.S.-led coalition forces have launched more than 10,000 airstrikes in Iraq and Syria since Donald Trump became president, unleashing 39,577 weapons in 2017. (The figure for 2016 was 30,743.) The "caliphate" is now gone and ISIS deflated but not defeated, since you can't extinguish an ideology solely with bombs. Meanwhile, along the Syrian-Turkish border a new conflict seems to be heating up between American-backed Kurdish forces and NATO ally Turkey.

Yet another strife-riven country, Yemen, witnessed a sixfold increase in U.S. airstrikes against al-Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula (from 21 in 2016 to more than 131 in 2017). In Somalia, which has also seen a rise in such strikes against al-Shabaab militants, U.S. forces on the ground have reached numbers not seen since the Black Hawk Down incident of 1993. In each of these countries, there are yet more ruins, yet more civilian casualties, and yet more displaced people.

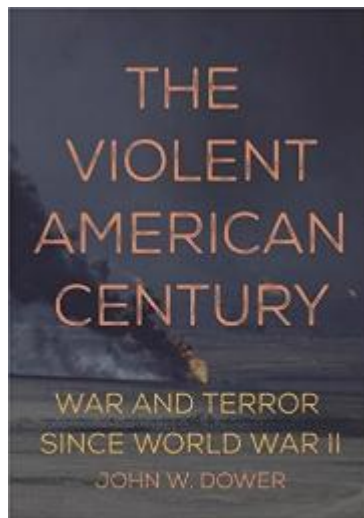
Finally, we come to North Korea. Though no real shots have yet been fired, rhetorical shots by two less-than-stable leaders, "Little Rocket Man" Kim Jong-un and "dotard" Donald Trump, raise the possibility of a regional bloodbath. Trump, seemingly favoring military solutions to North Korea's nuclear program even as his administration touts a new generation of more usable nuclear warheads, has been remarkably successful in moving the world's doomsday clock ever closer to midnight.

Clearly, his "great" and "powerful" military has hardly been standing idly on the sidelines looking "big" and "strong." More than ever, in fact, it seems to be lashing out across the Greater Middle East and Africa. Seventeen years after the 9/11 attacks began the Global War on Terror, all of this represents an eerily familiar attempt by the U.S. military to kill its way to victory, whether against the Taliban, ISIS, or other terrorist organizations.

This kinetic reality should surprise no one. Once you invest so much in your military -- not just financially but also culturally (by continually celebrating it in a fashion which has come to seem like a quasi-faith) -- it's natural to want to put it to use. This has been true of all recent administrations, Democratic and Republican alike, as reflected in the infamous question Secretary of State Madeleine Albright posed to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Colin Powell in 1992: "What's the point of having this superb military you're always talking about if we can't use it?"

With the very word "peace" rarely in Washington's political vocabulary, America's never-ending version of war seems as inevitable as anything is likely to be in history. Significant contingents of U.S. troops and contractors remain an enduring presence in Iraq and there are now 2,000 U.S. Special Operations forces and other personnel in Syria for the long haul. They are ostensibly engaged in training and stability operations. In Washington, however, the urge for regime change in

both [Syria](#) and [Iran](#) remains strong -- in the case of Iran implacably so. If past is prologue, then considering previous regime-change operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya, the future looks grim indeed.



Buy the book

Despite the dismal record of the last decade and a half, our civilian leaders continue to insist that this country must have a military not only second to none but globally dominant. And few here wonder what such a quest for total dominance, the desire for absolute power, could do to this country. Two centuries ago, however, writing to Thomas Jefferson, [John Adams](#) couldn't have been clearer on the subject. Power, he said, "must never be trusted without a check."

The question today for the American people: How is the dominant military power of which U.S. leaders so casually boast to be checked? How is the country's almost total reliance on the military in foreign affairs to be reined in? How can the plans of the profiteers and [arms makers](#) to keep the good times rolling be brought under control?

As a start, consider one of Donald Trump's favorite generals, Douglas MacArthur, [speaking](#) to the Sperry Rand Corporation in 1957:

"Our swollen budgets constantly have been misrepresented to the public. Our government has kept us in a perpetual state of fear -- kept us in a continuous stampede of patriotic fervor -- with the cry of grave national emergency. Always there has been some terrible evil at home or some monstrous foreign power that was going to gobble us up if we did not blindly rally behind it by furnishing the exorbitant funds demanded. Yet, in retrospect, these disasters seem never to have happened, seem never to have been quite real."

No peacenik MacArthur. Other famed generals like [Smedley Butler](#) and [Dwight D. Eisenhower](#) spoke out with far more vigor against the corruptions of war and the perils to a democracy of an ever more powerful military, though such sentiments are seldom heard in this country today. Instead, America's leaders insist that other

people judge us by our words, our stated good intentions, not our murderous deeds and their results.

Perpetual Warfare Whistles Through Washington

Whether in [Iraq](#), [Afghanistan](#), or elsewhere in the war on terror, the U.S. is now engaged in generational conflicts that are costing us trillions of dollars, driving up the national debt while weakening the underpinnings of our democracy. They have led to foreign casualties by the hundreds of thousands and created refugees [in the millions](#), while turning cities like Iraq's Mosul into [wastelands](#).

In today's climate of budget-busting "defense" appropriations, isn't it finally time for Americans to apply a little commonsense to our disastrous pattern of war-making? To prime the pump for such a conversation, here are 10 suggestions for ways to focus on, limit, or possibly change Washington's now [eternal war-making](#) and [profligate war spending](#):

1. Abandon the notion of perfect security. You can't have it. It doesn't exist. And abandon as well the idea that a huge military establishment translates into national safety. James Madison didn't think so and neither did Dwight D. Eisenhower.
2. Who could have anything against calling the Pentagon a "defense" department, if defense were truly its focus? But let's face it: the Pentagon is actually a war department. So let's label it what it really is. After all, how can you deal with a problem if you can't even name it accurately?
3. Isn't it about time to start following the Constitution when it comes to our "wars"? Isn't it time for Congress to finally step up to its constitutional duties? Whatever the Pentagon is called, this country should no longer be able to pursue its many [conflicts](#) without a formal congressional declaration of war. If we had followed that rule, the U.S. wouldn't have fought any of its wars since the end of World War II.
4. [Generational wars](#) -- ones, that is, that never end -- should not be considered a measure of American resolve, but of American stupidity. If you wage war long, you wage it wrong, especially if you want to protect democratic institutions in this country.
5. Generals generally like to wage war. Don't blame them. It's their profession. But for heaven's sake, don't put them in charge of the Department of "Defense" (James Mattis) or the National Security Council (H.R. McMaster) either -- and above all, don't let one of them (John Kelly) become the gatekeeper for a volatile, vain president. In our country, civilians should be in charge of the war makers, end of story.
6. You can't win wars you never should have begun in the first place. America's leaders [failed to learn](#) that lesson from Vietnam. Since then they have continued to wage wars for less-than-vital interests with predictably dismal results. Following the Vietnam example, America will only truly win its Afghan War when it chooses to

rein in its pride and vanity -- and leave.

7. The serious people in Washington snickered when, as a presidential candidate in [2004 and 2008](#), Congressman Dennis Kucinich called for a [Department of Peace](#). Remind me, though, 17 years into our latest set of wars, what was so funny about that suggestion? Isn't it better to wage peace than war? If you don't believe me, ask a wounded veteran or a Gold Star family.

8. Want to invest in American jobs? Good idea! But stop making the military-industrial complex the preferred path to job creation. That's a loser of a way to go. It's proven that investments in "[butter](#)" create double or triple the number of jobs as those in "guns." In other words, invest in education, health care, and civilian infrastructure, not more weaponry.

9. Get rid of the very idea behind the infamous [Pottery Barn rule](#) -- the warning Secretary of State Colin Powell offered George W. Bush before the invasion of Iraq that if the U.S. military "breaks" a country, somehow we've "bought" it and so have to take ownership of the resulting mess. Whether stated or not, it's continued to be the basis for this century's unending wars. Honestly, if somebody broke something valuable you owned, would you trust that person to put it back together? Folly doesn't decrease by persisting in it.

10. I was an officer in the Air Force. When I entered that service, the ideal of the citizen-soldier still held sway. But during my career I witnessed a slow, insidious [change](#). A citizen-soldier military morphed into a professional ethos of "[warriors](#)" and "[warfighters](#)," a military that saw itself as better than the rest of us. It's time to think about how to return to that citizen-soldier tradition, which made it harder to fight those generational wars.

Consider retired General John Kelly, who, while defending the president in a controversy over the president's words to the mother of a dead Green Beret, [refused](#) to take questions from reporters unless they had a personal connection to fallen troops or to a Gold Star family. Consider as well the way that U.S. politicians like Vice President Mike Pence are always so keen to [exalt](#) those in uniform, to speak of them as above the citizenry. ("You are the best of us.")

Isn't it time to stop praising our troops to the rooftops and thanking them endlessly for what they've done for us -- for fighting those wars without end -- and to start [listening](#) to them instead? Isn't it time to try to understand them not as "[heroes](#)" in another universe, but as people like us in all their frailty and complexity? We're never encouraged to see them as our neighbors, or as teenagers who struggled through high school, or as harried moms and dads.

Our troops are, of course, human and vulnerable and imperfect. We don't help them when we put them on pedestals, give them flags to hold in the breeze, and salute them as icons of a feel-good brand of patriotism. Talk of warrior-heroes is worse than cheap: it enables our state of permanent war, elevates the Pentagon, ennoble the national security state, and silences dissent. That's why it's both dangerous and

universally supported in rare bipartisan fashion by politicians in Washington.

So here's my final point. Think of it as a bonus 11th suggestion: don't make our troops into heroes, even when they're in harm's way. It would be so much better to make ourselves into heroes by getting them out of harm's way.

Be exceptional, America. Make peace, not war.

William Astore, a retired lieutenant colonel (USAF) and history professor, is a [TomDispatch](#) regular. He blogs at [Bracing Views](#).

Follow TomDispatch on [Twitter](#) and join us on [Facebook](#). Check out the newest Dispatch Book, Alfred McCoy's [In the Shadows of the American Century: The Rise and Decline of U.S. Global Power](#), as well as John Dower's [The Violent American Century: War and Terror Since World War II](#), John Feffer's dystopian novel [Splinterlands](#), Nick Turse's [Next Time They'll Come to Count the Dead](#), and Tom Engelhardt's [Shadow Government: Surveillance, Secret Wars, and a Global Security State in a Single-Superpower World](#).

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Last Updated on Wednesday, 07 February 2018 20:42

718 readings

[Tackling Inequality - The Myth that Davos Can Change the World](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 05 February 2018 10:16

Thalif Deen



US President Donald Trump at the Davos Forum

UNITED NATIONS, Jan 29 2018 (IPS) - When the World Economic Forum (WEF) concluded in Davos, Switzerland last week, the outcome of the annual talk-fest was seemingly predictable—plenty of unrestrained platitudes but, surprisingly, less of the American populist, protectionist rhetoric.

The presence of President Donald Trump was a political side-show as he proudly declared that America was “open for business”— even as standup comedian Jimmy Kimmel wisecracked: “And who better to make that declaration than a man who declared bankruptcy six different times” (when he was a self-declared “billionaire” businessman before he ran for the US presidency.)

Trump, who has increasingly opted for bilateralism over multilateralism — while pulling out of the 11-member Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and threatening to do the same with the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with Mexico and Canada— appeared more restrained before the world’s business elites, even though he arrived in Davos immediately after he slapped tariffs on imported solar panels and washing machines.

But then appearances, as they say, can be frighteningly deceptive.

Implicitly taking a shot at Trump, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi told the Davos Forum that “forces of protectionism are raising their heads against globalization.” Their intention is not only to avoid globalisation but also reverse its natural flow, he warned.

Ben Phillips, Launch Director at the Nairobi-based Fight Inequality Alliance, told IPS: “Davos is over. This is not merely to say that the private helicopters have taken their charges back to private airstrips for their onward journey home. This year, 2018, was the nail in the coffin for the idea that Davos could change the world.”

He described the Davos Forum as a “speed-dating club for plutocrats and politicians”. But the idea that it will be a force for a more equal society is dead, he added.

Last week, WEF boss Klaus Schwab embraced Trump, complaining that Trump’s “strong leadership” had suffered “misconceptions and biased interpretations”.

Schwab, went further, praising Trump’s rushed and irresponsible tax giveaway to billionaires that is cutting services, increasing debt and widening inequality: “On behalf of the business leaders here in this room, let me particularly congratulate you for the historic tax reform package passed last month, greatly reducing the tax burden of US companies”.

According to the New York Times, some in the audience booed at Schwab’s remarks praising Trump.

Davos is now Trump-Davos: the racism and cruelty of Trump is forgiven, said Phillips.

“And Trump became Davos-Trump: his claimed revolt against globalization is now exposed as merely an attack on poor migrants and not a challenge to the global elite. Goldman Sachs – once the target of Trump’s rhetoric but now the source of his key cabinet picks, was clear. They “really like what he’s done for the economy”, Phillips added.

Jennifer Morgan, Executive Director, Greenpeace International, told IPS she saw no evidence that the corporate or government leaders in Davos really understood the urgent need to provide justice for the people or the planet.

“While they speak of inclusive growth and climate action, they fail to investigate or challenge their own role in propping up and benefitting from the underlying system that has created the fractured world we live in,” she added.

However, she said, she was inspired by many of the young global shapers, particularly women, whom she met, leading the way with big ideas and collective leadership.

Morgan pointed out that climate risk and climate action were more present in discussions at Davos this year, but not at the speed or scale required when measured against the scale of the challenge we face.

“Climate disruption is the new norm, which means a transformation of our energy and land-use systems is the only way forward,” she noted.

Phillips told IPS it has not just the embrace of Trump, however, that has ended the myth of Davos as an equalizing force. It is the consistent failure of Davos to deliver.

“For years now, Davos has listed inequality as a major concern, and yet has also noted that it keeps increasing. (Don’t these leaders have any influence?)”, he asked.

As the world’s foremost expert on inequality trends, former World Bank economist Branko Milanovic, concluded last week, Davos has “produced 0 results” in lessening inequality – while the economy has been further adjusted by inequality-exacerbating policies that have returned us to the “early 19th century”.

For students of history, noted Phillips, this should all be unsurprising: never, at any time or place, have great strides been made in tackling the concentration of power and wealth by a few by literally concentrating together those powerful and wealthy few.

"All major equalizing change has involved a process of

those outside the elite gathering together, building confidence and strength, and pushing for a fairer share. Greater equality has never been freely given, it has always been won through collective struggle."

Ben Phillips, Fight Inequality Alliance

Indeed, all major equalizing change has involved a process of those outside the elite gathering together, building confidence and strength, and pushing for a fairer share.

Greater equality has never been freely given, it has always been won through collective struggle, declared Phillips.

Even the usually-restrained United Nations expressed concern over Trump's call for countries to pursue their own self-interest – in this age of globalisation and multilateralism.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the outspoken Zeid Raad al-Husseini, declared: "It's the script of the 20th century. He urged all countries to pursue their own interest, almost without reference to the fact that if you do all of that, if each country is narrowly pursuing its agenda, it will clash with the agendas of others and we will take the world back to 1913 once again."

Striking a different perspective to Davos, Phillips said "happily, last week was a week when that process of people organizing together for change also took a step forward. But not on the Davos mountain, but on very different mountains."

As the media summarized it "Forget Davos – Dandora is the key to tackling inequality."

Dandora in Nairobi is a slum situated on top of a garbage mountain, and it was there, not at the World Economic Forum, that NGOs, social movements and trade unions who have come together in the global Fight Inequality Alliance centred their organizing.

Dandora played host to an Usawa Festival ("Equality Festival") pulled together by Kenya's greatest hiphop star Juliani along with grassroots groups working to build up strength from the ground up.

Across the world, similar festivals and rallies brought people together to demand change and build their power. Attendees at Davos complained of being trapped in

fog, stuck in ditches, and almost buried by heavy snow.




At the Dandora garbage mountain, in contrast, the sun shone, the participants sang in joyful defiance and people took the initiative for change into their own hands, said Phillips.

“We are the people we’ve been waiting for!” they shouted.

It will take time, they said, but from the garbage mountain top they felt, in an echo of Dr King and of the captives who ran from the Pharaoh, that they could see the promised land, declared Phillips.

Last Updated on Wednesday, 07 February 2018 20:24

863 readings

[Memo to Bob
Mueller](#)   

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Concerned Canadians

Monday, 05 February 2018 11:29

It appears that one way or another Donald Trump will try to stop your investigation. We are also aware that you like to have all the nails driven in before you report to congress and the senate. As time is of the essence, we suggest that you create an interim report with sufficient facts to make your case and place it before each member of the Congress and the Senate ASAP!

703 readings

[Nuclear Reactors, Bankrupting Their Owners,
Closing Early](#)   

[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 07 February 2018 08:24

FEBRUARY 6, 2018

Nuclear Reactors, Bankrupting Their Owners, Closing Early

<https://www.counterpunch.org/2018/02/06/nuclear-reactors-bankrupting-their-owners-closing-early/>

by [JOHN LAFORGE](#)

[Facebook](#)[Twitter](#)[Google+](#)[Reddit](#)[Email](#)



Photo by Nuclear Regulatory Commission | [CC BY 2.0](#)

On January 22, FirstEnergy Corporation announced that its faulty and nearly-self-destructed Davis-Besse power reactor east of Toledo, Ohio, will be closed well before its license expires. But the shutdown is not because the reactor represents reckless endangerment of public health and safety. FirstEnergy was fine with that. No, the old rattle trap can't cover its costs any more, not with the electricity market dominated by cheaper natural gas, and renewable wind and solar.

Davis-Besse's early shutdown date has not been announced, but CFO James Pearson of FirstEnergy Nuclear Operating Co., the corporate division in charge of the wreck, said the reactor will close if lawmakers don't approve a taxpayer bailout.

FirstEnergy had said the financial sky was falling in March 2017. Chief nuclear officer Sam Belcher [his real name] told the *Toldeo Blade* then — as the firm was floating the bailout measure (SB 128) through the Ohio legislature — “In the absence of something happening, [taxpayer-funded handout to the private, investor-owned firm] we're going to have to make some tough decisions.” So

far, state lawmakers have refused to save the decrepit reactor with state taxes. They cite old-fashioned market competition, and the failure of previous subsidies to save the mature, well-established reactor industry once led by the now bankrupt Westinghouse.

Serious accidents at David-Besse in 1977, 1985, 1998, and 2002 endangered its neighbors. The most hair-raising was the discovery in 2002 that corrosion had eaten through more than 6-inches of the reactor head's carbon steel. The corrosion went undetected by federal and company inspectors for decades. Having gouged a hole in the reactor cover the size of a football, the corrosion left only 3/8 inch of steel holding back the high-pressure coolant. A break would have caused a massive loss-of-coolant accident and out-of-control overheating, resulting in catastrophic uranium fuel melting (known as a "meltdown") and massive radiation releases.

Repairs took two years and cost \$600 million, during which the Department of Justice penalized FirstEnergy over operating and reporting violations. FirstEnergy paid \$28 million in fines. Yet the NRC allowed the company to restart David-Besse in 2004, and then to run the rust bucket for 40 reckless years, even after the company tacked on another \$600 million in repairs in 2014.

With combined debt estimated at \$3.5 billion and losses mounting daily, CFO Pearson said FirstEnergy Nuclear Operating Co. will file for bankruptcy. Not just Davis-Besse, but the firm's Perry reactor northwest of Cleveland, and Beaver Valley reactors 1 & 2, northwest of Pittsburg, will also likely be closed.

Reactors Shuttered by Bankruptcy or Accident Risk from Calif. to New Jersey

Elsewhere in nuclear power's long "goodbye," California utility regulators decided this January 11 not to save Pacific Gas and Electric Co. (PG&E;) from cheap gas, solar and wind, but to close the company's two reactors at Diablo Canyon as early as 2020. Unlike the bribe-happy legislatures in New York and Illinois, nuclear power defenders were unable to convince California state

law makers to fund a bail out of PG&E.;

In 2013, Southern Calif. Edison, owners of the San Onofre reactors north of San Diego, abruptly decided to close them. Reactors 2 and 3 have been churning out high-level radioactive waste since 1983 and 1984 respectively. The hulks ran into trouble when massive repairs and upgrades failed inspections. In May that year, US Sen. Barbara Boxer said that the reactors were “unsafe and posed a danger to the 8 million people living within 50 miles. Boxer even called for a criminal investigation into Edison’s installation of faulty replacement steam generators.

The list of old age reactors shut down or closing soon keeps growing. Kewaunee in Wisconsin was shut in 2013, Vermont Yankee in 2014, and Fort Calhoun in Nebraska in 2016. Oyster Creek* in New Jersey and Pilgrim* in Massachusetts will close in 2019 or sooner. Indian Point’s 1 and 2 near New York City will be shuttered by 2021. Exelon Corp’s FitzPatrick* near Oswego, New York, FE Ginna in Ontario, NY and its nearby Nine Mile Point* were all set to close in 2017, before the state legislature agreed to a \$7.6 billion bailout. (This bailout law is being challenged in court by Nuclear Information and Resource Service whose lawsuit survived its first motion to dismiss.) Exelon’s Clinton and Quad Cities* reactors in Illinois, might have shut down last year too, except for a state taxpayer bailout worth \$2.3 billion adopted in 2016.

New reactor construction is being thwarted by similarly exorbitant costs. In 2016, two unfinished Bellefonte reactors in northern Alabama were cancelled. The two V.C. Summer reactors that were almost 40% complete in South Carolina were cancelled last July by its owners after the industry-shocking bankruptcy of the projects’ lead contractor Westinghouse Electric.

Next among dozens of shaky reactors on the chopping block, Xcel Energy’s 43-year-old Monticello* unit on the Mississippi River in Minnesota looks vulnerable, especially in view of a string of notorious accidents.

** These units are elderly clones of the General Electric “Mark I” reactors that caused a triple melt-down at Fukushima in Japan which began in March 2011 and continues to spread radiation to the atmosphere and to the Pacific Ocean.*

[Join the debate on Facebook](#)

More articles by: [JOHN LAFORGE](#)

John LaForge is a Co-director of Nukewatch, a peace and environmental justice group in Wisconsin, and edits its newsletter.

644 readings

[Fort McKay First Nation Fights for ‘Last Refuge’ Amidst Oilsands Development](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 09 February 2018 09:35

By [James Wilt](#) • Saturday, January 20, 2018 - 08:25

<https://www.desmog.ca/2018/01/20/fort-mckay-first-nation-fights-last-refuge-amidst-oilsands-development>

First elected to lead Fort McKay First Nation in northeast Alberta more than three decades ago, Boucher has [made a name](#) for his cooperative relationship with industry, which includes launching a sizable oilsands service conglomerate, [denouncing environmentalists](#) and purchasing a 34 per cent stake in a \$1 billion Suncor bitumen storage terminal.

But now, a proposed 10,000 barrel per day [oilsands project](#) is threatening to infringe on a nearby sacred region called Moose Lake that serves as the First Nation’s “key cultural heartland” and is shared with the local Métis community for traditional activities. And Boucher is speaking out against the project — specifically targeting the provincial NDP for failing to finalize a management plan that would restrict

development in the area prior to the regulatory hearings.

“This government does not want to do an agreement with Fort McKay,” said Boucher in an interview with DeSmog Canada, during a break in the Alberta Energy Regulator hearings. “We’ve had discussions with them. As a result of these discussions, we have gone nowhere in terms of trying to resolve our issues with respect to the integrity of Moose Lake.”

A spokesperson for Alberta’s environment and parks department didn’t provide a response before deadline.

‘It’ s the last refuge for Fort McKay’

The Moose Lake reserves are actually made up of two lakes — Gardiner and Namur — located about 64 km northwest of Fort McKay. Moose Lake is very important for the First Nation because it’s where the community originated and gravesites are located there.

“This is the one area where it’s pristine,” Boucher said. “People trust the environment, they trust eating the fish, they trust eating the wildlife. It’s the last refuge for Fort McKay. It’s why it’s really important for us to try to maintain some of the integrity that the land will have for our people to continue practicing our traditional activities in the future.”

Land use management plan promised in 2016

In late 2013, Prosper Petroleum — a small company led by veterans of BlackRock Ventures and Koch Exploration Canada — started drilling evaluation wells near Moose Lake, on leases obtained from Koch Oil Sands Operating. Shortly after, Fort McKay First Nation and Fort McKay Métis Community Association appealed the decision to grant the well licences, contending that further exploration activities should be halted until a land-use management plan was in place.

The Alberta Energy Regulator gave the company the go-ahead to continue exploratory drilling in November 2014. But only a few months later, then-premier Jim Prentice [signed a letter of intent](#) with Boucher to establish the Moose Lake Access Management Plan under the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan (LARP) in 2016.

“When Chief Boucher asked for our support to protect the small parcel of land near Moose Lake for his community, I didn’t hesitate to say yes,” Prentice said in a government press release.

The Alberta NDP was elected only two months later. The plan still hasn’t been released. In April 2016, then-minister of Indigenous relations Richard Feehan [said](#) “we’re still fully behind it and we’re moving ahead quite well on it.”

There are 42 recommendations in the still-unreleased access management plan.

Boucher said the government agrees with all but two, which both relate to the strict

regulation of industrial development within a 10 kilometre buffer zone around Moose Lake. That would mean things like carefully coordinating roads and other linear disturbances to help protect caribou and other wildlife. A central processing facility, used for steam generation and production, wouldn't be allowed within the radius.

Fort McKay First Nation also [delayed Brion Energy's Dover project](#) by requiring a 20 kilometre buffer around Moose Lake. It eventually authorized the project in 2014 after certain restrictions on wellpads and industrial plants were agreed upon (the details are confidential).

But Prosper Petroleum intends to develop within four kilometres of the reserve. As reported by [CBC News](#), the company's vice-president of stakeholder affairs said during the regulatory hearings that requiring the company to move operations farther from the area would "result in unprecedented and undue hardship to Prosper in terms of additional costs."

First Nation forced to take legal action

In an e-mail, Fort McKay First Nation executive director Jauvonne Kitto said that "Alberta has expressed concerns about managing the risk of proponents asserting financial losses arising from development management measures being proposed."

Boucher said that as a result of the absence of a plan, the energy regulator won't deal with Aboriginal treaty rights issues or Indigenous land-use management at all when deliberating on whether to approve the project.

"Their mandate is to consider the application and then come to a decision based on what they perceive to be in the best interest of Alberta," he said.

This leaves only one option to Fort McKay: battling it out in the courts.

The First Nation first [launched a lawsuit against the government](#) over this issue in April 2016. Kitto said the litigation is ongoing and scheduled to return to court upon the conclusion of the regulatory hearing process.

Land use plans 'only way reconciliation can be expressed on land'

But it doesn't have to be this way.

In an interview with DeSmog Canada, Valérie Courtois — director of Indigenous Leadership Initiative, an organization that advocates for Indigenous-led land management and the Indigenous Guardian Program — said there are some leading planning examples in the Northwest Territories, such as the Dehcho First Nations and Deline Got'ine Government.

Courtois noted the recent Supreme Court of Canada decision on the [Peel](#)

[watershed](#) is a reminder to Crown governments that there's a need for "honour" and "collaborative approaches" if the goal is good management, whether for development or conservation.

"I really see that these land-use plans and tools are the only way that reconciliation can be expressed on the land," she said.

If the Fort McKay situation is any indicator, it may be some time before that is seen in northern Alberta.

The Alberta Energy Regulator will release its decision within three months. Prosper Petroleum plans to start production in 2020.

"The likelihood that the AER will deny Prosper permission to carry on with the Rigel Project based on objections from Indigenous communities seems, unfortunately, very low," concluded a [recent analysis](#) by University of Calgary faculty of law research assistant Amy Matychuk.

But Fort McKay isn't going down without a fight.

"We continue to hope that in any eventuality that Moose Lake will be protected, that we have a refuge," Boucher said.

"We've lost 70 per cent of our land to the oilsands developers so far. We'd like to maintain a little piece of land so our people can continue to hunt, trap and fish and exercise our treaty rights on the lands we have available to us."

All images courtesy of Fort McKay First Nation. See the nation's Facebook video on Moose Lake [here](#).

Last Updated on Friday, 09 February 2018 09:41

522 readings

[Lets Party During BC Wine and Cheese Week](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Dragonslayer

Monday, 12 February 2018 18:25

Alberta Premier Rachel Notley recently attacked the innocent bystander (BC Wine Industry) because of an unrelated issue about the Kinder Morgan pipe line.

She went even further by pulling out the Russian playbook and suggested that If BC didn't do what she wants that she would encourage BC residents to vote against the BC NDP in BC byelections. Blackmail and election tampering for sure. Maybe she

broke the law? Ya think?

I would like to invite all those thirsty Albertans to come visit us in BC. Open up the summer cottage and throw wine and cheese parties. Perhaps we could convince Premier Horgan to declare a wine and cheese holliday so we could all take a day to tie one on. Oh what the heck...Lets just make it a week and we can super charge our wine industry. We might even end up with a stimulated cheese industry.

Last Updated on Monday, 12 February 2018 18:50

537 readings

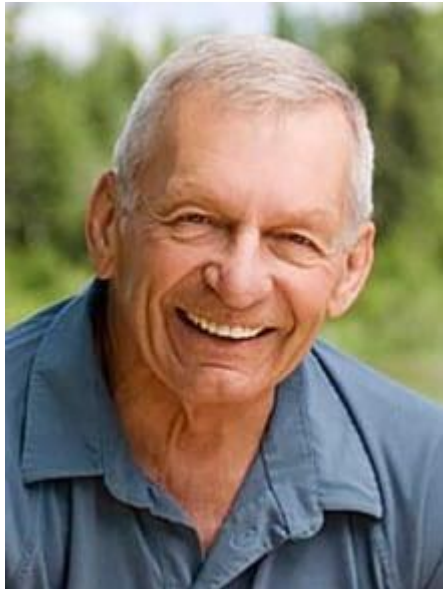
['Science is being ignored:' prominent Alberta professor sides with B.C. on pipeline](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 20 February 2018 15:10



David Schindler was awarded an Alberta Order of Excellence in 2008 for his work protecting fresh water resources in Canada and around the world and has advised the provincial government on oil spill clean-ups in the past. (University of Alberta)

Notley announced a provincial boycott on all imports of B.C. wines and cut off talks to purchase \$500 million worth of electricity from B.C, escalating the inter-provincial spat over the pipeline.

He mentioned a Royal Society of Canada [study from 2015](#) that lays out the unknowns when it comes to the transport of bitumen and said that many of the issues raised then have still not been addressed.

In particular, he said, he is concerned with oil spills during colder months.

"We still don't know how to get bitumen out from under the ice," he said. "If it

goes in to one of the major salmon rivers crossing B.C., we will just sit by and helplessly watch it go downstream."

Climate change commitments

It's not just scientific research and answers that are lacking, Schindler says, but also commitment to promises during the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Paris.

"From what I see, we are not taking this commitment very seriously at all," he said. "We are taking a very 'head in the sand' approach to the problem."

- NEB clears Trans Mountain to begin pipeline tunnel work at Burnaby Mountain

He says ventures to more renewable sources of energy, particularly geothermal, and away from the oil and gas industry are key to moving forward.

"If this were the beginning of the 20th century, we'd probably be protecting the buggy manufacturers and telling people

Ecology professor argues the interprovincial dispute is being driven by politics, not science

By Clare Hennig, CBC NewsPosted: Feb 19, 2018 3:35 PM PT Last Updated: Feb 19, 2018 3:35 PM PT

Despite the tough stance from Alberta Premier Rachel Notley about Kinder Morgan Canada's pipeline expansion, a prominent Alberta academic is taking British Columbia's side in the dispute.

David Schindler, professor emeritus of ecology at the University of Alberta, says he thinks B.C.'s concerns about the Trans Mountain pipeline are legitimate.

The issue is one of science and not politics, he argues.

"Somehow, science is being ignored in all this," he told CBC. Early Edition Stephen Quinn. "I think the questions [about spills] are very legitimate."

The National Energy Board recently announced that construction of the TransMountain pipeline expansion can go forward on Burnaby Mountain, but the B.C. government says it will restrict any increase in bitumen shipments until further study is conducted on spills.

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Last Updated on Wednesday, 21 February 2018 19:25

1044 readings

[Oak Bay, B.C., moves ahead with experimental deer control program](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 24 February 2018 09:44

Vancouver Island community hopes to launch first deer birth control program in Canada

Emily Brass · CBC News - February 23, 2018



The Urban Wildlife Stewardship Society is overseeing the deer control project, which

aims to capture 20 does before fawning season begins in late March. (CBC)

The community of Oak Bay, on southern Vancouver Island, is moving ahead with an experimental project to control urban deer using a contraceptive that has been used on the wild horse population in Alberta.

The district has partnered with the Urban Wildlife Stewardship Society, which is overseeing the project. It aims to capture 20 does before fawning season begins in late March.

The group is now sedating and putting collars on the animals, equipped with tracking devices. The team is also taking blood, fecal and DNA samples.

- [Birth control plan for Oak Bay deer hits snag](#)

Project Manager Steve Huxley said the data will be used in an application for further funding from the Provincial Urban Deer Advisory Committee, as the UWSS seeks permission to administer an immuno-contraceptive called Zonastat-D.

"It's a very simple drug," said the animal behaviourist, who previously oversaw operations at the Victoria Marine Animal Rescue Centre.

"It doesn't stay in their system. It's not dangerous if predators or people eat the meat of the animal."

In 2016, Oak Bay council requested \$20,000 from the province to carry out its plan. The government said it wanted to see more research before it would consider sharing the cost.

Contraceptive recently approved in U.S.

Zonastat-D was approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in July 2017. Huxley said if the project gets provincial approval, Oak Bay will be the first community in Canada to use the drug on deer.

"This immuno-contraception is also being applied to wild horse populations in Alberta," he said.

Huxley said the drug will be more effective at controlling Oak Bay's urban deer population than culling, a technique the district tried in 2015.

- [Province is passing the buck on urban deer problem, says City of Kelowna staff](#)

"[Culling] was problematic," he says. "They found the deer weren't that eager to go into the traps. There was so much other food around for them, the deer didn't really

need to go for the bait inside the traps."



The Urban Wildlife Stewardship Society wants to use birth control to reduce Oak Bay's deer population instead of culling the animals. (JL1967/Flickr)

"Another problem was that all kinds of other urban wildlife — raccoons and rats — were going in after the bait and tripping the traps. So then a crew has to go in and reset the traps and start all over again."

Huxley said the cull three years ago captured just 11 deer, only three of which were does. The project also drew strong opposition from the B.C. SPCA and other animal rights groups.

Tracking the deer

Crews in Oak Bay have been going out at first light to locate the animals.

"Because of the cold right now, they're pretty much hunkered down, So it takes quite a while to find them," said Huxley, after returning from the field.

"When we did find them, it was in a good area. We used a sedative dart. The doe wandered around for a couple of minutes, then laid its head down and went to sleep."

GPS-equipped collars will be used to estimate the number of deer in the area, and to track their movement patterns and range. Motion-sensor cameras installed around Oak Bay will also be used to monitor individual animals that have been tagged.

Huxley says biologists on his team have told him scientists and communities across Canada are keeping an eye on the project, as they consider potential solutions to urban deer overpopulation.

Last Updated on Saturday, 24 February 2018 10:19

482 readings

[First Nations say they've secured major work stoppage on Site C dam in advance of injunction application](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 27 February 2018 14:56

Charlie Smith - February 26th, 2018

PICTURE NOT AVAILABLE

West Moberly Chief Roland Willson says "B.C. Hydro wouldn't send their contractors home and shut down work for the next six months unless their back was against the wall. - Roland Willson

Many assumed the \$10.7-billion Site C dam was a done deal when Premier John Horgan announced in December that B.C. Hydro would complete the project.

That perception was reinforced less than when the Crown utility chose its preferred proponent for the generation station and spillways civil-works contract.

Moreover, the International Union of Operating Engineers, which strongly supports the Site C dam, donated \$123,520 to the NDP before the 2017 election.

It left little doubt in the minds of most media commentators that nothing could stop the project.

But today, the West Moberly and Prophet River First Nations said in a news release that they've managed to secure a "major work stoppage" in advance of presenting legal arguments in court for an interim injunction.

According to the two First Nations, B.C. Hydro initially declared on February 9 that it intended "to continue all previously scheduled work".

After the Indigenous groups' legal counsel warned that this would lead to an "interim, interim injunction" application, B.C. Hydro changed its position.

"On February 16th it sent logging contractors home that were in the process of cutting a stretch of old growth within three critical areas approximately 29 kilometers long by 80 meters wide (the Trappers Lake, Sucker Lake, and Peace Moberly Tract Critical Areas)," the news release said. "The clearcutting and road-building were part of a 75-kilometer transmission line required for the project."

The First Nations also declared there are "no known plans" for B.C. Hydro to do any work in nine other "critical areas", including clearing old growth from islands and on

the banks of the Peace River.

The interim injunction application is expected to be held over 10 days in the summer, likely starting on July 23

“We feel very good about the state of play,” West Moberly First Nations Chief Roland Willson said in the news release. “B.C. Hydro wouldn’t send their contractors home and shut down work for the next six months unless their back was against the wall. And if they are making these types of concessions before we even step foot inside the courtroom, we think that bodes well for our injunction this summer.”

The First Nations have alleged that the Peace River Valley is central to the Dunne-za way of life and is therefore protected by Treaty

Moreover, they argue that the Site C dam infringes on Treaty 8 and that mercury contamination associated with it threatens Indigenous fishing rights.

Last Updated on Thursday, 01 March 2018 17:11

1214 readings

[Lax Kw’alaams hereditary leaders voice support for oil tanker ban](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 28 February 2018 16:50

Posted by: [Bill Fee](#) February 27, 2018 in [2018](#), [News](#) [Leave a comment](#)

■

A group of North Coast First Nation hereditary leaders says it is in full support of the federal government’s proposed oil tanker ban.

The Allied Tribes of Lax Kw’alaams says there have been misconceptions about who represents the hereditary leadership of the First Nation. The leadership group says that the

Chief's Council set up to advise proponents of the Eagle Spirit Energy project has been misrepresented as the voice for hereditary leaders in Lax Kw'alaams.

Proponents of the Eagle Spirit project, which would pipe oil from Alberta to the North Coast, have launched a fundraising campaign to challenge the tanker ban.

"We were never consulted by Eagle Spirit and we never agreed to support such a dangerous project that threatens our Indigenous rights and our traditional territories," says Sm'oogit Galksic (Andrew Tait) of the Gits'iis Tribe in a news release.

"It is disappointing that they [Eagle Spirit Energy] continue to use the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) to argue First Nations were never consulted and do not support the federal oil tanker ban. We do support the oil tanker ban and want to make it clear that Eagle Spirit has never consulted the rightful title holders of Grassy Point, and we've never given permission to the Chief's Council to speak on our behalf."

The Allied Tribes says they represent the true owners and that the federal oil tanker ban is inline with their stewardship obligations to protect the land and waters for future generations from oil spills.

Last Updated on Wednesday, 28 February 2018 16:55

MARCH 2018

619 readings

[Trump Administration Tries to Torpedo Venezuelan Elections as It Intensifies "Regime Change" Efforts](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 03 March 2018 23:07

[See article on original site](#)

In recent weeks, the Trump administration has stepped up its [efforts](#) at "regime change" in Venezuela. In the past, Trump himself has even [mentioned](#) military action as a possible option, but the most recent moves appear more likely to be implemented, and some are already operational. According to sources with knowledge of the matter, the leading opposition contender for Venezuela's upcoming presidential election, Henri Falcón, was told by US officials that the Trump administration would consider financial sanctions against him if he entered the presidential race. (The US State Department did not return requests for comment.) The US [has backed](#) the main opposition coalition decision to boycott the election.

Falcón is a former governor and retired military officer. He is leading in the latest polls, and according to the most reliable opposition [pollster](#), Datanalisis, would defeat Maduro in the election by a margin of nearly 7 percentage points.

Why would the Trump administration want to prevent an opposition leader who could possibly win the presidency in Venezuela from running in this election? There is no way to know for sure, but high-level sources from inside the administration have stated that Florida Senator Marco Rubio is determining US policy toward Venezuela. Rubio is a hard-liner who does not seem interested in an electoral or negotiated solution to Venezuela's political crisis. On February 9, he appeared to support a military coup when he [tweeted](#): "The world would support the Armed Forces in Venezuela if they decide to protect the people & restore democracy by removing a dictator."

Such open support from Washington for a military coup against an elected government — before the coup has occurred — is unusual, to say the least, in the twenty-first century. But the Trump team is not just sitting around waiting for it to happen. The Rubio/Trump strategy seems to be to try to worsen the economic situation and increase suffering to the point where either the military, or the insurrectionary elements of the opposition, rise up and overthrow the government.

That appears to be the purpose of the [financial sanctions](#) that Trump ordered on August 24, 2017. These sanctions cut off Venezuela from billions of dollars of potential loans, as well as from revenue even from its own oil company in the US, Citgo. They [have worsened shortages of medicine and food](#), in an economy that is already suffering from inflation of about 3,000 percent annually and a depression that has cost about 38 percent of GDP. These sanctions are illegal under the Organization of American States (OAS) [charter](#) and under international [conventions](#) to which the US is a signatory.

Now US officials are [talking](#) about a more ferocious collective punishment: cutting off Venezuela's oil sales. This was not done previously because it would hurt US oil refining interests that import Venezuelan oil. But the administration has floated the idea of tapping the US strategic petroleum reserves to soften the blow. All this to overthrow a government that nobody can claim poses any threat to the United States.

No one can pretend that the Trump administration cares about fair elections in Latin America. The Honduran election of November 26 was almost certainly [stolen](#), and even Washington's close ally who heads the OAS, Secretary General Luis Almagro, [called for it to be run again](#). But the Trump administration went with the incumbent President Juan Orlando Hernández in Honduras, a politician whose brother and security minister have been linked to drug traffickers and whom Trump Chief of Staff John Kelly, former head of the US Southern Command, [has described](#) as a "great guy" and a "good friend." The Trump administration did not object to their post-election killings of unarmed protesters or other human rights abuses — in fact, the State Department [certified the Honduran government](#) as complying with human rights obligations just days after the election.

There are certainly valid complaints about the upcoming election in Venezuela. Some opposition candidates have been excluded, and the government moved the election forward from its initially scheduled time in [December](#), to April. The opposition had wanted it moved forward, but this was sooner than they wanted. (On Thursday, Reuters reported that an agreement had been reached between Venezuela's election board and some opposition parties to hold the election in late May.)

Negotiations between the government and the opposition over these and other problems broke down last month, although the government did agree to allow election observers from the United Nations. With regard to the procedural credibility of Venezuela's elections, in the past two decades there has almost never been any legitimate doubt about the vote count, due to the adoption of a very secure voting system. (The only exceptions were the Constituent Assembly election of July 30 last year, which the opposition boycotted and there was some question about the number of people who voted; and one out of 23 governors' elections on October 15, where the local vote count was not credible.) For the current negotiations, we cannot know if other disagreements might have been resolved if the Trump administration had not been pushing so hard to prevent elections from taking place, and encouraging extra-legal "regime change" as an opposition strategy.

The main opposition coalition, the Democratic Unity Roundtable (MUD, by its acronym in Spanish), has as of now decided to boycott the elections. But it's not clear that the voters will follow their lead. The most reliable and recent [polls](#), from Torino Capital and Datanalisis, show that 77.6 percent of voters intend to vote in the upcoming election, with only 12.3 percent planning to abstain. They should have that opportunity, and the Trump administration should not be trying to take it away from them.

[Mark Weisbrot](#) is Co-Director of the [Center for Economic and Policy Research](#) in Washington, D.C., and the president of [Just Foreign Policy](#). He is also the author of ["Failed: What the 'Experts' Got Wrong About the Global Economy"](#) (2015, Oxford University Press). You can subscribe to his columns [here](#).

373 readings

[Opponents of Kinder Morgan pipeline call out media's false equivalency in coverage of demonstrations](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 12 March 2018 20:58

by [Charlie Smith](#) Georgia

Strait

on March 12th, 2018 at 4:32 PM

2

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- This was the scene in Burnaby on Saturday (March 10). [Mike Hudema](#)

There's an unusual clarification at the bottom of a recent [CBC News web story](#) about two pipeline demonstrations in Metro Vancouver.

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- [Protect the Inlet is really about preventing future generations from enduring climate hell](#)
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- [Martyn Brown: Losing it like Trudeau in British Columbia](#)
- [Martyn Brown: Playing the "R" card on Kinder Morgan](#)

"A previous version of this story gave coverage to the pro-pipeline rally that was disproportionate based on the number of people who attended it," the tagline states. "The story has been updated to more accurately reflect both sides of the debate."

On Saturday, pro-pipeline forces rounded up about 200 people to come to Jack Poole Plaza to express support for Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion project. Some were brought in from Alberta and northeastern B.C.

It occurred on the same day that several thousand people gathered in Burnaby to oppose the project.

Some clever spin doctors likely dreamed up this tactic of holding a pro-pipeline demo downtown so they would generate media coverage to offset the much larger protest in Burnaby.

It worked. Broadcast outlets, including CBC, ran the "duelling demonstration" stories side-by-side.

This occurred even though the number of participants at each rally wasn't even close.

It created a false equivalency in the minds of viewers and listeners, which generated a backlash on social media.

CBC has since responded by running a clarification. The public broadcaster

deserves credit for addressing the issue.

But by that point, the pro-pipeline forces had already achieved their objective.

There's another way of covering the pipeline project

Rather than getting caught up in writing pro- or anti- demonstration stories on Saturday, I chose instead to focus on the one issue that the mainstream media is largely overlooking in its Kinder Morgan coverage: climate change.

It's shocking how little attention this receives in all the column inches and airtime devoted to the project.

Greenhouse gas emissions associated with the pipeline just don't seem to interest most journalists, particularly in central Canada.

This is despite last year's record forest-fire season in B.C., massive flooding in the Okanagan, weird rainfall patterns in Ontario, and gigantic hurricanes pounding Houston and Florida. Are they oblivious to this? Simply stupid? In denial? Or too worried that if they talk about climate change, they'll attract the wrath of their bosses?

My commentary carried this title: "[Protect the Inlet is really about preventing future generations from enduring climate hell](#)".

Those who want the pipeline to be completed, including Alberta premier Rachel Notley, might say that this is a one-sided way of looking at this issue.

But unfortunately for them, there's no false equivalency with climate change.

It's happening and it's likely going to kill a lot of people around the world this year.

It's time the media started educating people about this.

394 readings

[B.C. recruits noted constitutional lawyer for court action over Trans Mountain expansion](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 13 March 2018 06:45

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/trans-mountain-kinder-morgan-court-joseph-arvay-1.4573634>

B.C. recruits noted constitutional lawyer for court action over Trans Mountain expansion

Joseph Arvay has made arguments in several
headline-grabbing court cases

By Liam Britten, [CBC News](#) Posted: Mar
12, 2018 10:12 PM PT Last Updated: Mar
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Joseph Arvay will be developing a
reference case on behalf of the B.C.
government as to whether or not the
province can restrict bitumen exports.
(Darryl Dyck/Canadian Press)



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A high-profile constitutional lawyer will represent British Columbia in an upcoming court action over Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline expansion.

The province announced Monday that Joseph Arvey has been appointed

external counsel for B.C. in a reference case that could establish whether or not B.C. can restrict bitumen transported through the province.

[A reference case](#) is where the court is asked to weigh in on a particular legal matter, often when the constitution or division of powers between the federal and provincial governments is involved.

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Premier John Horgan announced plans to [refer a constitutional question to the courts](#) last month to resolve questions over B.C.'s legal rights in the latest development in the ongoing dispute over the Trans Mountain pipeline.

That announcement followed [Alberta temporarily boycotting B.C. wines](#) in response to the B.C. government's proposed [temporary ban on bitumen export increases](#) through B.C.

- [Threats and power politics — Notley's big pipeline gamble](#)

Arvay has been a participant in several headline-grabbing legal cases over the

years.

In 2015, he [successfully argued the Carter case](#), which led to the end of laws forbidding medically assisted death in Canada.

He has also represented prisoners' advocacy groups opposed to solitary confinement in a case that led to [time limits on the use of segregation in prisons](#).

- [Indigenous groups lead protest against Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline plan](#)

In years past, he has represented [now-convicted polygamist Winston Blackmore](#), as well as [student protesters during the APEC inquiry](#).

He was appointed to the Order of Canada in 2017.

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[Common Security: Through Implementing Precedents Underlying the SDGs](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 20 March 2018 18:55

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Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 24 October 2015 08:43

by Joan Russow PhD Global Compliance Research project



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Last Updated on Sunday, 15 April 2018 19:54

324 readings

[UN Human Rights Council Condemns Sanctions Against Venezuela](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 26 March 2018 18:36



The United Nations Human Rights Council resolution argues "such measures

prevent the full realization of economic and social development of nations."The United Nations Human Rights Council (OHCHR) has adopted a resolution proposed by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM) condemning economic sanctions against Venezuela by the United States, Canada, the European Union and their allies. The document, put forward at the OHCHR meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, on Friday, urged "states to refrain from imposing unilateral coercive measures (and) condemn(s) the continued unilateral application and enforcement by certain powers of such measures as tools of political or economic pressure," reminding all states that "such measures prevent the full realization of economic and social development of nations."

The resolution acknowledges Venezuela's position: economic sanctions "disproportionately" affect "the poor and most vulnerable classes," threatening the realization of human rights. Rather than the application of unilateral coercive measures, which are against international law, the resolution urges states "to resolve their differences through dialogue and peaceful relations."

Last week, the United States imposed a new round of sanctions against Venezuela, this time against the new cryptocurrency launched by the Bolivarian Republic, known as the Petro. The sanctions target all transactions "by a U.S. person or within the U.S. with any digital currency" issued by the Venezuelan government. The Petro was adopted by Nicolas Maduro's government to bypass the financial blockade the United States and its allies has imposed on Venezuela, limiting its capacity to import goods. Venezuelan Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza shared the resolution and the vote via Twitter. Western nations, including Germany, the United States, the United Kingdom and Spain were among those who rejected the decision. The Human Rights Council, meanwhile, said the measures "threaten the sovereignty of states... with a view to preventing these countries from exercising their right to decide, of their own free will, their own political, economic and social systems."

436 readings

[from the archives COP17 Durban; Time to address
Military's Massive Contribution to the Climate Crisis](#)



[Peace News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 31 March 2018 09:24

FRom the archives 2011

**COP17 Durban; Time to address Militarism's Massive Contribution to the
Climate Crisis**

-Joan Russow GlobalCompliance Research Project

At COP15 in Copenhagen and at COP 16 in Copenhagen, there were calls to address the contribution of militarism to climate change: both as a drain on resources which could be spent on addressing serious consequences of climate change but also as a serious cause of climate change





A 2011 version of the Emperor's new Clothes

MILITARISM WASTE AND MISUSE OF RESOURCES

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. Currently the Global Community is now spending 1.7 trillion per year on the military budget at a time when many basic and fundamental rights have not been fulfilled.

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 stated 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 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 years of commitment to substantially reduce the military budget.

Currently the Global Community is now spending 1.7 trillion per year 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.

The global commons (air, water, and forests) is being bought and sold in carbon markets under the guise that this is the ONLY feasible means of generating funds to take necessary actions to prevent and adapt to impacts of climate change. The result is further concentration of wealth and power, at the expense of the planet and humanity.

MILITARISM: A MAJOR CAUSE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Excerpt from submission to

COP16 <http://www.pej.org/html/modules.php?op=modload&name;=News&file;=article&sid;=8542>

- Militarism, through wars and military actions (overt and covert) around the world, has inflicted massive suffering and civilian casualties.
- Militarism is likely the largest single source of greenhouse gas emissions on the planet, yet the IPCC does not indicate in a separate category the extent of military contributions to greenhouse gas emissions.
- Access to more oil, the burning of which is a fundamental cause of climate change - is the primary underlying motive for current wars.
- Both warfare and climate change are rendering large areas uninhabitable - displacing millions of people as refugees, and yet the rights of immigrants are increasingly limited, threatened and abused.
- Climate change is likely to result in far more wars, being a "threat multiplier" and now recognized as the greatest looming threat to "security". Access to resources – including land, food, water – is already becoming increasingly challenging, and scarcities will likely trigger conflict and further displacement in the future.
- Militarism is the largest source of toxic chemical and radioactive poisoning of peoples and environment around the globe, and plays a major role in promoting false solutions that only worsen the problems (biofuels, nuclear technologies,

climate geoengineering etc.)”

AT COP17 IN DURBAN THERE MUST BE A LEGALLY BINDING AGREEMENT AND THE INCURRING OF AN OBLIGATION TO DO THE FOLLOWING :

- 1..Delegitimize 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 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 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.

22. End the unequal treatment of the states that possess nuclear weapons or nuclear weapon capabilities such as 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.

332 readings

[Gaza's Land Day Massacre](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 01 April 2018 08:47

Gaza's Land Day Massacre

The Land Day Massacre

by C. L. Cook - [Pacific Free Press](#)

March 31, 2018



Israeli military officials promised to expand its killing of Palestinians in Gaza if the planned six-week Great March of Return protest campaign continues.

Friday, during 'Land Day' commemorations of the beginning of the Nakba, or "catastrophe" as Palestinians refer to the establishment of Israel on their lands, the Israeli Defense Force, (IDF) met unarmed demonstrators with troops, tanks, drones, and the "100 snipers" promised earlier in the week.

The snipers, from perches behind earthen berms overlooking the estimated 30,000 strong demonstration, opened fire. IDF regulars sent hails of rubber-coated steel bullets and tear gas projectiles into the throng, as drones rained gas canisters on the men, women, and children from above. Tank fire too added to the chaos and destruction, and casualty count.

The Associated Press, (AP) [reported Saturday](#), 15 perished from gunfire outright* and its hospital sources said more than 750 have been and are being treated for bullet wounds, while twice that number have suffered injuries all told.

According to the AP, Palestinian hospital authorities at Gaza City's Shifa Hospital said of the 284 injured received at its emergency ward Friday, the "majority" were bullet injuries. Hospital spokesperson, Ayman Sahbani said of those, 70 were under the age of 18, and 11 women.

Sahbani said, of the estimated 40 surgeries performed Friday, and 50 more planned for Saturday, all were for bullet wounds.

"These are all from live bullets that broke limbs or caused deep, open wounds with damage to nerves and veins," he said.



IDF spokesperson, Brigadier General Ronen Manelis contradicted casualty reports, charging the hospitals are "exaggerating" both the numbers and demographics of those injured.

Manelis also said allegations of excessive force are untrue, insisting those killed by the army were all "involved in violence" and exclusively of fighting age, "between 18 and 30 years old."

The Brigadier General also warned, if protests do carry on the army will "not be able to continue limiting our activity to the fence area and will act against these "terror organizations" in other places too."

Manelis here refers to Hamas.

Israel has never recognized the elected government of Gaza, calling Hamas a terror organization and regarding all its members and the civic and civil functions they operate as

being by extension terrorist infrastructure, and therefore legitimate military targets.

Saturday, and over the past week, the [Israeli Air Force bombed](#) various Hamas targets.

Meanwhile, politically divided Palestinians in the West Bank observed a commercial strike Saturday, called in solidarity for those killed and wounded.

In New York, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called a joint emergency session Friday night, which resolved to initiate an independent investigation into events in Gaza, while urging "restraint by both sides."

Guterres' position is a reiteration of UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nickolay Mladenov, who in the aftermath of the massacre Friday urged "all sides to exercise restraint and to take the necessary steps to avoid a violent escalation."

But like the continued enforced isolation and regular punitive police and military actions against Gazans, the equivalency Mladenov's statement implies is now deemed an unacceptable misnomer, even within the mealy-mouthed lexicon of international diplomacy.

It would be laughable, and the Secretary-General regarded as a clown, if the situation in Gaza were not a literal, mirthless, killing joke.

As Ramona Wasdi, writing in the Middle East Monitor [cogently observes](#),

"The UN' s absence of any assertiveness when it comes to holding Israel accountable for its crimes is becoming a core component of the colonial entity' s ability to act with total impunity. Nowhere is this more evident than in its patronizing attitude towards the Palestinian right of return."

Wasdi reminds, before the Great March of Return, Palestinians repeatedly assured these would be dedicatedly non-violent manifestations, while Israeli officials and the media within promised remorseless violence, death, and destruction would greet the protesters.

Indeed, IDF Chief of Staff Gadi Eizenkot minced no words in the weeks preceding the march, saying,

"The orders are to use a lot of force."

In that at least, Israel has been true to its word.

273 readings

[The Dolls of Militarism From War Hawks to](#)



[Chickenhawks](#)

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 05 April 2018 07:00

The Dolls of Militarism From War Hawks to Chickenhawks By Danny Sjrusen

I get sick of saying it, but just when you thought it couldn't get any worse...

Donald Trump's continual cabinet reshuffling -- otherwise the stuff of reality-TV drama -- has become genuinely frightening. Like so many Russian *matryoshki* or nesting dolls, the president has been removing one war hawk after another, only to reveal yet more extreme versions of the same creature. And [rumor](#) has it that such personnel moves have yet to reach their end point.

In just the last few weeks, President Trump has fired his secretary of state and national security adviser, while nominating two fanatical replacements: CIA Director Mike Pompeo and former U.N. Ambassador John Bolton. The "old" team, Rex Tillerson and Lieutenant General H.R. McMaster, were flawed choices from the start, but Pompeo and Bolton seem like an instant formula for a war -- or two or three of them. (And keep in mind that we're already actively fighting at least [seven](#) wars across the Greater Middle East and Africa.)

Tillerson [gutted](#) the State Department and, had he stuck around, might have gone down as one of the [worst](#) secretaries of state ever to walk the halls of Foggy Bottom. Still, the former ExxonMobil CEO does seem to have tried to [restrain](#) Trump's more extreme positions on the Paris climate accords and the Obama-era Iran nuclear deal. In addition, as his infamous "moron" [comments](#) suggests, he evidently wasn't cowed by our bully-in-chief.

Lieutenant General McMaster was no prince either. He helped [craft](#) a National Defense Strategy that all but declared a new Cold War on Russia and China. He was also to the right of reasonable on Iran and North Korea. Nevertheless, he is an intelligent man with genuine academic [bona fides](#). I've met the guy and, even though we disagree on almost everything, he's certainly preferable to a zealot like Bolton. McMaster thinks critically and wasn't always reflexively pro-war. However, Trump, a man who likes his information in tiny doses (and preferably on Fox News), [reportedly](#) found H.R.'s detailed [briefings](#) insufferable. And McMaster's recent suggestion that Russia played an "incontrovertible" [role](#) in the 2016 U.S. election evidently didn't help him one bit either.

Think about it for a second. An embattled, [scandal-ridden](#) administration suddenly fires two hawkish, though tenuously mainstream, foreign policy advisers and replaces them with off-the-grid warmongers. Connect those dots and it gets scary, fast. In fact, the situation is starting to resemble a Hollywood-style, [Wag-the-Dog](#), drum-up-a-war-to-distract-the-populace scenario.

With whom? Given the proclivities of Pompeo and Bolton, the obvious candidate is Iran. After all, as their records suggest, both the incoming secretary of state and the

national security adviser suffer from acute cases of [Iran hysteria](#) and have been beating the Islamic Republic war drum for years now. So look for Trump and his two new subordinates to strike a less than substantial deal with nuclear North Korea (to show their cuddly diplomatic side) and then pivot toward tearing up the Iran nuclear deal in May and heading for military action against non-nuclear -- and so more vulnerable -- nuclear-pact-[adhering](#) Iran.

Count on this, at least: it's going to be one hell of a ride for America's already [overstretched](#) military men and women -- and one hell of a [cash bonanza](#) for an already flush military-industrial complex.

The Bolton Problem

No question about it: John Bolton is a nightmare. If he worked for Iran or any other Muslim state, we'd label him a fundamentalist extremist. But he's ours and his religion of choice has long been chauvinist interventionism, so instead he tends to get the lifeless (and perhaps not even [accurate](#)) label "neoconservative."

How bad is he? Well, we'd all undoubtedly be far better served if *Michael* Bolton were national security adviser and just sang "How Am I Supposed to Live Without You" throughout his term in office.

The national security adviser holds an incredibly influential position and doesn't even require Senate confirmation hearings. Need proof? The establishment's favorite statesman-cum-[war criminal](#) Henry Kissinger started out in that position for President Richard Nixon. The thought of Bolton's voice being the final one Trump hears (and he's well-known to be prone to whatever last [catches](#) his attention) before making decisions about war and peace should chill us all.

How dangerous is Bolton, who came to Trump, like so many others, via his position as a commentator at Fox News? Back in 2005, he couldn't even pass [muster](#) among Republicans in Senate confirmation hearings to become President George W. Bush's ambassador to the United Nations. Dubya had to slip him in with a [recess](#) appointment (a decision even he [came to regret](#)). But give Bolton credit, at least, for consistency. He's been wrong about every significant foreign policy move since 9/11. Of course, he was hardly alone in that in Washington politics, but he does stand out for his unapologetic regime-change enthusiasm. He's repeatedly [called](#) for preventive war with North Korea. He's [long called](#) for regime change in Iran by force of arms and, back in distant 2017, even placed a [time stamp](#) on that event (the end of 2018)!

He still insists that the 2003 invasion of Iraq, which [shattered](#) that country and the entire region, was justified, a fact that ought in itself to have disqualified him in the eyes of a president who, on the campaign trail, repeatedly called that war "dumb."

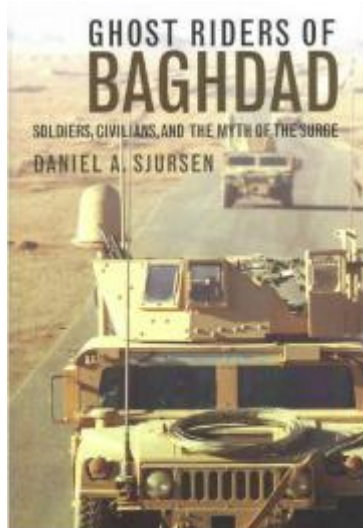
A man who hasn't learned from or even accepted the failure of regime change in Iraq is now to take the helm coordinating U.S. military policy for the future. If Iraq didn't constitute a mistake, then what would? It's hard to imagine. If preventive war -- not exactly street [legal](#) in international law -- is A-okay, why not, say, regime

change in Syria (another country the president recently [claimed](#) he wanted to get out of) and risk war with Turkey, Iran, and Russia as well? Or how about directly taking on Iran, an event that could make the invasion of Iraq look like the "[cakewalk](#)" it was billed as back in early 2003? There are plenty of nasty regimes out there and you can bet on one thing: Bolton will advise the president to use his \$716 [billion](#) military for more than just [parades](#).

The Pompeo Problem

In 1986, Mike Pompeo was the class valedictorian at West Point and he then spent some time in the pre-9/11 Army. You might think that, all these years later, he would have at least a hint or two about the real-life costs of unwinnable, unnecessary wars in the Greater Middle East. Still, he's clearly on the war-with-Iran crazy train. He's even [bragged](#) that it would only take 2,000 air sorties to wipe out Iran's nuclear capabilities. The million-dollar question that should follow evidently doesn't even occur to him: What *then*? A ground invasion? An indefinite blockade and/or no fly zone? How would Israel respond? What about Russia? Would Shia militias turn on American troops elsewhere in the region?

If James Mattis keeps his job (an open question these days for the man who has [confided](#) to ever-ready-to-leave colleagues that he doubts he can even work with John Bolton), Pompeo could become the nation's first top diplomat in memory to be more hawkish than the secretary of defense, himself a former four-star general. Foggy Bottom could then be [renamed](#) War Department 2.0.



Buy the book

Pompeo is a staunch [Islamophobe](#) and has even [received](#) an award from the extremist anti-Muslim hate group ACT for America. The presumptive secretary of state possesses the anti-Islamic, Christian [zealotry](#) of Vice President Mike Pence combined with the bombast of Trump and the (dangerous) intellect of the purported "[adults](#)" in (or now leaving) the "room," Mattis and McMaster.

No less unsettling: Pompeo's actions at his last job as CIA director. While there, for

example, he fought to release documents that were designed to intimate alleged [collusion](#) between Iran and al-Qaeda. Forget all you know about the Middle East in these last years; forget that Osama bin Laden and Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Khamenei were on opposite sides of an ongoing, regional sectarian war; forget that Iran is actively fighting al-Qaeda-linked groups in Syria, Yemen, and Iraq. Pay attention to Pompeo, a man ready to insist that Iran equals al-Qaeda and so is, in fact, the sort of 9/11-associated culprit to which Congress meant to apply its 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force.

In other words, while at the CIA, Pompeo continued to peddle an updated version of the Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld playbook that sold their invasion of choice -- in that case, falsely linking Iraqi autocrat Saddam Hussein to al-Qaeda -- to an uninformed citizenry. Or to put it another way, Pompeo and Bolton are on the same page, both ready to replay an old script one more time.

If John Bolton is still a true believer when it comes to the doctrine of [crusading](#) regime change, then Mike Pompeo is exactly the diplomat-in-chief to sell it to an intellectually unengaged president, a largely [AWOL](#) Congress, and a distracted public. All the pieces will soon be in place for the next disaster.

From Hawkish Generals to Chickenhawks

So what's really going on here? Two disturbing trends seem to be at work: the move from rule by general to rule by civilian chickenhawk and the end of dissent (or even debate) within Trump's inner circle.

The president's initial record of appointing not one but three of "[his](#)" generals to run the national security team and the White House was itself a threat to the republic and its time-honored tradition of civilian primacy over the military. Those three flag officers -- McMaster, Mattis, and retired general John Kelly -- already inhabited their own echo chamber when it came to America's wars. All of them were still wedded to the [myth](#) of the Iraq surge to "victory" of 2007-2008. According to this fable (still widely accepted in military circles), the U.S. military could've/would've/should've won in Iraq after General David Petraeus's [famed](#) "[surge](#)" there, if only feckless Barack Obama had left the troops in Iraq just a bit longer (by which they meant, as in South Korea after 1953, for more or less ever).

In addition, appointing highly decorated veterans in an era in which all things military are adulated in this country had its own potential for squelching dissent. Witness Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders taunting a reporter that it would be "[highly inappropriate](#)" to question White House Chief of Staff John Kelly because he had once been a four-star Marine general. Still, Mattis and McMaster are at least intelligent, somewhat principled men who haven't always toed the Trump line or kissed the proverbial ring. (McMaster had been bucking authority inside the Army for three decades, even writing a [book](#) arguing that the joint chiefs should have stood up to President Lyndon Johnson in the Vietnam War years.)

The president's new appointees, civilians though they are, will out-hawk the generals any day of the week. Bolton, in particular, had made a name as a Fox News

commentator [calling](#) for war with North Korea and Iran in the sort of language one doesn't -- in my experience -- even hear in the military ranks. So, big picture, the national security state seems now to be moving from one threat to democracy, a politicized military, to another: the frenzied chickenhawkery of even more extreme civilians.

What President Trump seems to value most is sycophantic loyalty not to the nation but to himself, a quality that's the most essential aspect of any [cult of personality](#). Which means one thing: outright dissent of any real sort inside the administration is a thing of the past (an autocratic mood that could, sooner or later, spread to the larger society). What did McMaster and Tillerson ultimately have in common? Simply put, both attempted to restrain Trump's more extreme impulses and neither truly [clicked](#) with the president on a personal level. Big mistake. What this president wants above all else isn't critical thinking or informed debate on crucial issues but total allegiance.

The defining characteristics of this White House are [nepotism](#) and sycophancy. John Bolton is never going to temper Trump's most bellicose instincts and Pompeo is already a Trump sycophant. When defending Pompeo's appointment, Trump's two main arguments were that he was a West Point graduate and that they are "always on the same [wavelength](#)." It's been widely [reported](#) that the two men have hit it off on a personal and professional level, as Pompeo personally delivered daily oral CIA intel briefs in the Oval Office (since Trump loathes reading). Pompeo grasped just how to get what he wanted in such a situation: stay in the boss's good graces. Mind-melding with the president is the path to promotion in this administration.

As America enters the second spring of the Trump era, it's creeping ever closer to yet more war. McMaster and Mattis may have [written](#) the National Defense Strategy that [over-hyped](#) the threats on this planet, but Bolton and Pompeo will have the opportunity to address these inflated threats in the worst way possible: by force of arms.

Trump finally has the minions he wants: devoted and fervently militaristic.

And while the public remains focused on the man's outlandish shenanigans, his team will be cooking up something far worse: a new war to put all the others to shame.

Major Danny Sjursen, a [TomDispatch regular](#), is a U.S. Army officer and former history instructor at West Point. He served tours with reconnaissance units in Iraq and Afghanistan. He has written a memoir and critical analysis of the Iraq War, [Ghost Riders of Baghdad: Soldiers, Civilians, and the Myth of the Surge](#). He lives with his wife and four sons in Lawrence, Kansas. Follow him on Twitter at [@SkepticalVet](#) and check out his new podcast [Fortress on a Hill](#), co-hosted with fellow vet Chris 'Henri' Henriksen.

[The views expressed in this article are those of the author, expressed in an unofficial capacity, and do not reflect the official policy or position of the

Department of the Army, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. government.]

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Last Updated on Sunday, 15 April 2018 19:24

339 readings

[DEFENDING OUR OCEANS](#)   

[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 05 April 2018 11:19

DEFENDING OUR OCEANS

By Murray Rankin, MP. Victoria

First published in Oak Bay News, April 4



<http://www.orcanetwork.org/nathist/salishorcas1.html>

Article continued

Spanning three oceans, Canada's coastline is the longest in the world. Sadly, our oceans are increasingly threatened by rising temperatures, acidification and pollution. The impacts on humans, wildlife and the environment could be disastrous.

The University of Victoria's Ocean Networks Canada monitors the country's coast to gather real-time data for scientific research. This research helps communities, governments and industries make informed, evidence-based decisions to promote better ocean management, disaster mitigation and environmental protection.

While we know that human activity has already caused significant changes in our oceans, important questions remain unanswered. How will marine ecosystems respond to increasing ocean acidification? How does the depletion of oxygen in coastal waters affect ecosystem services? What are the long-term effects of marine plastic pollution? These are of the questions Canadians need to address. Thankfully, organizations like ONC are working to answer them.

One concern right here at home is plastic pollution. A recent report by UVic's Environmental Law Centre revealed that there are over 3,000 particles of plastics *per cubic metre* of seawater in the Strait of Georgia. It's estimated that 90 percent of seabirds have plastic in their stomachs. Research like this has a big impact. In 2015, one of my NDP colleagues, Brian Masse, introduced a motion to ban harmful plastic microbeads in consumer products. I'm pleased to say that after years of effort that ban will go into effect on July 1 this year.

Plastic microbeads are just one of many pollutants that find their way into our oceans, but they're a good example of how scientific research and evidence-based decision making can yield progress.

Unfortunately, a larger threat is looming. Despite the risks and against public opposition, the Prime Minister is still championing the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain oil pipeline and tanker project as being in the "national interest." I fail to see how it can be in the national interest to retain the Harper government's emissions targets, refuse to adequately consider the project's upstream and

downstream impacts, and dismiss the environmental and economic disaster that our coast would suffer in the wake of a major spill from a bitumen tanker.

These concerns aren't speculative. We need only look at the record of Kinder Morgan's existing pipeline. 82 spills reported in the last 57 years; averaging more than one each year. A bigger pipeline and more tankers crisscrossing our narrow, coastal waterways can only increase the chance of a major spill.

Like many Canadians, I expected more from Mr. Trudeau. I took him at his word when he said on August 20, 2015 in Esquimalt that the approval process would be "redone". But it wasn't.

My question to the Liberals is this: since when is breaking election promises, accepting unscientific assessments and inadequate consultation with First Nations, threatening endangered orcas, risking food security, and playing Russian roulette with BC's coastal environment and economy in the national interest?

A couple of weeks ago, hundreds of fellow Victorians gathered around my community office on Fort Street to voice their rejection of the Kinder Morgan pipeline. I was given a symbolic gift of water from the Pacific Ocean. In return, I presented one of the organizers, Charlene Simon, with a Canadian flag to symbolize that taking steps to protect our precious coastline and the local economies that depend on it is *exactly* what's in the national interest.

People in Victoria have told me that we cannot allow the Liberal government in Ottawa to gamble with BC's coastline and economy. Those fighting to protect the west coast deserve to be recognized as proud Canadians for their efforts.

Whether you're a surfer or a scientist, the voices of those who live, work and play on our oceans need to be heard in Ottawa now more than ever.

Last Updated on Thursday, 05 April 2018 11:45

214 readings

[Containing the nuclear weapons corporations: Nuclear weapons divestment in the United States](#)   

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 07 April 2018 08:13

Containing the nuclear weapons corporations: Nuclear weapons divestment in the United States

Apr 7, 2018

By Campaign to Move nuclear Weapons Money

[http://www.nuclearweaponsmoney.org/news/containing-the-nuclear-weapons-corporations-nuclear-weapons-divestment-in-the-united-](http://www.nuclearweaponsmoney.org/news/containing-the-nuclear-weapons-corporations-nuclear-weapons-divestment-in-the-united-states/)



[states/](#)

The United States spends over \$60 billion annually on nuclear weapons – more than the other five nuclear-armed States combined. This colossal amount of spending on nuclear weapons is unnecessary, regardless of whether or not you support unilateral nuclear disarmament by the United States, or conditional nuclear deterrence until there is a multilateral nuclear abolition agreement by all nuclear armed States.

Senator Markey and Representative Blumenauer have introduced the [Smarter Approach to Nuclear Expenditure \(SANE\) Act](#), which calls for minimal deterrence (until global nuclear disarmament is agreed), which could be served by spending approximately 1/3 of the current nuclear weapons budget (*Senator Markey is pictured above introducing the SANE Act*).

However, even this moderate approach can only get the support of a handful of congress-members. Why? Because the [United States corporations manufacturing nuclear weapons and their delivery systems](#) are too powerful a lobby for even the moderate democrats to oppose.

Civil society must therefore employ other means to constrain the power of the nuclear weapons corporations and to build support for cuts in nuclear weapons budgets. Nuclear divestment is probably the most powerful tool at our disposal.

Cities, States, universities, religious organisations, banks and other entities have funds which they invest in the stock market in order to get a return for their institutions and constituents. Many of these are investing in nuclear weapons corporations.

By moving these institutions to divest from the nuclear weapons corporations, the nuclear abolition movement can spotlight the unethical behaviour of these corporations, help reduce market confidence in them, and put pressure on them to get out of the nuclear arms race. Such actions against the nuclear weapons corporations can also give political strength and cover to congressmembers who are wavering on whether or not to support nuclear weapons budgets cuts and initiatives such as the SANE Act.

Move the Nuclear Weapons Money highlights [examples of such nuclear divestment in the United States](#), and around the world. We also link to partner organisations and

campaigns which have been undertaking nuclear divestment work. One such organisation active in the United States in the 1980s and 1990s was Nuclear Free America. They encouraged cities to declare themselves as nuclear-weapon-free zones and adopt ordinances which prohibited nuclear-weapons-related activities including investments in nuclear weapons corporations.

Examples include [Takoma Park \(MD\)](#) which adopted a nuclear divestment policy in 1983 and the city of [Oakland \(California\)](#) which adopted a nuclear divestment policy in 1988.

US organisations which have become active more recently include the [Future of Life Institute](#) and [Nuclear Ban US](#).

On 2 April 2016, Cambridge (Massachusetts) City Council [adopted a resolution](#) proposed by the Future of Life Institute to prohibit city funds from investing in nuclear weapons corporations. The institute has also produced a [guide for nuclear divestment in the United States](#).

Nuclear Ban US, which was established in 2017 after the adoption at the United Nations of the [Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons](#) (TPNW), is calling for nuclear divestment in the United States as a way for cities, states and institutions to give effect to some of the treaty provisions despite the fact that neither the United States, nor any other nuclear-armed State, have agreed to sign the treaty.

On March 16, the [Peace Walk for the People and for the Earth](#) set off from Leverett (Massachusetts) arriving in Washington, DC on April 6. Several of the walkers carried Nuclear Ban US materials. As they visited cities along the way they encouraged the cities to adopt nuclear divestment policies and other measures to give effect to the TPNW.

Please [send us](#) other examples of nuclear divestment policies adopted by US cities or other US institutions for us to include in our online database.

356 readings

[Ta' ah Amy George, Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, Indigenous leaders and hundreds of others shut down work at Kinder Morgan terminal](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 07 April 2018 16:57

By coast protectors info@coastprotectors.ca

A full-day blockade at Kinder Morgan's Burnaby construction site today was led by Tsleil-Waututh Elder Ta'ah Amy George and the full executive of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, which represents more than half the Nations, tribes and Bands in BC.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip (Penticton Indian Band), Chief Bob Chamberlin (Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis First Nation) and Chief Judy Wilson (Neskonlith

First Nation in Secwepemc territory) were joined by hundreds of supporters in pouring rain, shutting down work at the facility for the day.

A long rolling clap of thunder struck at the same moment as the drummers began the gathering, prompting cheers from the large crowd of supporters. After hours of blocking both gates to the tanker farm and after it was clear that Kinder Morgan was finished work for the day, **Grand Chief Stewart Phillip declared victory:**

“Clearly Kinder Morgan is intimidated and fearful of a strong, unified front between Indigenous leaders and our allies. Kinder Morgan was forced not to issue a prerequisite complaint to the RCMP to enable arrests. Without question, Kinder Morgan backed down today. We were here and we will be back. There is absolutely no way that we are letting Kinder Morgan expand its archaic and dangerous fossil fuel extraction. Today we proudly stood with land defenders to send a strong message to Kinder Morgan, its investors, and Trudeau — we will not stand down and we will remain united in our opposition.”

Indigenous leaders and people across Canada and the U.S. have promised escalating action to stop Kinder Morgan’s pipeline and tanker project from moving forward. International opposition to the tar sands project is on the rise, and opponents have promised to make sure Alberta Premier Rachel Notley hears that opposition when she promotes Kinder Morgan’s pipeline in New York and Toronto next week.

We’re not giving up. We’re not going away. This pipeline will never be built.

In solidarity,

Sarah and the Coast Protectors team

Coast Protectors is hosted by UBCIC Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs - 312 Main St, Suite 401, Vancouver, BC V6A-2T2, Canada

This email was sent to drJoanrussow@gmail.com . To stop receiving emails, [click here](#).

Keep up with Coast Protectors on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#).

Last Updated on Saturday, 07 April 2018 17:06

198 readings

[Who’s defending Canada’s national](#)



[interest?](#)

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 17 April 2018 16:49

First Nations facing down a pipeline Justin Trudeau is bailing out a Texas oil billionaire. He should be bailing out Canada's workers and the climate.



Last Saturday, Indigenous leaders stood arm-in-arm in front of the gates of Kinder Morgan's pipeline worksite in Burnaby, British Columbia.

For weeks before, hundreds of non-native people – environmentalists, federal parliamentarians Elizabeth May and Kennedy Stewart, even an engineer formerly employed by the Texas oil corporation – had marched to the same place. In each case, police approached, read aloud their violation of a no-go zone, and arrested and shackled them.

Now it was the turn of half of the leadership of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, including Grand Chief Stewart Phillip. They waited in the rain for hours. But the police never came.

It wasn't an accident. As the push for this pipeline has transfixed the country, there's one image the oil industry and Canadian government desperately want to avoid: that of Indigenous peoples as the unifying front of a rising movement for an alternative.

The media has thus far done them the favour. We've heard little about the Tsleil-Waututh and Squamish, the coastal First Nations who've taken the federal government to court. We've heard even less about the Secwepemc in the interior of BC – whose lands cover almost half of Kinder Morgan's route – who are building solar-panelled tiny houses directly in the pipeline's path. And we've heard nothing about the Lubicon, Athabasca Chipewyan and Beaver Lake Cree downstream of the

Alberta mines, who first raised the cry of concern about Canada's future with the tar sands.

They understand what the Alberta and Canadian governments seem to not. To prevent climate breakdown, we must stop oil companies from digging up new deposits of fossil fuels. Government boosters of each pipeline project have instead sent a very clear message: to hell with our climate commitments. So Indigenous peoples have done what our governments will not: they've drawn a line.

At a meeting in Alberta ten years ago, long before the world knew of the tar sands, a young Indigenous activist named Clayton Thomas-Mueller pointed at a map of proposed pipelines, sprawling like tentacles across North America. "This map traces where our allies will emerge," he predicted.

And so we've seen new, diverse coalitions of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people spring forth in the pathway of the Northern Gateway, Keystone XL, and Energy East pipelines. Each has been stalled or halted. Kinder Morgan's TransMountain expansion – tripling its carrying capacity – is the latest. The thousands who've flocked to Burnaby mountain the last weeks now know that real climate leaders aren't found in legislatures. They're found mounting blockades on the ground.

The rule of law, you say? By pushing through the pipeline, Justin Trudeau bulldozes it himself. He violates Indigenous land rights on unceded lands that have been recognized by the Supreme Court, and the right to "free, prior informed consent" in the United Nations declaration. He violates the Paris Climate Accords, whose ambitious target his government was praised for helping establish. And he violates an electoral mandate granted by a majority of British Columbians. In other words, the Indigenous-led opposition to pipelines aren't "rogue criminals" or a "noisy minority." They're enforcing the democratic will of a province – and the sacred legal duties of the country.

So don't let pundits and politicians pretend this crisis is about BC Premier John Horgan defying federal jurisdiction. Governments aren't provoking a new constitutional impasse. They're prolonging an old colonial pillage. Much of the remaining pools of global carbon – and the infrastructure to ship it out – are located on Indigenous peoples' territories. Which makes the attempt to trample through their lands by a foreign oil company – a spawn of Enron – part of a long, familiar story. Yet Justin Trudeau doesn't call this what it is. He calls it the "national interest."

But wrapping a crime in the flag of national interest can only shroud the truth for so long. The wall of Indigenous-led protest points the way to a new story: a transition off fossil fuels to a thriving low-carbon economy. The world is already turning on the tar sands. Its shadow may tower over Canadian politics, but its contribution is diminishing and small: just 2 percent of our economy.

The good news is that we can create far more jobs through investment in a clean energy transition than in oil and gas – as many as 34 times more. Such as in public transit, housing retrofits and health or care-giving work. Or by funding Indigenous-owned renewable projects that communities are already getting off the ground. So why are Trudeau and Alberta premier Rachel Notley spending our taxes bailing out a Texas oil billionaire? They should be bailing out Canada's workers, First Nations

and the climate.

To say that Indigenous peoples have become the heroes in this fight isn't high-minded romanticism. It's hard-bitten reality. Those First Nations who've signed deals with Kinder Morgan struggle with crushing poverty – they are stuck between a pipeline and a hard place. And as Indigenous rights have become more formidable, the financials buy-offs – as much as \$1bn per fossil fuel project – have only grown larger. This suggests one thing about the resistance of other First Nations: that it is even more remarkable.

“We need the money [the project would bring], but we don't need it enough to sell out the things we love and are spiritually connected to – and that's our land, our water, our people,” Rueben George of the Tsleil-Waututh First Nation said on Friday.




The Tsleil-Waututh, and their many growing supporters, will be on watch when Kinder Morgan takes its likely next step: drilling a hole through Burnaby mountain. Polls show that 10 percent of British Columbians – an astonishing half-a-million people – are already prepared to engage in civil disobedience to stop it. They understand what government and industry hoped they would not: that Indigenous rights aren't just a tool to forge a safe, liveable future – they're the most powerful one we have.

It means the best representative of our national interest isn't Justin Trudeau or Rachel Notley, nor even John Horgan. It's the Indigenous peoples standing in the path of a pipeline.

Martin Lukacs @Martin_Lukacs Mon 16 Apr 2018 19:37 BST...The Guardian

Last Updated on Tuesday, 17 April 2018 17:08

199 readings

[Protesters built a giant pipeline to greet Justin Trudeau in London](#)   

[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 19 April 2018 06:32

By Andrea Diaz, CNN - Updated 6:16 PM ET, Wed April 18, 2018

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was greeted in Britain's capital with a 98-foot long fake pipeline that blocked the main entrance to the Canadian High Commission."



Greenpeace activists build an "oil pipeline" next to a cutout of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was greeted in London on Wednesday with a 98-foot fake pipeline meant to challenge his support of a controversial oil pipeline in his country.

The stunt, which blocked the main entrance to the Canadian High Commission, was orchestrated by [Greenpeace activists](#) who oppose a multibillion-dollar pipeline planned in western Canada across indigenous lands.

The Trans Mountain expansion, approved in 2016, will help oil companies reach new markets by expanding the capacity of North America's only pipeline with access to the West Coast, and it will nearly triple the number of oil tankers traveling the shared waters between Canada and Washington state.



Police stand guard as Greenpeace activists build an "oil pipeline" outside Canada House.

Greenpeace activists said the project will take highly polluting tar sands to global markets, and that building the pipeline would make Trudeau's claims of climate leadership a "laughingstock."

"Trudeau is risking the health of Canada's rivers and coast, the water supply and livelihoods of many indigenous people, and undermining the credibility of the Paris climate agreement, all to keep some struggling oil companies in profit," Greenpeace UK oil campaigner Sara Ayech [said in a news release](#).

According to the [project's overview](#), the expansion will create a system similar to an existing 714-mile pipeline in Canada between Strathcona County in Alberta and Burnaby in British Columbia. That will turn the the capacity of 300,000 barrels of oil per day to 890,000 barrels per day, the overview says.



Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau leaves Canada House, passing a cardboard cutout of himself placed by Greenpeace activists.

The project is estimated to cost \$7.4 billion (Canadian) and government officials say it will be beneficial, creating jobs and tax revenue.

But it is opposed by the indigenous people of the First Nation communities in Canada, and there have been protests in several Canadian cities. The leader of the province of British Columbia and the governor of Washington state also have opposed the pipeline.

Greenpeace said 30 volunteers assembled the mock pipeline in about 15 minutes and then took about an hour to decorate the columns of the Canada House building, home of the Canadian High Commission, with banners that read "Crudeau Oil."

Thompson said the protest pipeline was installed around 6 a.m. and went from the main entrance of Canada House to the consular entrance on Cockspur Street, and Trudeau arrived around 8:30 a.m.

"The pipeline is still there, but the High Commission removed the banners. Our activists left after 12 hours of protests. The police were very polite and helpful," Graham Thompson, a Greenpeace spokesman, said later Wednesday.

Trudeau was in London for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

On Sunday, he told the CBC the Trans Mountain expansion will be built despite the protests and the British Columbia government's continued battle against it in the courts. He says the project is in the country's best interests.

Last Updated on Monday, 23 April 2018 22:05

178 readings

[YEARS OF INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS TO REDUCE THE MILITARY BUDGET IGNORED](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 21 April 2018 07:20

Joan Russow PhD

Global Compliance Reseach Project

"The reduction of the military budget and disarmament are necessary conditions of security and development" (Anatole Rapapport, 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.

148 readings

[COP24 MUST AVOID THE SYSTEMIC CONSTRAINTS OF COP21](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 27 April 2018 11:58

By Joan Russow PhD

Global Compliance Research Project

Friday April 27 2018,



At COP 21 Ban Ki Moon, in Paris, urged states to negotiate with a global vision not with national vested interests (Cop21 press conference)

A global vision would be:

to address article 2 of the UNFCCC and at a minimum to immediately end all subsidies for fossil fuel, to calculate the carbon budget for each state,

to divest in fossil fuels and to reinvest in renewable energy, to conserve sinks -such as old growth forests and bogs, to strengthen conservation of biodiversity,

to avoid all false solutions such as nuclear, geo-engineering and biofuels which would all violate principles within the UNFCCC, to compensate for historical emissions,

and to institute a fair and just transition for workers affected negatively by the new vision. and to promote nature based solutions and socially equitable

and environmentally sound such as solar, wind, tidal, and geothermal

COP24 in Katowice must avoid the systemic constraints that undermined COP21

SYSTEMIC CONSTRAINTS PREVENTING THE COMMITMENT TO URGENCY

IN COP21 IN THE PREAMBLE IS THE “RECOGNITION THAT CLIMATE CHANGE REPRESENTS AN URGENT AND POTENTIALLY IRREVERSIBLE THREAT TO HUMAN SOCIETY AND THE PLANET” YET THE EXISTENCE OF SYSTEMIC CONSTRAINTS PREVENTED COP21 FROM EMBODYING THIS RECOGNITION

1. THE BEST IS THE ENEMY OF THE GOOD- THE COMPROMISERS CREDO

2. BASELINES TARGETS TIMEFRAMES WERE ALL OUT OF SYNC

3. -EXPEDIENT OMISSION; GLOBAL CARBON BUDGET. HISTORICAL AND PER CAPITA EMISSIONS

4. THE SHORTNESS OF INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY AND THE

UNDERMINING OF LEGAL OBLIGATIONS FROM ARTICLE 2 3 AND 4

5. A SOLUTION SHOULD NEVER BE EQUALLY BAD OR WORSE THAN THE PROBLEM IT IS INTENDED TO SOLVE

6. SOME STATES ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHER

7. THE LOWEST COMMON DENOMINATOR; THE TYRANNY OF CONSENSUS

8 THE FAILURE TO REVERSE THE EXEMPTION FOR THE CONTRIBUTION TO GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSION

9. RELUCTANCE TO USE THE INTERNATIONAL COURT AGAINST THE MAJOR EMMITTERS FOR THEY VIOLATIONS OF ARTICLE 2 OF THE UNFCCC

10. IGNORING COMMITMENT FOR FUNDING SOURCE

FIRST SYSTEMIC CONSTRAINT

THE BEST IS THE ENEMY OF THE GOOD

ALL STATES SHOULD HAVE ACTED TO FULFILL

SDG 13 AND ON BAN KI MOON'S CALL FOR NEGOTIATING WITH A GLOBAL VISION

In SDG13 on climate change, addressing climate change is described as urgent; climate change could jeopardize the fulfillment of most of the SDGs. and the key biodiversity areas.

In 1988, at the Changing Atmosphere Conference in Toronto, the participants including representatives from government, academia, NGO and industry expressed their concern about Climate Change in the Conference statement:

“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 human activities, inefficient and 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.

The Conference called for immediate action by governments,

to Reduce CO2 emissions by approximately 20% of 1988 levels by the year 2005 as an initial global goal. Clearly the industrialized nations have a responsibility to lead the way both through their national energy policies and their bilateral multilateral assistance arrangement.

Ban Ki Moon, in Paris, urged states to negotiate with a global vision not with national vested interests (COP 21 press conference)

A global vision would be to address article 2 and at a minimum to immediately end all subsidies for fossil fuel, to calculate the carbon budget for each state, to divest in fossil fuels and to reinvest in renewable energy, to conserve sinks -such as old growth forests and bogs (not just as a means to offset emissions), to strengthen conservation of biodiversity, to avoid all false solutions such as nuclear, geo-engineering and biofuels which would all violate principles within the UNFCCC, promote nature-based solutions along with solar energy, wind energy, wave and geothermal and to compensate for historical emissions, and to institute a fair and just transition for workers affected negatively by the new vision.

In 2018 the global community is in danger of non-compliance with the purpose of the legally binding United Nations Framework on Climate Change(article 2)

..."to achieve, in accordance with the relevant provisions of

the Convention, stabilization of greenhouse gas

concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent

AT COP21 BAN KI-MOON URGED STATES TO NEGOTIATE WITH A GLOBAL VISION NOT FROM SPECIFIC NATIONAL INTERESTS”

WHAT COP21 SHOULD HAVE BEEN WAS A NEW GLOBAL VISION WITH LEGALLY BINDING ACTIONS TO FINALLY IMPLEMENT THE BINDING COMMITMENTS AND ADHERE TO THE PRINCIPLES IN THE LEGALLY BINDING 1992 UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE UNFCCC

ALL THE WAY THROUGH THE NEGOTIATIONS, GOVERNMENTS WERE TALKING ABOUT THEIR REDLINES: I.E. WE WILL NOT AGREE TO A DOCUMENT IF X IS IN THE TEXT OR IF X IS NOT IN THE TEXT.

THERE MUST BE NO COMPROMISE TO ACCOMMODATE THE TRUMP GOVERNMENT; INSTEAD THERE MUST BE A STRONG LEGALLY BINDING DOCUMENT THAT COULD BE USED TO SUE THE US AND OTHER NON-COOPERATING FOSSIL FUEL STATES FOR VIOLATION OF ARTICLE 2 OF THE LEGALLY BINDING UNFCCC

STABILIZATION OF GREENHOUSE GAS CONCENTRATIONS IN THE ATMOSPHERE AT A LEVEL THAT WOULD PREVENT DANGEROUS ANTHROPOGENIC

INTERFERENCE WITH THE CLIMATE SYSTEM. SUCH A LEVEL SHOULD BE ACHIEVED WITHIN A TIME-FRAME SUFFICIENT TO ALLOW ECOSYSTEMS

TO ADAPT NATURALLY TO CLIMATE CHANGE, TO ENSURE THAT FOOD PRODUCTION IS NOT THREATENED AND TO ENABLE ECONOMIC

DEVELOPMENT TO PROCEED IN A SUSTAINABLE MANNER.

AT COP21 BAN KI-MOON URGED STATES TO NEGOTIATE WITH A GLOBAL VISION NOT FROM SPECIFIC NATIONAL INTERESTS”

WHAT COP21 SHOULD HAVE BEEN WAS A NEW GLOBAL VISION WITH LEGALLY BINDING ACTIONS TO FINALLY IMPLEMENT THE BINDING

COMMITMENTS AND ADHERE TO THE PRINCIPLES IN THE LEGALLY BINDING 1992 UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE UNFCCC

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THERE MUST BE NO COMPROMISE TO ACCOMMODATE THE TRUMP GOVERNMENT; INSTEAD THERE MUST BE A STRONG

LEGALLY BINDING DOCUMENT THAT COULD BE USED TO SUE THE US AND OTHER NON-COOPERATING FOSSIL FUEL

STATES FOR VIOLATION OF ARTICLE 2 OF THE LEGALLY BINDING UNFCCC

SECOND SYSTEMIC CONSTRAINT

BASELINES TARGETS TIMEFRAMES WERE ALL OUT OF SYNC

At COP21. the proposed "contributions were not only legally binding commitments but also ranged in baselines from

1990 to 2010, from percentages from 20- 30 + % and targets from 1990 to 2030.

GLOBAL VISION WOULD HAVE BEEN GIVEN THAT THE STATES HAD FAILED TO RETURN TO 1990 LEVELS BY THE END OF

THE CENTURY IN 2000.. IF ONLY THEY HAD RETURNED TO 1990 LEVELS BY 2000 THEN NOW IN 2015 GIVEN

THE URGENCY AND THE LOST TIME IN 2015 THEY MUST MAKE EVEN STRONGER COMMITMENTS in 2018

REAL COMMITMENTS WOULD BE TIME LINES AND TARGETS IN LINE WITH EXISTING AND EMERGING SCIENCE SUCH

AS 15% BELOW 1990 BY 2016, 20% BELOW 1990 BY 2017, "contributions" 30%

BELOW 1990 LEVELS BY 2018, 50%

BELOW 1990 LEVELS BY 2020, 65 % BELOW 1990 LEVELS BY 2025, 75%
BELOW 1990 LEVELS BY 2040 AND 100%

BELOW 1990 EMISSIONS BY 2050, DECARBONIZATION WITH 100%
ECOLOGICALLY SOUND RENEWABLE ENERGY,

THIRD SYSTEMIC CONSTRAINT

;EXPEDIENT OMISSION CARBON BUDGET ETC

APART FROM LONG LIST OF WHAT THEY ARE GOING TO DO WITHOUT
BEING COMPELLED TO DO ANYTHING. THERE WERE SEVERAL

EXPEDIENT OMISSIONS IN THE FINAL DOCUMENT, FIRST THERE WAS
NO MENTION OF FOSSIL FUELS- INCLUDING OIL, COAL OR GAS,

HISTORICAL OR PERCAPITA EMISSIONS AND ABOVE ALL THERE WAS
NO MENTION OF THE CARBON BUDGET AND FAIR SHARES

OF THE CARBON BUDGET. AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE THE TOTAL
CARBON BUDGET WAS A BIG ISSUE WITH SCIENTISTS AND NGOS

TOTAL CARBON BUDGET IS ESTIMATED AT 2900 GIGATONS FROM
PRE-INDUSTRIAL TIME IN ORDER TO KEEP BELOW 2 DEGREES

AND THAT IN 2011 1900 GIGATONS OF CO2 HAD BEEN USED UPTHUS
ABOUT 1000 GIGATONS REMAINS

AT THE CURRENT RATE OF 35.7 GT PER YEAR, IN 2015 THERE WOULD
ONLY REMAIN AROUND 860 GT

IPCC – ESTIMATES THE TOTAL REMAINING EMISSIONS FROM 2014/2015
TO KEEP GLOBAL AVERAGE TEMPERATURE

BELOW 2°C (900/ 860GT CO2) WILL BE USED IN AROUND 20 YEARS AT
CURRENT EMISSION RATES

http://www.globalcarbonproject.org/carbonbudget/15/files/GCP_budget_2015_v1.pdf

THE EMISSION PLEDGES FROM THE US, EU, CHINA, AND INDIA LEAVE LITTLE ROOM FOR OTHER COUNTRIES

TO EMIT IN A 2°C EMISSION BUDGET (66% CHANCE) OF THE 35 GIGA TONS

UNEP INDICATED THAT IN 2045 ALL THE GLOBAL CARBON BUDGET WOULD BE USED UP

IF THE CURRENT ANNUAL RATE CONTINUES OF 35.7-40 GIGA TONS THE BUDGET NOT BE USED UP MORE LIKELY BY 2037

WILL BE USED UP IN 20 YEARS 2 DEGREE SCENARIO

WILL BE USED UP IN 6 YEARS 1.5 DEGREES

THIS IS FRIGHTENING AND EQUALLY FRIGHTENING IS THAT IS WAS IGNORED IN THE AGREEMENT.

THIS EVIDENCE IS SIGNIFICANT FOR THE STRESS THE URGENCY OF HAVING LEGALLY BINDING INTERNATIONALLY DETERMINED MITIGATION COMMITMENTS.

3 Accepting the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) scenarios provide us with a global carbon budget that will be consumed in 10–20 years at current emissions levels, 4 and entail very significant levels of risk.

FOURTH SYSTEMIC CONSTRAINT;

THE SHORTNESS OF INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY AND THE UNDERMINING OF LEGAL OBLIGATIONS FROM ARTICLE 2 3 AND 4 of UNFCCC

OP21 SUFFERED FROM THE SHIFTING BASELINE SYNDROME;

SHORTNESS OF INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY

A GLOBAL VISION IS NOT JUST RECALLING (AS WAS DONE IN COP21) BUT ABIDING BY ARTICLES 2 3 AND 4 IN THE LEGALLY BINDING

UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC)

OBJECTIVE ARTICLE 2

COP21 NEEDED TO ADVOCATED STRONGER ACTIONS THAN WERE PROPOSED IN THE UNFCCC WAS IN 1992.

UNFCCC PREAMBLE; HISTORIC EMISSIONS

IS THE FOLLOWING:

NOTING THAT THE LARGEST SHARE OF HISTORICAL AND CURRENT GLOBAL EMISSIONS OF GREENHOUSE GASES

HAS ORIGINATED IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, THAT PER CAPITA EMISSIONS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

ARE STILL RELATIVELY LOW AND THAT THE SHARE OF GLOBAL EMISSIONS ORIGINATING IN DEVELOPING C

OUNTRIES WILL GROW TO MEET THEIR SOCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT NEEDS,

IN COP21

REFERENCES TO HISTORICL EMISSIONS 0

PER CAPITA 0

DECARBONIZATION BY 2050 IN EARLY VERSIONS COP 21 NOW

PARTIES, AND TO UNDERTAKE RAPID REDUCTIONS THEREAFTER IN ACCORDANCE WITH BEST AVAILABLE SCIENCE,

SO AS TO ACHIEVE A BALANCE BETWEEN ANTHROPOGENIC EMISSIONS BY SOURCES AND REMOVALS BY SINKS OF

GREENHOUSE GASES IN THE SECOND HALF OF THIS CENTURY, ON THE BASIS OF EQUITY, AND IN THE CONTEXT OF

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EFFORTS TO ERADICATE POVERTY

COP21 SUFFERED FROM THE SHIFTING BASELINE SYNDROME

BAN KI-MOON URGED NEGOTIATORS TO NEGOTIATE WITH A GLOBAL VISION;

A GLOBAL VISION IS NOT JUST RECALLING (AS WAS DONE IN COP21) BUT ABIDING BY ARTICLES 2 3 AND 4 IN

THE LEGALLY BINDING UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC)

UNFCCC OBJECTIVE ARTICLE 2

UNFCCC

THAT THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES MAY ADOPT IS TO ACHIEVE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RELEVANT PROVISIONS OF THE

CONVENTION, STABILIZATION OF GREENHOUSE GAS CONCENTRATIONS IN THE ATMOSPHERE AT A LEVEL THAT WOULD

PREVENT DANGEROUS ANTHROPOGENIC INTERFERENCE WITH THE CLIMATE SYSTEM. SUCH A LEVEL SHOULD BE ACHIEVED

WITHIN A TIME-FRAME SUFFICIENT TO ALLOW ECOSYSTEMS TO ADAPT NATURALLY TO CLIMATE CHANGE, TO ENSURE

THAT FOOD PRODUCTION IS NOT THREATENED AND TO ENABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TO PROCEED IN A SUSTAINABLE MANNER.

COP21

2A HOLDING THE INCREASE IN THE GLOBAL AVERAGE TEMPERATURE TO WELL BELOW 2 °C ABOVE PRE-INDUSTRIAL LEVELS

AND TO PURSUE EFFORTS TO LIMIT THE TEMPERATURE INCREASE TO 1.5 °C ABOVE PRE-INDUSTRIAL LEVELS, RECOGNIZING

THAT THIS WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE THE RISKS AND IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE;

BUT AT 1 DEGREE RISE IN TEMPERATURE THERE IS ALREADY DE-STABILIZATION OF GREENHOUSE GAS CONCENTRATIONS IN THE

ATMOSPHERE AT A LEVEL THAT IS CAUSING DANGEROUS ANTHROPOGENIC INTERFERENCE WITH THE CLIMATE SYSTEM.

stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic

interference with the climate system.

a global vision would be to address article 2 would be at a minimum to immediately end all subsidies for fossil fuel, to calculate the

carbon budget for each state, to enforce fair share of the carbon budget, to divest in fossil fuels and to reinvest in renewable energy,

to commit to decarbonisation by 2050, to conserve sinks (not just as a means to offset emissions), to avoid all false solutions such

as nuclear, geo-engineering and biofuels which would all violate principles within the unfccc and to compensate for historical emissions.

UNFCCC ARTICLE 3 PRINCIPLES

IN THEIR ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE OF THE CONVENTION AND TO IMPLEMENT ITS PROVISIONS, THE PARTIES

SHALL BE GUIDED, INTER ALIA, BY THE FOLLOWING:

.UNFCCC 3.1. 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.

.UNFCCC

A GLOBAL VISION WOULD HAVE BEEN TO RESPECT THE COMMITMENTS UNDER ARTICLE 4 IN UNFCCC

UNFCCC ARTICLE 4 COMMITMENTS

1. ALL PARTIES, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THEIR COMMON BUT DIFFERENTIATED RESPONSIBILITIES AND THEIR SPECIFIC NATIONAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES, OBJECTIVES AND CIRCUMSTANCES, SHALL:

(A) DEVELOP, PERIODICALLY UPDATE, PUBLISH AND MAKE AVAILABLE TO THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES,

IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 12, NATIONAL INVENTORIES OF ANTHROPOGENIC EMISSIONS BY SOURCES AND

REMOVALS BY SINKS OF ALL GREENHOUSE GASES NOT CONTROLLED BY THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL, USING COMPARABLE

METHODOLOGIES TO BE AGREED UPON BY THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES;

(B) FORMULATE, IMPLEMENT, PUBLISH AND REGULARLY UPDATE NATIONAL AND, WHERE APPROPRIATE, REGIONAL

PROGRAMMES CONTAINING MEASURES TO MITIGATE CLIMATE CHANGE BY ADDRESSING ANTHROPOGENIC EMISSIONS

BY SOURCES AND REMOVALS BY SINKS OF ALL GREENHOUSE GASES NOT CONTROLLED BY THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL,

AND MEASURES TO FACILITATE ADEQUATE ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE;

OF TECHNOLOGIES, PRACTICES AND PROCESSES THAT CONTROL, REDUCE OR PREVENT ANTHROPOGENIC EMISSIONS

OF GREENHOUSE GASES NOT CONTROLLED BY THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL IN ALL RELEVANT SECTORS, INCLUDING THE ENERGY,

TRANSPORT, INDUSTRY, AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND WASTE MANAGEMENT SECTORS;

(D) PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT, AND PROMOTE AND COOPERATE IN THE CONSERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT,

AS APPROPRIATE, OF SINKS AND RESERVOIRS OF ALL 11 GREENHOUSE

GASES NOT CONTROLLED BY THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL,

INCLUDING BIOMASS, FORESTS AND OCEANS AS WELL AS OTHER TERRESTRIAL, COASTAL AND MARINE ECOSYSTEMS;

(E) COOPERATE IN PREPARING FOR ADAPTATION TO THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE; DEVELOP AND ELABORATE

APPROPRIATE AND INTEGRATED PLANS FOR COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT, WATER RESOURCES AND AGRICULTURE,

AND FOR THE PROTECTION AND REHABILITATION OF AREAS, PARTICULARLY IN AFRICA, AFFECTED BY DROUGHT

AND DESERTIFICATION, AS WELL AS FLOODS;

(F) TAKE CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS INTO ACCOUNT, TO THE EXTENT FEASIBLE, IN THEIR RELEVANT

SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTIONS, AND EMPLOY APPROPRIATE METHODS, FOR EXAMPLE

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS, FORMULATED AND DETERMINED NATIONALLY, WITH A VIEW TO MINIMIZING ADVERSE EFFECTS

ON THE ECONOMY, ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND ON THE QUALITY OF THE ENVIRONMENT, OF PROJECTS OR MEASURES

UNDERTAKEN BY THEM TO MITIGATE OR ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE;

(G) PROMOTE AND COOPERATE IN SCIENTIFIC, TECHNOLOGICAL, TECHNICAL, SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND OTHER RESEARCH,

SYSTEMATIC OBSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF DATA ARCHIVES RELATED TO THE CLIMATE SYSTEM AND INTENDED

TO FURTHER THE UNDERSTANDING AND TO REDUCE OR ELIMINATE THE REMAINING UNCERTAINTIES REGARDING

THE CAUSES, EFFECTS, MAGNITUDE AND TIMING OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF

VARIOUS RESPONSE STRATEGIES;

(H) PROMOTE AND COOPERATE IN THE FULL, OPEN AND PROMPT EXCHANGE OF RELEVANT SCIENTIFIC, TECHNOLOGICAL,

TECHNICAL, SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND LEGAL INFORMATION RELATED

TO THE CLIMATE SYSTEM AND CLIMATE CHANGE, AND

TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF VARIOUS
RESPONSE STRATEGIES;

(I) PROMOTE AND COOPERATE IN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND PUBLIC
AWARENESS RELATED TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND

ENCOURAGE THE WIDEST PARTICIPATION IN THIS PROCESS,
INCLUDING THAT OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS; AND

(J) COMMUNICATE TO THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
INFORMATION RELATED TO IMPLEMENTATION, IN ACCORDANCE
WITH ARTICLE 12

UNFCCC ARTICLE 4.2. THE DEVELOPED COUNTRY PARTIES AND
OTHER PARTIES INCLUDED IN ANNEX I COMMIT THEMSELVES

PECIFICALLY AS PROVIDED FOR IN THE FOLLOWING: 12 (

UNFCCC 4.2(A) EACH OF THESE PARTIES SHALL ADOPT NATIONAL
POLICIES AND TAKE CORRESPONDING MEASURES ON

THE MITIGATION OF CLIMATE CHANGE, BY LIMITING ITS
ANTHROPOGENIC EMISSIONS OF GREENHOUSE GASES AND
PROTECTING

AND ENHANCING ITS GREENHOUSE GAS SINKS AND RESERVOIRS.
THESE POLICIES AND MEASURES WILL DEMONSTRATE

THAT DEVELOPED COUNTRIES ARE TAKING THE LEAD IN MODIFYING
LONGER-TERM TRENDS IN ANTHROPOGENIC EMISSIONS

CONSISTENT WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF THE CONVENTION,
RECOGNIZING THAT THE RETURN BY THE END OF THE PRESENT
DECADE

TO EARLIER LEVELS OF ANTHROPOGENIC EMISSIONS OF CARBON
DIOXIDE AND OTHER GREENHOUSE GASES NOT CONTROLLED

BY THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO SUCH
MODIFICATION, AND TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE

DIFFERENCES IN THESE PARTIES' STARTING POINTS AND
APPROACHES, ECONOMIC STRUCTURES AND RESOURCE BASES,

THE NEED TO MAINTAIN STRONG AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC

GROWTH, AVAILABLE TECHNOLOGIES AND OTHER INDIVIDUAL CIRCUMSTANCES, AS WELL AS THE NEED FOR EQUITABLE AND APPROPRIATE CONTRIBUTIONS BY EACH OF THESE PARTIES TO THE GLOBAL EFFORT REGARDING THAT OBJECTIVE. THESE PARTIES MAY IMPLEMENT SUCH POLICIES AND MEASURES JOINTLY WITH OTHER PARTIES AND MAY ASSIST OTHER PARTIES IN CONTRIBUTING TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE OBJECTIVE OF THE CONVENTION AND, IN PARTICULAR, THAT OF THIS SUBPARAGRAPH;

UNFCCC 4.2 (B) IN ORDER TO PROMOTE PROGRESS TO THIS END, EACH OF THESE PARTIES SHALL COMMUNICATE,

WITHIN SIX MONTHS OF THE ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE CONVENTION FOR IT AND PERIODICALLY THEREAFTER, AND

IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 12, DETAILED INFORMATION ON ITS POLICIES AND MEASURES REFERRED TO IN SUBPARAGRAPH

(A) ABOVE, AS WELL AS ON ITS RESULTING PROJECTED ANTHROPOGENIC EMISSIONS BY SOURCES AND REMOVALS

BY SINKS OF GREENHOUSE GASES NOT CONTROLLED BY THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL FOR THE PERIOD REFERRED TO

IN SUBPARAGRAPH (A), WITH THE AIM OF RETURNING INDIVIDUALLY OR JOINTLY TO THEIR 1990 LEVELS

THESE ANTHROPOGENIC EMISSIONS OF CARBON DIOXIDE AND OTHER GREENHOUSE GASES NOT CONTROLLED

BY THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL. THIS INFORMATION WILL BE REVIEWED BY THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES,

AT ITS FIRST SESSION AND PERIODICALLY THEREAFTER, IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 7;

IN 1990 AVERAGE CO₂ LEVELS (CONCENTRATIONS) IN THE ATMOSPHERE WERE 320 PPM, THAT THE GLOBAL RISE

IN TEMPERATURE FROM 1850-1990 WAS 0.78 DEGREES C AND THAT

THE ANNUAL EMISSIONS OF CO₂ IN 1990 AND

2015 WERE 22 AND 39 GIGATONNES RESPECTIVELY

NOTE IN 1992 THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION ABOUT OFFSETS ETC.

SO IF OFFSETS ETC WHAT PERCENTAGE REDUCTION BELOW 1990 LEVELS WOULD THE CONTRIBUTIONS HAVE TO BE TO REVERSE THE TEMPERATURE TO ..78 C

UNFCCC 4.2 (C) CALCULATIONS OF EMISSIONS BY SOURCES AND REMOVALS BY SINKS OF GREENHOUSE GASES FOR THE PURPOSES OF SUBPARAGRAPH

(B) ABOVE SHOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE BEST AVAILABLE SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE, INCLUDING OF THE EFFECTIVE CAPACITY OF SINKS AND

THE RESPECTIVE CONTRIBUTIONS OF SUCH GASES TO CLIMATE CHANGE. THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES SHALL CONSIDER AND AGREE 1

HIS INCLUDES POLICIES AND MEASURES ADOPTED BY REGIONAL ECONOMIC INTEGRATION ORGANIZATIONS. 13 ON METHODOLOGIES

OR THESE CALCULATIONS AT ITS FIRST SESSION AND REVIEW THEM REGULARLY THEREAFTER;

UNFCCC 4.2 (D) THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES SHALL, AT ITS FIRST SESSION, CONSUSREVIEW THE ADEQUACY OF SUBPARAGRAPHS

(A) AND (B) ABOVE. SUCH REVIEW SHALL BE CARRIED OUT IN THE LIGHT OF THE BEST AVAILABLE SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION AND

ASSESSMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACTS, AS WELL AS RELEVANT TECHNICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INFORMATION.

BASED ON THIS REVIEW, THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES SHALL TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION, WHICH MAY INCLUDE THE ADOPTION

OF AMENDMENTS TO THE COMMITMENTS IN SUBPARAGRAPHS (A) AND (B) ABOVE. THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES, AT ITS

IRST SESSION, SHALL ALSO TAKE DECISIONS REGARDING CRITERIA

FOR JOINT IMPLEMENTATION AS INDICATED IN

SUBPARAGRAPH (A) ABOVE. A SECOND REVIEW OF SUBPARAGRAPHS (A) AND (B) SHALL TAKE PLACE NOT LATER THAN 31

DECEMBER 1998, AND THEREAFTER AT REGULAR INTERVALS DETERMINED BY THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES, UNTIL

THE OBJECTIVE OF THE CONVENTION IS MET;

UNFCCC 4.2 (E) EACH OF THESE PARTIES SHALL : (I) COORDINATE AS APPROPRIATE WITH OTHER SUCH PARTIES, RELEVANT

ECONOMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUMENTS DEVELOPED TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE OF THE CONVENTION; AND

(II) IDENTIFY AND PERIODICALLY REVIEW ITS OWN POLICIES AND PRACTICES WHICH ENCOURAGE ACTIVITIES THAT LEAD TO

GREATER LEVELS OF ANTHROPOGENIC EMISSIONS OF GREENHOUSE GASES NOT CONTROLLED BY THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL

THAN WOULD OTHERWISE OCCUR;

UNFCCC 4.2(F) THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES SHALL REVIEW, NOT LATER THAN 31 DECEMBER 1998, AVAILABLE INFORMATION

WITH A VIEW TO TAKING DECISIONS REGARDING SUCH AMENDMENTS TO THE LISTS IN ANNEXES I AND II AS MAY BE APPROPRIATE,

WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE PARTY CONCERNED;

UNFCCC 4.2 (G) ANY PARTY NOT INCLUDED IN ANNEX I MAY, IN ITS INSTRUMENT OF RATIFICATION, ACCEPTANCE, APPROVAL OR ACCESSION,

OR AT ANY TIME THEREAFTER, NOTIFY THE DEPOSITARY THAT IT INTENDS TO BE BOUND BY SUBPARAGRAPHS (A) AND (B) ABOVE.

THE DEPOSITARY SHALL INFORM THE OTHER SIGNATORIES AND PARTIES OF ANY SUCH NOTIFICATION.

UNFCCC 4.3. THE DEVELOPED COUNTRY PARTIES AND OTHER DEVELOPED PARTIES INCLUDED IN ANNEX II SHALL PROVIDE NEW AND

ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO MEET THE AGREED FULL COSTS INCURRED BY 14 DEVELOPING COUNTRY PARTIES IN COMPLYING

WITH THEIR OBLIGATIONS UNDER ARTICLE 12, PARAGRAPH 1. THEY SHALL ALSO PROVIDE SUCH FINANCIAL RESOURCES, INCLUDING

FOR THE TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY, NEEDED BY THE DEVELOPING COUNTRY PARTIES TO MEET THE AGREED FULL INCREMENTAL

COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING MEASURES THAT ARE COVERED BY PARAGRAPH 1 OF THIS ARTICLE AND THAT ARE AGREED

BETWEEN A DEVELOPING COUNTRY PARTY AND THE INTERNATIONAL ENTITY OR ENTITIES REFERRED TO IN ARTICLE 11,

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THAT ARTICLE. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE COMMITMENTS SHALL TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE NEED

FOR ADEQUACY AND PREDICTABILITY IN THE FLOW OF FUNDS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF APPROPRIATE BURDEN SHARING AMONG THE DEVELOPED COUNTRY PARTIES.

UNFCCC 4.4. THE DEVELOPED COUNTRY PARTIES AND OTHER DEVELOPED PARTIES INCLUDED IN ANNEX II SHALL ALSO ASSIST THE

DEVELOPING COUNTRY PARTIES THAT ARE PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TO THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN MEETING

COSTS OF ADAPTATION TO THOSE ADVERSE EFFECTS.

FIFTH SYSTEMIC CONSTRAINT

A SOLUTION SHOULD NEVER BE EQUALLY BAD OR WORSE THAN THE PROBLEM IT IS INTENDED TO SOLVE

Some proposed solutions are false solutions. Such as nuclear (<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alan-robock/nuclear-energy-is-not-a->

solution_b_5305594.html)

Such as geoengineering

(<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/geoengineering-is-not-a-solution-to-climate-change/>)

BIOFUEL (<https://www.euractiv.com/section/agriculture-food/opinion/land-grabbing-still-a-huge-problem-in-eastern-europe/>)

<http://www.stopafricalandgrab.com/>

SIXTH SYSTEMIC CONSTRAINT

SOME STATES ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHER

ALL THREE COPS DISCOUNTED THE EVIDENCE OF THE SCIENTISTS AND IGNORED THE PLEAS OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

IN COP15, THE DEVELOPED STATES' NEGOTIATORS WERE RELYING ON THE 2007 INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE REPORT

WITH DATA FROM 2004 AND 2005, BUT THE DEVELOPING STATES WERE DRIVEN BY NEW AND EVOLVING SCIENTIFIC DATA. SCIENTIFIC

REPORTS AT COP 15 REVEALED NEW DATA;

THE WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANISATION REPORTED MORE RAPID GLOBAL WARMING, MORE DROUGHT, AND MORE FREQUENT

AND SEVERE CLIMATE RELATED INCIDENTS, AND THAT GLACIERS ARE MELTING FASTER THAN PREDICTED IN 2007 IPCC REPORT.

THE UN HIGH COMMISSION ON REFUGEES NOTED THAT THE WORLD ALREADY HAD MILLIONS MORE REFUGEES THAN EXPECTED,

BECAUSE OF CLIMATE CHANGE.

AT AN IPCC PRESS CONFERENCE A SCIENTIST FROM THE IPCC WARNED THAT AT A 2 DEGREE RISE IN TEMPERATURE,

THE POOR, THE VULNERABLE, AND THE DISENFRANCHISED WOULD NOT SURVIVE, AT A 1.5 DEGREE RISE, THEY MIGHT

in COP22. there must be compensation for historical emissions which have impacted vulnerable states, to avoid all false solutions such

as nuclear, geo-engineering and biofuels which would all violate principles within the UNFCCC,

SEVENTH SYSTEMIC CONSTRAINT

THE LOWEST COMMON DENOMINATOR THE TYRANNY OF CONSENSUS

A GLOBAL VISION WOULD HAVE BEEN THE STRIVING FOR CONSENSUS WITH A FALLBACK of 75 % ESPECIALLY WITHIN EACH ARTICLE

AT COP21 UNTIL THE LAST VERSIONS ARTICLE 22; ALLOWED FOR FALLBACK

ARTICLE 22 (VOTING)

1. EACH PARTY SHALL HAVE ONE VOTE,

3. WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO THE PROVISIONS OF PARAGRAPH 3 OF ARTICLE 15 OF THE CONVENTION, THE PARTIES

HALL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO REACH AGREEMENT ON ALL MATTERS BY CONSENSUS. IF SUCH EFFORTS TO REACH CONSENSUS

AVE BEEN EXHAUSTED AND NO AGREEMENT HAS BEEN REACHED, A DECISION SHALL, AS A LAST RESORT, BE ADOPTED BY

A THREE-FOURTHS MAJORITY VOTE OF THE PARTIES PRESENT AND VOTING.

4. FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS ARTICLE, 'PARTIES PRESENT AND VOTING' MEANS PARTIES PRESENT AND CASTING AN AFFIRMATIVE

OR NEGATIVE VOTE.

IN A PRESS CONFERENCE OF THE UNFCCC SECRETARIAT I SUGGESTED THAT TO AVOID DESCENDING TO THE LOWEST COMMON DENOMINATOR.

|PERHAPS PRINCIPLE 22 COULD APPLY TO EACH ARTICLE. IF THERE WERE A FALLBACK TO 75% IN ARTICLE 2 OVER 80 PERCENT OF

THE STATES WOULD HAVE AGREED TO KEEP THE TEMPERATURE BELOW 1.5 AND TO HAVE LEGALLY BINDING MITIGATION COMMITMENTS

FOR THE MAJOR GREENHOUSE GAS EMITTERS.

EIGHTH SYSTEMIC CONSTRAINT THE FAILURE TO REVERSE THE EXEMPTION FOR THE CONTRIBUTION TO GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS TO END THE EXEMPTION OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF MILITARISM TO GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

It appears that the United States insisted on the inclusion of this exemption at the time of the Kyoto Protocol

http://www.earthisland.org/journal/index.php/elist/eListRead/the_pentagons_hidden_impact_on_climate_change/

MILITARISM: THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM. 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.

CURRENT ESTIMATION OF GLOBAL MILITARY BUDGETS

At COP16,"According to Dr. Joan Russow, of Global Compliance Research Project, "The US military operates in the shadows of climate

negotiations, having demanded that their emissions be exempted from scrutiny or regulation. This absolutely cannot continue: the climate

crisis has reached the point where all of life – now and for future generations – is threatened. We cannot just ignore the largest polluter on earth,

fight more wars over access to oil, and continue to feed this vicious cycle!"

Ironically, even the Pentagon recognizes that climate change is a "threat multiplier", that will result in mass migrations, and far more wars

and conflicts, threatening US "national security". But their response is more of the

same: build up fortress America, and run the military on

liquefied coal and biofuels to reduce reliance on foreign oil. Their total disregard for human rights around the world is apparently from

a 2003 Pentagon report, which calculated dispassionately: "Deaths from war as well as starvation and disease will decrease population size,

which overtime, will re-balance with carrying capacity."

(http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9919:militarisms-contribution-to-greenhouse-gas-emissions&catid=86:i-earth-news&Itemid=210)

At Cop 21, Ban ki-Moon urged states to negotiate with a "global vision" not with national vested interests. (A paraphrase of his statement at a COP21 press conference)

There is an unclear relationship between the UNFCCC and what came out of Paris. Unless the voluntary contributions become revised and

firm commitments, made to address the global carbon budget and to keep well below 1.5 degrees, the Paris Agreement will undermine

Article 2 of the UNFCCC, (stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous

anthropogenic with the climate system)

A global vision to implement article 2 would be, at a minimum, to immediately end all subsidies for fossil fuel, (no tar sands, no pipelines

and no tankers) to divest in fossil fuels, and reinvest in socially equitable and environmentally sound renewable energy, to not use "transition"

to justify reinvestment in the continuation of the fossil fuel industry, to calculate the carbon budget for each province,

o enforce fair share of the carbon budget,

To commit to 25% reduction of GHGs emissions below 1990 levels by 2020, 35% below 1990 by 2025, 50% below 1990 by 2030, 60 %

below 1990 by 2035. 75% below 1990 by 2040 to 100 % below 1990 by 2050 to decarbonisation by 2050, and 100% socially equitable and

environmentally sound renewables.

To compensate for historical emissions which have impacted vulnerable states, to avoid all false solutions such as nuclear, geo-engineering and

biofuels which would all violate principles within the UNFCCC,

Legal Remedy

Once there is a legally binding agreement, then the delinquent states should be taken to the International Court of Justice for failing to discharge the

obligations under the UNFCCC.

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

other legal obligations 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.icjciij.org/presscom/index.php?pr=106&p1;=6&p2;=1&search;=%22%22CompositionoftheChamberforEnvironmentalMatters>).

There should be a campaign to have all states respect the jurisdiction and decisions of the International Court of Justice.

NINTH SYSTEMIC CONSTRAINT:

RELUCTANCE TO USE THE INTERNATIONAL COURT AGAINST THE MAJOR EMMITTERS FOR THEIR VIOLATIONS OF ARTICLE 2 OF THE

UNFCCC

Legal Remedy Once there is a legally binding agreement, then the delinquent states should be taken to the International Court of Justice for failing to discharge

the obligations under the UNFCCC.

In addition, major greenhouse gas-producing states must be forced to implement the actions that would discharge the obligations incurred when

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been most damaged by the failure, of the major greenhouse gas emitting states, to discharge obligations under the Convention. 7

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.icjciij.org/presscom/index.php?pr=106&p1;=6&p2;=1&search;=%22%22Compositionof the Chamber for Environmental Matters>)

TENTH SYSTEMIC CONSTRAINT.IGNORING COMMITMENT FOR FUNDING SOURCE

Forty years ago in 1976, all member states 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)

and At UNCED , all states made the commitment;

to implement the following 1992 commitment ”to reallocate resources at present committed to military purposes (Article 16e,Chapter 33, Agenda 21, UNCED).

The funds should be transferred to implementing the above To institute fair and just transition for workers and communities affected by the above.

In conclusion. If these systemic constraints are avoided, hopefully, COP24 will finally address the urgency of climate change

and there will be a legally binding agreement supported in each article by at least 75% vote, Then the states which have

agreed to the strong legally binding document to implement the UNFCCC could take the rogue states to the international

Court of Justice for violating Article2 of the UNFCCC

From the 2010 Cochamba Conference - Speach 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

Last Updated on Sunday, 29 April 2018 06:55

MAY 2018

59 readings

[Central Americans Demand to be Consulted About Mining Projects](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 04 May 2018 10:34

By [Edgardo Aya](#)



Residents of the municipality of San Rafael Las Flores maintain a permanent sit-down in front of the Constitutional Court, in the centre of Guatemala's capital, to demand that the country's highest court rule on the demand for a suspension of the San Rafael mining company's permit to operate a mine in that municipality. Credit: Edgardo Ayala / IPS

GUATEMALA CITY, May 4 2018 (IPS) - Rosa Dávila is busy cooking ears of corn, to be eaten by the men and women who have set up a checkpoint on the side of the road to block the passage of supplies sent to a mining

company that operates in the area.

The San Rafael mining company, a subsidiary of the Canadian company Tahoe Resources, is located on the outskirts of San Rafael Las Flores, a town 96 km southeast of Guatemala City, in the department of Santa Rosa.

The roadblock has been mounted by the inhabitants of Casillas, a neighbouring rural municipality, located a few kilometres down the road, and which cannot be avoided on the way to the mine. Other transit points have also been blocked by the “resistance”, as the anti-mining protesters refer to themselves.

“The first thing we want, for God’s sake, is for them to go back to their country,” said Dávila, a 48-year-old homemaker and mother of seven, as she stoked the fire.

The residents of this and other neighbouring municipalities are firmly opposed to the company’s mining operations, due to the social and environmental damage they say has been caused since they began in 2007.

Conflicts like this have broken out in other areas of Guatemala and in other Central American countries, not only with mining companies but also with hydroelectric power companies.

“It’s not fair, and the worst thing is that they never asked us if we wanted these companies to come here,” Dávila told IPS while moving about in the kitchen set up in an improvised camp, which IPS visited on Apr. 29.

The lack of prior consultations with the communities where such projects are installed is a recurrent problem in the countries of Central America, whose governments fail to comply with international regulations that call for prior consultation over whether or not the population approves of these investments.

In late April, environmental organisations held in the Guatemalan capital the Second Regional Meeting of the Central American Alliance against Mining, which concluded with the requirement that the governments of the region comply with international and regional obligations to guarantee the right to free, prior and informed consultation.

“We call upon Central American governments to reflect on the viability of what they call development, when we know that the extractive industry is a model of destruction and death for our countries,” explained Julio González, of the Guatemalan environmental organisation MadreSelva, at the end of the meeting, on Apr. 27.

That organisation and the other participants in the meeting have joined forces in the regional Alliance against mining, in order to constitute a block with more power in the face of the activities of the extractive industries in Central America.



In the municipality of Casillas, in the department of Santa Rosa, in Guatemala, local inhabitants erected a roadblock on the road that leads to the San Rafael Las Flores mine, blocking the passage of trucks carrying supplies to the site. In the picture, Rosa Dávila (centre) peels ears of corn in the activists' improvised camp. Credit: Edgardo Ayala / IPS

One of the rules under which the organisation operates is [ILO Convention 169](#) on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, in force since September 1991, which has been ratified by 22 countries, including all countries in Central America except El Salvador and Panama.

Article 6 of the Convention establishes that governments shall “consult the peoples concerned, through appropriate procedures (...) whenever consideration is being given to legislative or administrative measures which may affect them directly,” such as when a national or municipal state institution grants a concession to international consortiums.

But that is basically dead letter in the Central American countries that have ratified it, said activists consulted by IPS during the meeting.

The governments have not promoted consultations, because they believe that important development projects would be halted, so it is the affected communities that have carried out their own consultations, they added.

In Guatemala, where 63 percent of the population is indigenous, around 90 such consultations have been held, by show of hands.

Related IPS Articles

- [El Salvador Passes Pathbreaking Law Banning Metal Mining](#)

- [Another Town in El Salvador Votes No to Mining](#)

“Before the hydroelectric companies were to arrive, we began to carry out consultations, and we asked whether these businesses have the right to take our rivers, and the vast majority said no,” 69-year-old Mayan Indian Cirilo Acabal Osorio told IPS.

So far they have managed to stop attempts by companies to install projects in the eight communities putting up resistance in that region, which are predominantly Mayan, said the native of Zona Reina, municipality of Usulután, in the department of Quiché in northwestern Guatemala.

In Honduras more than 40 open town meetings have been held in which the population of different localities has rejected similar projects, said Pedro Landa, of the [Reflection, Research and Communication Team](#) (ERIC), attached to the Jesuits.

“But the State continues to ignore the will of the people,” he said.

Environmentalists said local governments in the area consider the consultation processes to be non-binding, and as a result do not take them into account.

Before the Salvadoran legislature approved, in March 2017, a historic law prohibiting metal mining in all its forms, civil society organisations carried out popular consultations in at least four municipalities, under the Municipal Code.

For now there is no need for further consultations, as the law banned mining company investments. But the spectre of mining is still present after the right-wing parties, its natural allies, obtained an overwhelming majority in the Legislative Assembly in the Mar. 4 elections, warned Rodolfo Calles, of the Association for the Development of El Salvador (CRIPDES).

Convention 169 refers only to indigenous peoples, although the experts said in the meeting that national laws that serve the same purpose can be applied: people affected by any industrial activity must be informed and consulted beforehand.

“In the case of countries that do not have indigenous communities, they will use other mechanisms that they undoubtedly have, such as referendums,” Sonia Gutiérrez, an expert with the [Association of Mayan Lawyers and Notaries of Guatemala](#), told IPS.

The extractive industry has no economic weight in the region, despite its impacts on the environment and on production in the communities where it operates, Nicaraguan activist Olman Onel told IPS. He pointed out that in his country, for example, it only contributes one percent of GDP and 0.66 percent of employment.

On the other hand, the participants in the forum denounced the police and judicial persecution suffered by environmentalists in the whole region, as a

mechanism to silence opposition to such projects.

Landa, of ERIC, said that in Honduras, where more than 800 extractive projects and 143 hydroelectric projects have been approved in recent years, at least 127 environmentalists have been killed, including Berta Cáceres.

She was riddled by bullets on Mar. 3, 2016, for her fierce opposition to the construction of the Agua Zarca hydroelectric dam, located between the departments of Santa Bárbara and Intibucá, in the northwest of the country.

Meanwhile, in San Rafael Las Flores, local inhabitants have organised to defend their land and their livelihood, agriculture, although the damage caused by the extractive activity is already evident, they said.

Rudy Pivaral, a 62-year-old farmer, told IPS that the impacts on the flora and fauna are already being felt, and there is a decrease and drying up of water sources, which makes it impossible to continue producing two or three harvests a year, in addition to the health problems associated with water pollution.

Around 96 families in the village of La Cuchilla, on a hill next to the site, had to be evicted because of damage to the walls of the houses, due to the vibrations produced by the drilling in the ground.

Last Updated on Friday, 04 May 2018 10:53

138 readings

[Common Security: Through Implementing Precedents Underlying the SDGs](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 05 May 2018 18:28

OBLIGATIONS AND COMMITMENTS UNDERLYING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

In the following, the SDGs are placed in the context of years of international obligation derived from a selection of Conventions, treaties, and Covenants and of commitments from UNGA Conference Action Plans, Declarations and Resolutions.

SDG Goal 1; End Poverty in all its Form Everywhere ; Sixty Seven Years of Procrastination

http://www.pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10365:sdg-goal-1-end-poverty-in-all-its-forms-everywhere-sixty-seven-years-of-unfulfilled-commitments&catid=74:ijustice-news&Itemid=216

SDG Goal 2 End Hunger Achieve Food Security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture

http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10344:sdg-goal-2-end-hunger-achieve-food-security-and-improved-nutrition-and-promote-sustainable-agriculture&catid=86:i-earth-news&Itemid=210

SDG Goal 3: A Review of Social and SOCIAL AND Environmental Determinants of Health

http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10372:-sdg-goal-3-a-review-of-social-and-environmental-determinants-of-health&catid=86:i-earth-news&Itemid=210

SDG Goal 4: Ensure Inclusive Equitable Quality Education and Promote Life-Long Learning Opportunities For all. And Educating for SDGS

http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10380:goal-4-ensure-inclusive-and-equitable-quality-education-and-promote-life-long-learning-opportunities-for-all&catid=74:ijustice-news&Itemid=216

SDG Goal 5:Time to implement the Beijing Platform of Action

http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10346:-sdg-goal-5-to-implement-the-the-beijing-platform-of-action&catid=74:ijustice-news&Itemid=216

SDG Goal 6: Must include the human right to safe water and sanitation

http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10374:sdg-goal-6must-include-the-human-right-to-safe-water-and-sanitation&catid=86:i-earth-news&Itemid=210

SDG Goal 7; Access to Affordable Socially Equitable Environmentally Sound EnergySDG Goal 7; Access to Affordable Socially Equitable Environmentally Sound Energy

http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10383:sdg-goal-7-access-to-reliable-affordable-socially-equitable-environmentally-sound-energy&catid=74:ijustice-news&Itemid=216SDG ...

SDG 8: Socially equitable and environmental sound employment and fair and just transition principle

http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10381:sdg-8-socially-equitable-and-environmental-sound-employment-and-fair-and-just-transition-principle&catid=74:ijustice-

[news&Itemid=216](#)

SDG GOAL 9 Infrastructure transportation - moving away from car dependency

http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10379:sdg-goal-9-infrastructure-transportation-moving-away-from-car-dependency&catid=86:i-earth-news&Itemid=210

SDG GOAL 10 Reduce inequality within and among countries (a goal within the context of previous obligations and commitments)

http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10405:sdg-goal-10-reduce-inequality-within-and-among-countries-a-goal-within-the-context-of-previous-obligations-and-commitments&catid=74:i-justice-news&Itemid=216

SDG Goal 11 Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe resilient and sustainable.

http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10411:sdg-goal-11-a-comment-making-cities-amn-human-settlements-inclusive-safe-resilient-and-sustainable&catid=74:i-justice-news&Itemid=216

SDG Goal 12: Moving away from the Unsustainable Patterns of Consumption and Production to socially equitable and ecologically sound development

http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10397:

SDG Goal 13 Climate Change; urgent means urgent

http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10336:sdg-goal-13-climate-change-urgent-means-urgent&catid=91:vl-earth-news&Itemid=214

SDG Goal 14: Oceans- Time to Heed Warnings, discharge obligations and act on commitments

http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10369:-sdg-goal-14-oceans-time-to-heed-warnings-discharge-obligations-and-act-on-commitments&catid=74:justice-news&Itemid=216

SDG GOAL 15: THE IMPERATIVE TO END LOGGING IN THE OLD GROWTH FORESTS, BAN GE FORESTS AND COMBAT DESERTIFICATION

http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10359:sdg15-the-imperative-to-end-logging-in-the-old-growth-forests&catid=86:i-earth-news&Itemid=210

SDG Goal 16 : Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable ...militarism must also be addressed

http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10335:comment-on-sdg-goal-16-militarism-must-be-addressed-&catid=74:justice-news&Itemid=216

SDG Goal 17: Strengthening Means of Implementation through Complying with International Peremptory Norms

http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10402:sdg-goal-17-strengthening-means-of-implementation-through-complying-with-international-peremptory-norms-&catid=74:justice-news&Itemid=216

Last Updated on Tuesday, 08 May 2018 06:08

413 readings

[The United States' Hand in Undermining Democracy in Venezuela](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 17 May 2018 12:29

The United States' Hand in Undermining Democracy in Venezuela

NACLA, May 17, 2018

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/1636f5f161ae9f00> [See article on original site](#)

It used to be generally frowned upon to openly call for military coups and U.S. intervention in Latin America. Not anymore. At least not when it comes to Venezuela, a country where—according to the prevailing narrative—a [brutal dictator](#) is starving the population and quashing all opposition.

Last August, President Trump casually mentioned a “[military option](#)” for Venezuela from his golf course in New Jersey, provoking an uproar in Latin America but barely a peep in Washington. Similarly, Rex Tillerson, then-Secretary of State, [spoke favorably](#) about a possible military ouster of Venezuelan president Nicolás Maduro.

In recent months, opinion pieces suggesting that a coup or a foreign military intervention in Venezuela might be a good thing have dotted the U.S. media landscape: from the [Washington Post](#) to [Project Syndicate](#) to [The New York Times](#). Occasionally a pundit argues that a coup d'état could have undesirable consequences, for instance if a hypothetical coup regime should decide to [deepen relations with Russia or China](#).

Rarely does anyone point out that this is an insane debate to be having in the first place, particularly regarding a country, where elections occur frequently and are, with few exceptions, considered to be competitive and transparent. On Sunday, May 20th, Maduro will be up for reelection. Polls suggest that, if turnout is high, he could be voted out of office.

The fact that coups, not elections, are the hot topic is a sad reflection of the warped direction that the mainstream discussion on Venezuela has taken. For many years now, much of the analysis and reporting on the oil-rich but economically-floundering nation have offered a black-and-white, sensationalized depiction of a complex and nuanced internal situation. In addition, there has been little serious discussion of the Trump administration's policies toward Venezuela even as they wreak further damage to the country's economy, worsen shortages of life-saving medicines and food, and undermine peace and democracy.

Hardening Sides

Lest we forget, Maduro—often described by U.S. politicians and pundits as a dictator—was democratically elected in snap elections carried out a month after the death of his predecessor, Hugo Chávez, in early 2013. As a presidential term lasts six years in Venezuela, his current constitutional mandate will end in early 2019.

From the get-go, some sectors of the Venezuelan opposition rejected Maduro's legitimacy and called for his immediate departure from office. In 2014 and again in

2017, they endorsed protest movements explicitly aimed at generating major disruptions in key urban areas to try to force the removal of the government, for example through overwhelming popular pressure or via internal or external military intervention.

Though many of these protests were peaceful, others became violent and resulted in dozens of fatalities, some attributable to state security forces and others attributable to members of the protest movement, [according to credible reports and documentary evidence](#). Hundreds of protesters were detained, and a few opposition figures, including former Chacao mayor Leopoldo López, were sentenced to jail for allegedly inciting violence. López is currently under house arrest after serving three years in prison.

Opposition supporters believe that the due process rights of López and others involved with the protests were violated, and there certainly are grounds for this argument. Meanwhile, some government supporters believe that these individuals deserved harsher penalties for having attempted to usurp the popular will through destabilization and violence, in a manner reminiscent of the lead-up to the short-lived 2002 military coup against Chávez that [López and other opposition leaders](#) were involved in.

In late 2015, Venezuela's opposition won a large majority of seats in National Assembly elections. But the country's executive and legislative branches were soon at loggerheads over alleged cases of electoral fraud that led Venezuela's Supreme Court, a body that is widely seen as loyal to the government, to disqualify three opposition legislators. The removal of these legislators meant the loss of the opposition alliance's two-thirds supermajority that gave it broad powers to intervene at the executive level.

The opposition cried foul and refused to abide by the court decision. In response, the court refused to recognize the legitimacy of the parliament. Venezuela's institutions ceased to interact according to the constitutional playbook and each side adopted [increasingly radical tactics](#) to try to gain the upper hand.

Opposition leaders supported a new series of protests that grew increasingly combative and violent, paralyzing key thoroughfares in Caracas and other cities for days at a time. Groups of protesters clashed frequently with security forces and dozens of people were killed, including protesters, state security agents, and bystanders.

The Maduro government responded to the growing chaos in the streets by convening elections for a National Constituent Assembly that would draft a new constitution and, [according to Maduro](#), bring "order, justice, peace" to Venezuela.

The opposition, denouncing the initiative as a ploy designed to displace the National Assembly, boycotted the elections. Unsurprisingly, the new body is almost entirely pro-government and the U.S. and allied governments have refused to recognize it. Following the Constituent Assembly elections, the protest movement floundered and the opposition grew more divided, with hardliners calling for further boycotts of

the subsequent regional and municipal elections. As a result of this and other factors, opposition voters failed to mobilize and the government won a majority of votes in both electoral contests in late 2017.

The Economy

The backdrop to Venezuela's prolonged political crisis has of course been the country's ever-worsening economic quagmire. Though plunging oil prices have certainly played a role, Maduro undoubtedly bears part of the responsibility for the deep depression and hyperinflation that has prompted hundreds of thousands of his countrymen to emigrate and caused his poll numbers to plummet.

While many ideologues blame "socialism" for the country's economic ills, most economists point to a set of policy errors that [have little or nothing to do with socialism](#). Most devastating has been the dysfunctional exchange rate system, which has led to a worsening "inflation-depreciation" spiral over the past four years, and now hyperinflation. Free gasoline and price controls that didn't work also contributed to the crisis. The Trump administration's financial sanctions—more than all previous destabilization efforts, which were significant—have made it nearly impossible for the government to get out of the mess without outside help.

As if this profoundly distressing situation weren't enough, media outlets have frequently published exaggerated accounts of the conditions in Venezuela, depicting widespread starvation, for instance. To be sure, soaring food prices have contributed to increased undernourishment throughout the country, but this is a far cry from [a large scale famine](#).

More importantly, there has been scant US media reporting on the further economic damage provoked by the Trump administration's financial sanctions, announced in late August last year (shortly after Trump's statement about a "military option" for Venezuela).

As my colleague [Mark Weisbrot has explained](#), Trump's unilateral and illegal financial embargo – which cuts Venezuela off from most financial markets – has had two major consequences, both of which entail increased economic hardship for the Venezuelan people. First, it causes even greater shortages of essential goods, including food and medicine. Second, it makes economic recovery nearly impossible, since the government cannot borrow or restructure its foreign debt, and in some cases even carry out normal import transactions, including for medicines.

Aside from fomenting greater economic havoc in Venezuela, Trump and his coterie of advisors on Venezuela, including Republican Senator Marco Rubio, have supported opposition hardliners in their efforts to scuttle attempts at dialogue and undermine elections, even when these offer the possibility of a peaceful political transition.

Case in point: this Sunday's presidential elections. Opposition leader Henri Falcón— a former governor and campaign manager of the opposition's 2013 presidential candidate, Henrique Capriles—is running as an independent candidate

against Maduro and three other candidates. Several major opposition parties are boycotting the election because, among other reasons, they object to the early date of the elections, which they say leaves them insufficient time to organize a strong campaign—the electoral authority did, however, agree to a one-month delay from the initial date. Two opposition parties, First Justice and Popular Will, were also unable to register candidates because they allegedly didn't meet the formal requirements to do so.

However, voter surveys carried out by Datanalisis, Venezuela's most frequently cited pollster, indicate that [Falcón would win](#) if there's a high turnout. Before confirming his candidacy, Falcón secured strong guarantees from the country's electoral authority, ensuring transparency, voter accessibility and vote secrecy, as in all contested prior elections since Chávez took office in 1999.

But the Trump administration, after [unsuccessfully threatening Falcón](#) with individual financial sanctions if he didn't give up his candidacy, has supported the election boycott by more hardline opposition sectors that see Falcón, who was a Chávez ally until 2010, as too willing to compromise with chavistas if elected. The U.S. administration has even threatened sanctions [targeting Venezuelan oil](#) if the elections are held. Sources indicate that when both Falcón and the Venezuelan government requested that the UN send an international observation team to monitor the elections, US officials intervened to ensure that no such monitoring effort would take place.

With the U.S. government and Venezuela's opposition doing their best to empower hard-liners' call for a boycott, there is a high probability that turnout from the opposition camp will be low and that Maduro will win the election by a strong margin. We can expect the administration to immediately denounce a "fraudulent" and "illegitimate" process and take further actions that will make life even more difficult for ordinary Venezuelans.

Regime Change in Venezuela: An Ongoing U.S. Policy

It's worth noting that Trump's Venezuela policy is mostly a continuation of President Obama's policy toward Venezuela, although the financial embargo and calls for a military coup are particularly outrageous and disdainful of international law and the norms of civilized nations. The Trump sanctions build on an Obama sanctions regime identifying Venezuela as an "[extraordinary threat to national security](#)." Around the time that Obama initiated a process of normalizing relations with Cuba, he began targeting assets of various senior officials and individuals associated with the Maduro government.

Under Obama, the U.S. government [continued Bush-era funding to opposition political organizations](#) in Venezuela and lobbied regional governments, again and again, to censure Venezuela in multilateral organizations, like the Organization of American States (OAS). It also refused to accept a Venezuelan ambassador to Washington—while inviting one from Cuba—and joined hard-liner opposition members in [refusing to recognize](#) Maduro's electoral win in April 2013.

Essentially, the Obama administration—like the Bush administration, which was involved in the short-lived 2002 coup against Hugo Chávez—had a policy of promoting “regime change” in Venezuela. That policy has taken a more aggressive, overt, and dangerous direction under Trump.

Sadly, there has been virtually no criticism of U.S. government efforts to topple the Venezuelan government anywhere in the major media. In the U.S. Congress, where a large number of legislators now oppose the embargo against Cuba, for instance, there is little outcry, with the important exception of a [small group of progressive Democrats](#) who have opposed sanctions against Venezuela, under both Obama and Trump. The majority of the political and media establishment appears to believe that Trump has the right policy agenda for Venezuela, with many liberals pointing to cases of corruption, human rights violations and other crimes allegedly involving Venezuelan officials as justification for harsh measures.

Yet none of these critics are calling for broad economic sanctions against Latin American countries with far more violent and repressive records. Against Honduras, for instance, where the military was recently deployed to violently repress peaceful demonstrations following [fraudulent elections](#), which the U.S. government recognized. Or against [Colombia](#) and [Mexico](#), where, over the last few months, dozens of political candidates and social leaders have been killed with impunity.

Venezuela is treated differently by the U.S., for obvious reasons: it has a government that seeks to be independent from Washington and it sits atop hundreds of billions of barrels of oil reserves, which—when the Venezuelan economy finally recovers— will enable the government to have far-reaching regional influence.

In fact, that is exactly what happened during the Chávez administration. Venezuela grew in popularity in Central America and the Caribbean thanks in great part to the government’s generous Petrocaribe initiative, which brought tangible economic benefits to many countries in the region. It was also influential in building regional institutions such as the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), which were much more independent of the U.S. than the Organization of American States, located in Washington, DC.

Regardless of how one feels about Venezuela’s current government, it is time to acknowledge that U.S. policy towards that country is making things worse. It is generating greater economic pain, instability and political polarization in Venezuela and undermining the odds of reaching a peaceful solution to the country’s political crisis.




Talk of coups and military intervention in Venezuela, or anywhere in Latin America, needs to return to its previous taboo status, particularly given the current U.S. leadership’s receptiveness to absurd ideas. Instead, it’s time for cooler heads from across the political spectrum to work together to change the direction of U.S. policy toward Venezuela. First, U.S. citizens who care about Venezuela must organize to force Trump to lift his financial embargo; then we must encourage efforts to build trust and dialogue across the political divide while marginalizing

hardliners who oppose any form of compromise.

Alexander Main is senior associate for international policy at the Center for Economic and Policy Research in Washington, DC.

Last Updated on Saturday, 26 May 2018 14:55

365 readings

[Blue Arab eyes A poem on Ahed Tamimi](#)   

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 18 May 2018 09:38

By Larry Hannant



517 Shares

500

In their line of work smiling is rare
Uzis and tear gas the more common fare.
But from ten years ago there's photos that show
Israeli goons smirking at the bravado
of a Palestinian girl, not even eight,
thrusting her fist in the face of their mate.
Ahed Tamimi, three feet of temerity,
a stripling they dismissed with hilarity.

Today their laughter is stilled and unheard.
A teenaged Ahed their malice has stirred
for raising her hand and delivering a smack
to a gun-wielding soldier leading a pack
that invaded her village, as often they had,
and cruelly shooting her cousin Mohammed.
A slap which though quiet rang out far and wide.
Now revenge is demanded to heal Zionist pride.

Rapacious settlers from before the Crusaders
have yearned to possess Palestine
but as others before them, these Zionist invaders
will shatter on those blue eyes sublime.

Her global esteem brings a torrent of lies

“What brand of Arab has blond hair and blue eyes?”

One Knesset demagogue calls it pure ruse –

the Tamimis are actors, just paid to confuse.

Arrest them all, specially her mother for filming it.

We’ll use Hollywood if propaganda’s seen fit,

to broadcast the tale that terrorism’s the frame

to distort the Palestinian people’s just claim.

Then a second esteemed legislator did curse

that his boot would put Ahed in hospital or worse.

“No one could stop me. I would kick in her face.”

His hatred for Arabs is so commonplace,

he voices what Zionists think but might shrink from,

howling that Palestinians are vile “dogs” and “scum.”

Oren Hazan could be seen as just cracked,

yet the Zionist state and its thugs have his back.

Rapacious settlers from before the Crusaders

have yearned to possess Palestine

but as others before them, these Zionist invaders

will shatter on those blue eyes sublime.

In the face of a brave Palestinian teen

what the Zionists plot is grimly obscene.

Jail without trial for sure in the near term.
But soldiers dismayed by her blue eyes firm
know that their prisons won't break Ahd.
So they'll fashion a plot to render her dead,
try to stifle the light and cast into the shade
those resolute eyes that remain unafraid.

Then will we look to our own precious girls
and not see their image in Ahd's blond curls?
For they are at heart like their sister Ahd
with one crucial difference, which must be said,
that they, if they live in a principled state,
can hope that justice will govern their fate,
while Ahd Tamimi courts jail and risks death
when she smacks a thug from the IDF.

Rapacious settlers from before the Crusaders
have yearned to possess Palestine
but as others before them, these Zionist invaders

will shatter on those blue eyes sublime.
Last Updated on Friday, 18 May 2018 13:28

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[Shut Trump's
Twitter Account](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Dragonslayer

Wednesday, 23 May 2018 19:17

Donald Trump has been blocking those who criticized him on Twitter. A Judge told him to unblock them because blocking them is infringing on their first amendment rights to free speech.

Does this mean that since he is refusing to do so that he is making Twitter complicit in infringing on first amendment rights?

Should Twitter block Trump's twitter account? Should the judge yank Twitter's business licence and criminally charge Twitter if it continues to allow Trump to use Twitter to break the law?

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Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 25 May 2018 06:31

By Karl Friedhoff Karl Friedhoff is a fellow in public opinion and Asia policy at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs.

<https://thebulletin.org/why-trumps-cancellation-north-korea-summit-may-undermine-us-south-korea-alliance11847>

24 MAY 2018



Exploiting divides between the United States and South Korea on North Korea policy is standard operating procedure for Pyongyang. The cancellation of the Trump-Kim summit helps to further that goal. But the most serious fault lines for the US-Korea alliance lie within the alliance itself. Donald Trump's treatment of South Korea is a throwback to a time when South Korea was poorer, weaker, and less influential. If it continues, it will lead South Koreans from across the political spectrum to question not just US bases in South Korea but the necessity of the alliance.

The South Korean public is generally distrusting of the North Korean regime. Kim Jong Un is the least favored leader in the region, averaging 0.77 on a 0-10 scale from August 2016 through November 2017. The next closest leader was Japan's Shinzo Abe with an average score of 1.8 over that same period. In 2014, fewer than 10 percent thought North Korea would ever abandon its nuclear programs.

These views also color policy preferences of the South Korean public. In a 2015 survey, nearly 70 percent opposed resuming economic aid to North Korea and a plurality at that time preferred South Korea to maintain a hardline stance in its policy

toward the North.

Despite this, the South Korean public also supported pursuing a summit with North Korea in 2015—eight in 10 said that a summit was necessary. On April 27, 2018 the third inter-Korean summit took place, and results from polling done in its wake show a sharp swing in favor of North Korea and Kim Jong Un.

In a poll conducted in early May, 69 percent reported some level of trust in North Korea's intention to denuclearize. In a separate poll, 58 percent said that they expected North Korea to stick to the key points of the Panmunjom Declaration. In that same survey, 65 percent said the summit improved their view of Kim Jong Un.

But that goodwill was likely short-lived. In mid-May North Korea returned to its habit of issuing threats. It first threatened to cancel the June 12 summit with Donald Trump and soon followed with the possibility of cutting off all communications with South Korea. In the short-term, this will ensure that South Korea and the United States continue to deal with a mutual challenge. But this will only paper over the deep fault lines that exist within the US-South Korea alliance exposed by the Trump administration.

Analyses of the US-Korea alliance often note that support for the alliance with the United States among the South Korean public is at or near historic highs. Support often approaches 95 percent. But a key point is overlooked—the operative word in the survey question is better translated as “necessary” rather than “support.” If the threat of North Korea, which is viewed as the primary reason for the alliance, is removed then attitudes on the necessity of the alliance will face significant downward pressure.

But a peace regime need not be reached for the South Korean public to begin to question relations with Washington. A United States that treats allies with disdain has already begun this process in Europe, and it will do the same in South Korea. North Korea's actions will then act as an accelerant or a braking mechanism.

The Trump administration has already undertaken three missteps in its relations with South Korea, and a fourth may be on its way. The first two—taken within the context of Trump's America First platform—have begun to create the perception in South Korea that the US-South Korea alliance is not one of partnership but one of coercion. The third convinced the South Korean public that the United States was ready and willing to sacrifice much of Seoul in a conflict. The fourth, if handled inappropriately, may cement that perception. Given recent history, there is every reason to expect that it will be handled inappropriately.

The first was the handling of a US missile defense battery (THAAD) deployed in South Korea. From its very deployment—rolled off of US aircraft literally under the cover of dark as the sitting president was facing massive public protests—the system rankled South Korea. China, unhappy with the system's placement, then targeted South Korea with unofficial sanctions, costing the South Korean economy an estimated \$7.5 billion in 2017.

To add insult to injury, Trump said the \$1 billion THAAD battery—tasked with defending US forces in Korea, not Korean population centers—should be paid for by Seoul. This was not part of the agreement for deployment. Then-National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster was forced to walk back Trump's statement.

The second was Trump's targeting of South Korea for a renegotiation of the bilateral free trade agreement (FTA) between the two countries—known as KORUS. As a candidate, President Trump singled out the KORUS FTA as a bad deal negotiated under previous administrations, making it ripe for renegotiation—or unilateral withdrawal—should he become president. Then, as president, he did indeed force a renegotiation of the deal.

Ultimately, that renegotiation saw the United States gain little. Moreover, the “negotiate or else” manner in which it was approached sent a demeaning message to a close US ally. In a November 2017 poll, 53 percent of South Koreans supported taking Trump up on the “or else” option and favored scrapping the trade agreement if the US demanded a renegotiation. The South Korean government, however, took a pragmatic approach and secured a deal that changed very little from the original.

The third was the Trump administration's drumbeat to war in late 2017. The president's calls for “fire and fury” broke harshly from American behavior of the past. Traditionally, North Korea was viewed as the actor injecting uncertainty into the region. But with President Trump's language, the United States became the biggest question mark. This was aided by statements like those from South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham, who said that if people died in a conflict with North Korea at least they would be dying “over there.” The possibility of conflict on the Korean Peninsula became very real, and it was perceived that it was US aggression that would bring about that conflict. Those in Seoul were being thrust directly into the line of fire by an ally.

On top of all of this, a negotiation on sharing military costs is now underway between the United States and South Korea. If handled inappropriately, it could touch on all the sensitivities of the South Korean public, and do longer-term damage to attitudes towards the US-South Korea alliance.

The Special Measures Agreement (SMA)—informally known as burden sharing—determines how much South Korea contributes to support US forces on its soil. Under the current deal, South Korea pays roughly \$850 million per year, 42 percent of the total cost. However, this total omits the cost of the land which is home to US forces in Seoul. Were it included, it would bring Korea's total contribution to nearly 80 percent based on an estimate produced by the Wall Street Journal.

But Mr. Trump is not satisfied. He previously stated that allies should pay 100 percent of the costs, and if allies are unwilling to do this then US forces should be removed. More recently, he reportedly asked the Pentagon to review options for drawing down troops in South Korea.

His typically maximalist approach carried over into the SMA negotiations. The United States introduced a new request to the negotiations—that South Korea help pay for the deployment of strategic forces in the region, including those currently based in Guam. According to the US position, these assets are part of the forces that help defend South Korea and therefore should be included in the SMA. The South Korean delegation strongly disagrees.

These types of negotiations have always been sensitive in South Korea. Part of that sensitivity is real and part of it is by design. South Korean government officials have long used the possibility of anti-American protests in Seoul as leverage in negotiations with the United States.

But given past statements, and more important, past actions of President Trump, there should be very real concern. SMA negotiations are held amidst great secrecy out of concern that it could seriously damage public perception of the United States in the country. It is unlikely that this round of negotiations will follow that same path. An ill-timed, poorly worded Twitter missive that demands South Korea pay up “or else”, will force the negotiations into the court of public opinion, derailing the carefully guarded process.

For South Koreans, this outcome will recall a time when the relationship was far more unequal than it is today. South Korea has made great strides in its contributions not only to the alliance, but to upholding the global order created by the United States. Seeing those contributions dismissed, many South Koreans will reevaluate the alliance with the United States. But this questioning will have two new features.

First, the reevaluation will come from a broad spectrum of the South Korean public. The political left has long wanted a return to greater South Korean autonomy. But moderate conservatives who have long supported the alliance and are in their 40s and 50s will

also begin to question its value. At the same time, far-right conservatives are already discussing how the US alliance has prevented South Korea from taking the steps necessary to defend itself. Given their support for South Korea obtaining its own nuclear arsenal, the implications are clear. The best such example came this week from a former South Korean national security adviser. That a known North Korea hawk is entertaining the idea of a partial US troop withdrawal should sound alarm bells in Washington.

The beginnings of this movement are hinted at in recent polling. In a poll conducted in mid-May, 44 percent of respondents wanted to continue the stationing of US troops at the current level. But a majority (52 percent) favored with a drawdown in troops with continued basing (25 percent) or a phased complete withdrawal of US forces (27 percent). The revelation that Trump unilaterally cancelled the summit with Kim without first notifying the South Korean government will only reinforce the growing bloc questioning the value of the alliance.

Second, this reevaluation will not come in the form of the flag-burning anti-Americanism last seen in 2002. That period in South Korean history has largely passed. Instead, it will be a relatively silent sea change. The South Korean public will decide it may be better off without an ally that coerces it into hefty payments for military protection, uses its security leverage to demand unilateral renegotiations of already-ratified agreements, and then stands in the way of finding peace on the Korean Peninsula. That type of relationship is one that may lead South Koreans to believe they will be better off not only with no US forces based in Korea but without the United States at all.

comment; Joan Russow

Kim Jong Un once said that his disagreement is not with South Korea, but with the United States. The severing of South Korea with the United States will facilitate the unification of the two Koreas. and the end to the provocative war games off the Korean Peninsula.

Last Updated on Friday, 25 May 2018 06:50

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Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 25 May 2018 12:30

OPINION & ANALYSIS

FULL STORY: THE ENERGY MIX @THEENERGYMIX

MAY 24, 2018

By PRIMARY AUTHOR PAUL MCKAY

<http://theenergymix.com/2018/05/24/exclusive-new-ship-fuel-rules-could-sink-tar-sands-oil-sands-expansion/>

The law of unintended consequences may soon cause serious collateral damage to Alberta's tar sands/oil sands ambitions, and the planned Trans Mountain and Keystone XL pipelines.

The United Nations International Maritime Organization (IMO) recently approved new, much stiffer fuel standards for the 50,000 ocean-going vessels which currently burn low-grade, high-sulphur oil. Known as Bunker C, it is cheap and dirty. An estimated four million barrels per day are burned in all manner of merchant ships, including oil tankers. The related greenhouse gas emissions roughly equal those from all sources in Germany.

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But the days of Bunker C are numbered. The fatal bullet will be sulphur-tipped. By 2020, the IMO has mandated that the commercial fleets it represents can only buy and burn ship engine oil with a sulphur content of 0.5%. That is a 700% reduction from the current average. It has been estimated that the 15 largest ocean vessels currently emit as much sulphur annually as all of the world's cars.

And as that massive shift unfolds, Alberta's tar sands/oil sands production will probably be in the crosshairs.

Fleet owners fought the new standard for years, and lobbied hard for the new IMO emission rule to be pushed to 2025 or beyond. (They are now doing the same with pending greenhouse gas emission rules

for ships). But they finally conceded defeat when studies proved enough global refineries which “crack” different grades of petroleum can meet the 2020 deadline by either blending in much more low-sulphur oil distillates to achieve the 0.5% standard, or producing much more low-sulphur diesel to replace the Bunker C.

The maritime fleet owners opposed the new IMO emission standard because it will drive up their fuel bills and, in their framing, impede world trade. But many profit-driven refineries around the globe which can supply ship engine fuel are delighted. The stiffer sulphur standard means they can earn much higher margins by blending in quality grades of sweet crude and refinery distillates, or selling low-sulphur diesel, compared to bottom-of-the-barrel Bunker C.

To chase those profits, and stay in the market for four million barrels of ship engine oil per day (with demand growing), many newer refineries are already reconfiguring some units to use much higher volumes of low-sulphur distillates for blending. And major new refineries are being built to produce low-sulphur diesel to replace Bunker C by early 2020. That means about 75% of current Bunker C production will disappear far sooner than thought possible even a year ago.

Alberta bitumen will likely be a big loser, because it contains on average some 11 times more sulphur than conventional crude, and results in a high ratio of low-grade Bunker C when refined. As of 2020, according to industry reports, U.S. refinery purchases of diluted bitumen for ship fuel will begin slowing to an eventual trickle, Europe will buy none because it has the wrong refinery profile, and Asian refiners will dedicate new refineries to produce low-sulphur diesel for ship fuel.

U.S. refiners have already predicted that future shipments of Alberta bitumen destined for the ship oil market will face even stiffer price penalties because it is more costly to strip out the extra sulphur, and the demand for Bunker C will soon plummet. As refiners are forced to pay more for low-sulphur, sweet crude feedstocks such as those from oil shale, offshore Gulf wells, or imports, they will demand steeper price discounts for bitumen purchases to preserve their profit margins.

Refiners have the hammer: they can choose from multiple crude suppliers based on price and quality, and squeeze those that are

most vulnerable or expendable.

A case in point is the U.S. refining giant Marathon Petroleum, which is on the verge on acquiring its competitor Andeavor for US\$23.3 billion to become America's largest oil conglomerate. Their combined refining capacity will be three million barrels per day.

Last year, Marathon sold off its Alberta tar sands/oil sands assets for \$2.5 billion, and took a related \$5-billion write-down on its balance sheet. On the same day, Royal Dutch Shell sold its tar sands/oil sands assets for a combined cash and share value of \$5.8 billion. Earlier, ExxonMobil took a write-down on tar sands/oil sands tracts said to hold 2.8 billion barrels. Other multinationals which have recently abandoned the tar sands/oil sands include the French conglomerate Total S.A., Houston-based ConocoPhillips, and Norway's state-owned oil company, Statoil.

Most, like Marathon, have since bought into oil plays and projects which feature low-sulphur, low-carbon, low cost per barrel deposits linked to existing pipeline and refinery systems, or ocean ventures such as those off the U.S. Gulf coast, Norway, or Newfoundland.

Once Marathon's takeover of Andeavor is completed, it will own the largest continental system of shale and sweet crude wells, pipelines, refineries, marine ports, and outlets for products such as gasoline, home heating oil, and jet fuel. It will configure refineries to process whatever products garner the highest margins. So will its major U.S. rivals Valero and ConocoPhillips.

Buying more bitumen will likely be last on their list.

Ditto for future bitumen shipments to America's largest refinery, the former Royal Dutch Shell complex in Texas. It is now fully owned by Motiva, a subsidiary of Aramco, the state oil company of Saudi Arabia. Last year Aramco bought out Shell so that it could lock in future volume shipments of low-sulphur Saudi crude to produce 600,000 barrels per day of high-grade oil products for the U.S. market or re-export.

A similar picture holds true in Asia. In a strategic move to protect its global oil market share, Saudi Arabia recently signed deals to co-own and help finance two new world-scale refineries in Malaysia and India.

It has invested \$7 billion in the Petronas RAPID oil refinery south of Kuala Lumpur, which is slated to open in 2019. In return, the Saudis will retain rights to supply at least half the unrefined crude (and possibly up to 70%) needed to produce 300,000 barrels of low-sulphur diesel and gasoline per day. It is poised to capture a large part of the Asian ship oil market, because nearby Singapore is a major tanker hub and ship fuel storage site.

Saudi Arabia has the world's largest high-quality oil reserves, and can ship from tidewater to tidewater port in oil tankers capable of holding two million barrels in a single cargo. It recently signed a \$44-billion deal to build a new refinery on India's west coast. It will be capable of refining 1.2 million barrels of low-sulphur diesel and gasoline per day, supplied by Saudi sweet crude and supertankers. Aramco has also bought into refineries in China, Japan, Indonesia, and South Korea.

There is no chance an Aframax oil tanker leaving Vancouver with a maximum load of 580,000 barrels of bitumen can compete on price with a supertanker coming from Saudi Arabia to the same Pacific port with two million barrels in a single cargo.

Nor can Alberta bitumen match the quality and price of low-sulphur crude delivered by Saudi supertankers to its new or planned Asian refineries. That means being totally shut out of 1.5 million barrels per day in potential new exports, just to Malaysia and India.

Prospects for Alberta bitumen sales to China are equally bleak, for multiple reasons.

First, sulphur-laden heavy oil will not be welcomed in the region where most of China's refineries operate, because air pollution levels there are already deadly. The notorious "teapot" refiners are already facing new orders from Beijing to import low-sulphur crudes and produce far cleaner fuels for ships, vehicles, and even tractors. Importing bitumen with sulphur content 11 times higher than conventional crude would sabotage that cleanup campaign—and potentially put "teapot" executives in prison.

In fact, China's refinery sector is now poised to become a leading Asian producer of low-sulphur fuels, and two new tidewater mega-refineries will hasten the closure of older, more polluting rivals

in that country.

Second, high-sulphur heavy crude has only the faintest future as an ocean vessel fuel once the 2020 IMO standards are enforced, and China has a vast fleet of commercial ships that will soon need to run on low-sulphur engine fuel. The high-sulphur content in bitumen can be stripped out, but only at an extra cost borne by the crude supplier as a discounted price or penalty. (Ocean cargo ships could also install sulphur scrubbers in their engine exhaust stacks to keep using Bunker C, but that's a hefty expense which might jeopardize future marine insurance contracts or vital seaworthiness permits.)

Third, contrary to popular belief, China is now a formidable exporter of oil and petroleum-based chemical products. A recent surge in new refinery and chemical plants has allowed it to convert cheap imported oil into value-added products such as diesel, gasoline, jet fuel, and chemicals which are then often sold outside China to garner the highest margins possible.

The country has moved swiftly and strategically to lock in long-term oil imports at low benchmarks, from countries such as Russia, Kazakhstan, Iran and Iraq, so that its strategic oil reserves are constantly full for refineries to draw upon. Playing hardball, China has recently curtailed oil imports from Saudi Arabia because cheaper options are available! Canadian bitumen is certainly not one of them.

Sometimes answers to very puzzling questions, particularly those involving politicians, can stay obscured by hiding in plain sight.

In the case of Alberta's expansive tar sands/oil sands ambitions, and the related Trans Mountain and Keystone XL pipelines, two glaring questions have been missing from all the debates, drama, and demonizations:

Exactly which Asian countries or refiners have signed long-term contracts to purchase more Alberta bitumen for decades to come? Exactly how much have they committed to pay per barrel delivered? A thorough scouring of documents filed by Kinder Morgan to win the National Energy Board's conditional approval for its Trans Mountain pipeline expansion shows these questions were of no

interest to the pipeline company. It did not ask them, nor did the NEB. So no specific evidence was supplied by the tar sands/oil sands producers.

Kinder Morgan, it seems, only cared what tar sands/oil sands companies were prepared to pay, in the form of long-term pipeline leases to push through another 600,000 barrels of diluted bitumen per day. It also wanted enough customers to keep the pipeline filled for decades, and earn a good profit as fast as possible. The Alberta tar sands/oil sands producers wanted an assured pipeline to Vancouver built with someone else's capital, and future protection against potential price gouging.

So very complex contracts were drawn up to protect both parties. There were negotiated lease rates and benchmarks, penalty clauses, backout clauses, and dispute settlement mechanisms set out. This is standard industry practice.

The NEB eventually endorsed the terms, including provisions that Kinder Morgan would not be bound to complete the Trans Mountain pipeline unless long-term lease revenues were certain. In turn, the tar sands/oil sands producers could walk away if Kinder Morgan failed to complete the pipeline by a fixed date. Again, these are standard industry protection clauses.

But no one seems to have asked, or dared to ask since, who in Asia will be buying—not extracting or pipelining—600,000 more barrels of Alberta bitumen per day for several decades. This is the key third corner of a triangle of contracts needed to make the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion financially viable.

If the tar sands/oil sands producers have signed such contracts, they have not published details. If Asian countries or refiners have signed them, the details have not appeared in government, corporate or industry trade reports. The Canadian banks which have made major loans to tar sands/oil sands projects and related pipelines have not disclosed specific details in their quarterly reports and investment circulars.

If Alberta Premier Rachel Notley has seen such contracts with Asian customers, she has not released or even summarized them. Nor has federal Finance Minister Bill Morneau, nor has Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Curiously, none of these politicians has claimed they've seen proof of such Asian contracts, before quickly adding

they cannot disclose the terms because of commercial confidentiality reasons.

One explanation is that no one can see, or conceal under a cloak of confidentiality, contracts which simply do not exist.

Just last week, Morneau assured the Ottawa press corps that even if Kinder Morgan abandons its Trans Mountain project on May 31, angel investors are standing by to swoop in and convert an albatross into an acclaimed success. And he promised, if that occurs, that there's a fat federal cheque waiting for potential pension fund patrons. He apparently did not read the memo citing all the global banks, insurance companies, and major pension funds which have already vetoed future tar sands/oil sands financing. To be fair, it is a very long memo.

So Morneau declined to identify those Hail Mary miracle workers, or any committed Asian buyers for Alberta's bitumen. Once again, the mainstream media routinely failed to ask the two questions any small-town bank manager or accountant looking over a business plan would insist on: Where is the proof you have customers, and proof of what will they pay?

Perhaps the deafening silence from Finance Minister Morneau, the man who controls Canada's finances, is the telling answer. Or perhaps it came last year when Norway's Statoil, ExxonMobil, Marathon Petroleum, Total S.A., ConocoPhillips, Royal Dutch Shell, and Koch Industries sold off some \$22.5 billion in Alberta bitumen assets that they were wiser to dump at a steep loss than to keep.

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[Breakthrough in explosive lawsuit against Monsanto](#)



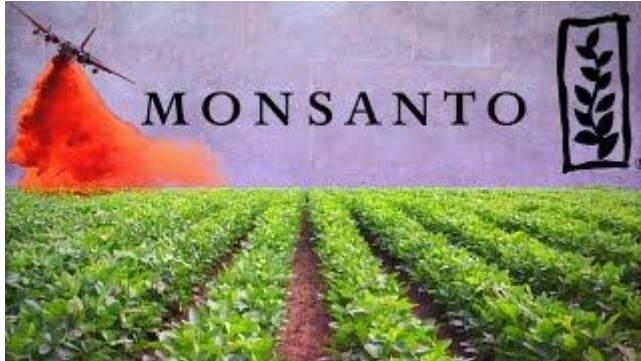
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Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 27 May 2018 18:51

By Jon Rappoport

https://www.opednews.com/articles/Breakthrough-in-explosive-by-Jon-Rappoport-Cancer_Carcinogenic_Evidence_Lawsuits-180525-497.html



Monsanto: The Company that Owns the World's Food Supply

(Image by YouTube, Channel: Business Casual) [Permission](#) [Details](#) [DMCA](#)

A San Francisco lawsuit against Monsanto and its weedkiller, Roundup, is moving forward. And it's just received a new green light from the judge in the case.

Monsanto's lawyers are bracing for a deep level of attack, which they were hoping to avoid. The judge has ruled the jury can hear testimony on this issue: Monsanto suppressed evidence that Roundup causes cancer.

Reporter Carey Gillam has the story (The Guardian, 5/22):

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"At the age of 46, DeWayne Johnson is not ready to die. But with cancer spread through most of his body, doctors say he probably has just months to live. Now Johnson, a husband and father of three in California, hopes to survive long enough to make Monsanto take the blame for his fate.

"On 18 June, Johnson will become the first person to take the global seed and chemical company to trial on allegations that it has spent decades hiding the cancer-causing dangers of its popular Roundup herbicide products -- and his case has just received a major boost.

"Last week Judge Curtis Karnow issued an order clearing the way for jurors to consider not just scientific evidence related to what caused Johnson's cancer, but allegations that Monsanto suppressed evidence of the risks of its weed killing products. Karnow ruled that the trial will proceed and a jury would be allowed to consider possible punitive damages.

"The internal correspondence noted by Johnson could support a jury finding that Monsanto has long been aware of the risk that its glyphosate-based herbicides are carcinogenic ... but has continuously sought to influence the scientific literature to prevent its internal concerns from reaching the public

sphere and to bolster its defenses in products liability actions,' [Judge] Karnow wrote. [Yes, the Judge in the case wrote that statement.]

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"Johnson's case, filed in San Francisco county superior court in California, is at the forefront of a legal fight against Monsanto. Some 4,000 plaintiffs have sued Monsanto alleging exposure to Roundup caused them, or their loved ones, to develop non-Hodgkin lymphoma (NHL). Another case is scheduled for trial in October, in Monsanto's home town of St Louis, Missouri.

"How the Johnson lawsuit plays out could be a bellwether for how other plaintiffs proceed. If Johnson prevails, there could be many more years of costly litigation and hefty damage claims. If Monsanto successfully turns back the challenge, it could derail other cases and lift pressure on the firm.

"According to the court record, Johnson had a job as a groundskeeper for the Benicia unified school district where he applied numerous treatments of Monsanto's herbicides to school properties from 2012 until at least late 2015. He was healthy and active before he got the cancer diagnosis in August 2014. In a January deposition, Johnson's treating physician testified that more than 80% of his body was covered by lesions, and that he probably had but a few months to live."

How will Monsanto proceed? First, they'll argue that Johnson's cancer could have been caused by other factors. They'll throw the kitchen sink at the jury. It could have been genetics. It could have been lifestyle. It could have been causes that are still unknown to researchers. It could have been starlight from a galaxy far, far away. Monsanto's lawyers will try to bury the jury in reams of supposition.

Second, they'll show the jury an EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) finding that Roundup does not cause cancer. Like the FDA, the EPA has sided with major corporations in efforts to protect them. Monsanto will claim: "The federal government has asserted Roundup is safe, and that's the end of our responsibility. The federal government is the final arbiter." Which is to say: the truth isn't the final arbiter.

Third, Monsanto will execute a series of acrobatic moves to prove they never suppressed evidence that Roundup causes cancer. They were simply "considering all relevant safety issues." They were "posing various scenarios." Their internal memos were "temporary work product" on the way to making a final judgment about Roundup's safety. They were raising valid concerns about flawed studies that claimed Roundup was dangerous.

If all else fails, Monsanto might try to settle with Johnson -- and then claim the \$\$ payout was simply a way to show compassion for his unfortunate condition -- and move on -- continuing to offer the public a fine and safe product (Roundup). No guilt admitted.

In the extreme -- and I need to raise this question -- might Monsanto, behind the scenes, secretly and illegally offer Johnson's lawyer and his client a very large sum to present a weak case in court and let Monsanto win the case?

You decide.

If Monsanto has intentionally hidden the dire effects of Roundup for decades, while people have gotten sick and died, what wouldn't they do?

Among the myriad scandals and crimes of Monsanto, here is one that sheds light on the mindset of the company. Axisoflogic.com reports (3/22/12):

"In 2001, 3,600 inhabitants of the city of Anniston, Alabama, attacked Monsanto for PCB [a chlorine chemical] contamination. According to a report, declassified by the U.S. Agency of Environmental Protection (EPA), Monsanto for almost forty years dumped thousands of tons of contaminated waste in a stream and an open garbage dump in the heart of a black neighborhood in the city.

"The way The Washington Post reported the story is instructive: 'Monsanto documents -- many emblazoned with warnings such as 'CONFIDENTIAL: Read and Destroy' -- show that for decades, the corporate giant concealed what it did and what it knew. In 1966, Monsanto managers discovered that fish submerged in that creek turned belly-up within 10 seconds, spurting blood and shedding skin as if dunked into boiling water. They told no one.




"Monsanto was finally convicted in 2002 of having polluted 'the territory of Anniston and the blood of its people with the PCB.' The firm was ordered to pay \$700 million in damages and to guarantee the cleaning-up of the city. No legal action was brought against the company officials."



Monsanto: The Company that Owns the World's Food Supply

Last Updated on Sunday, 27 May 2018 19:06

258 readings

[Should BC Pull Out of Canada?](#)   

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Dragonslayer

Tuesday, 29 May 2018 21:12

If The Canadian Government Takes over Kinder Morgan and tries to pass legislation to force the pipeline it will be in a legal conflict of interest by passing laws to benefit their own company.

Perhaps it is time for the people of BC to have a referendum about leaving Canada. Maybe we should initiate talks with Washington, Oregon and California to form a new country separate from the US and Canada? Indeed we have the resources and progressive politics to do so.

When politicians take your country far to the right and work to subvert peoples rights in order to push corporate agendas, it is time for the people to take back their country.

Last Updated on Friday, 01 June 2018 11:04

594 readings

[The Trudeau, Inc. take-over of the expansion of Kinder Morgan would impact on climate change, jeopardize future conservation projects in the Salish Sea and the rights of future generations and the rights of indigenous peoples](#)
[Justice News](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 01 June 2018 13:27

By Joan Russow

Global Compliance Research Project

By Joan Russow PhD

Global Compliance Research Project

1. **The Trudeau, Inc. expansion would contribute to the undermining of Canada's commitment to implement the SDGs and of its obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**

In SDG13 on climate change, addressing climate change is described as urgent; climate change could also preclude the fulfillment of most of the SDGs

In 1988, at the Changing Atmosphere Conference in Toronto, the participants including representatives from government, academia, NGO and industry expressed their concern about Climate Change in the Conference statement:

“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 human activities, inefficient and 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.

The Conference called for immediate action by governments,

to Reduce CO2 emissions by approximately 20% of 1988 levels by the year 2005 as an initial global goal. Clearly the industrialized nations have a responsibility to lead the way both through their national energy policies and their bilateral multilateral assistance arrangement.

At COP21, Canada’s “contribution” was to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30% below 2005 levels by 2030.

Just under twenty years later, Ban Ki Moon, in Paris, urged states to negotiate with a global vision not with national vested interests (COP 21 press conference)

Canada is the highest per capita contributor to greenhouse gas emissions and Canada’s carbon budget has been ignored by Canada In 2018, Canada is in danger of being in non-compliance with the purpose of the legally binding United Nations Framework on Climate Change(article 2)

...”to achieve, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention, stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.”

At COP 21 in Paris. Ban Ki Moon urged the negotiators to negotiate with a global vision not with national interests (COP 21, Press, Conference, 2015)

A global vision would be to address article 2 and at a minimum to immediately

close the tar sands [see below], to end all subsidies for fossil fuel, to calculate the carbon budget for Canada, to divest in fossil fuels and to reinvest in renewable energy, to conserve sinks - such as old growth forests and bogs (not just as a means to offset emissions), to strengthen conservation of biodiversity, to avoid all false solutions such as nuclear, geo-engineering and biofuels which would all violate principles within the UNFCCC, promote nature-based solutions along with solar energy, wind energy, wave and geothermal and to compensate for historical emissions, and to institute a fair and just transition for workers affected negatively by the new vision.

At COP 21 there was the violation of the non-regression principle because in the legally binding 1992 UNFCCC, states made a "commitment" to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, while in the Paris Agreement the states only made a "contribution".

The contributions by states, including Canada, in the Paris Agreement could result in a temperature rise of over 3 or more degrees.

Canada should seek an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice on whether Canada's current "contributions" in the Paris agreement violate Article 2 of the UNFCCC and, if so, to determine what actions would be necessary to comply with article 2.

Canada, at a minimum, must calculate its carbon budget and make a firm commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 25% below 1990 levels by 2020 and to achieve decarbonisation and 100 % below 1990 levels by 2050

A real global vision, however, would be time lines and targets in line with existing and emerging science such as 20% below 1990 by 2018, 30% below 1990 levels by 2019, 40% below 1990 levels by 2020, 60 % below 1990 levels by 2025, 75% below 1990 below 1990 levels by 2035 and 100% below 1990 emissions by 2040, and reaching Decarbonization with 100% socially equitable ecologically sound renewable energy,

In addition the Trudeau.Inc expansion would contribute to the violation 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 the 1992 Convention on Biological Biodiversity, the precautionary principle reads;

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 1992 UN Framework Convention on climate change :

The Parties should take precautionary measures to anticipate, prevent or minimize the causes of climate change and its adverse effects, and where there are threats of irreversible damage, the lack of scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing such measures.

And in 1995 agreement "relating to the Conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks ...is the also 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 to decline the support for Trudeau Inc expansion

- 1. The Trudeau, Inc. expansion could jeopardize future conservation projects in the Salish Sea, and violate the rights of future generations**

In the past few years, there have been many proposals for conservation, comprising terrestrial, marine and coastal ecosystems in the Salish Sea; for promoting and demonstrating a balanced relationship between humans and the biosphere, while integrating especially the role of traditional knowledge in ecosystem management and fostering economic and human development which is socio-culturally and ecologically sustainable.

Trudeau.Inc expansion would undermine numerous proposals related to coastal and marine conservation of the Salish Sea are areas of terrestrial and coastal/marine ecosystems; sound ecological practices could reinforce scientific

research, monitoring, training and education

With the approval of Trudeau.Inc. expansion, government will violate legally binding international instruments; such as the Convention concerning the Protection of Cultural and Natural heritage

Under the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, 1972) Canada has affirmed the following:

•.... in view of the magnitude and gravity of the new dangers threatening them, it is incumbent on the international community as a whole to participate in the protection of the cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value... (Preamble, Convention Concerning the Protection of the World cultural and Natural Heritage,1972)

Under Article 4 of the. Convention, Canada recognized the duty of ensuring the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage situated on its territory, belongs primarily to that State. It will do all it can to this end, to the utmost of its own resources and, where appropriate, with any international assistance and co-operation, in particular, financial, artistic, scientific and technical.

Another project that could be jeopardized is to declare the Salish Sea , a Particularly Sensitive Sea PSSA under the International Maritime Organization.

In addition, Trudeau, Inc. expansion could cause Canada to violate the Law of the Seas;

"The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982 (UNCLOS) is popularly considered "a constitution for the oceans", establishing a global framework for the exploitation and conservation of marine resources. It is one of the most important Treaties in setting out the importance and special nature of whales and dolphins" (<http://uk.whales.org/issues/in-depth/united-nations-convention-on-law-of-sea-1982>)

Expansion of Trudeau, Inc would violate key principle, in the UN Declaration on the Rights of indigenous Peoples: `free, prior informed consent.` This principle would be completely ignored through the approval of this expansion. This approval will also contravene Call to Action 92.1 in the

Truth and Reconciliation Commission:

Commit to meaningful consultation, building respectful relationships, and obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects.

LEGACY OF ACCIDENTS

In April 2016 was a report, written by the Friends of the Earth and entitled *Tar Sands/Dilbit Crude Oil Movements Within the Salish Sea*. . gives an excellent account of previous accidents and warning about potential accidents:

“The difficulty and unmet needs for responding to a dilbit crude oil spill motivated this new analysis of oil spill risk in the Salish Sea. The reasons for this concern were rigorously documented in a report published by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) in 2016.”

Fortuitously, the NAS study was released while this paper was being completed enabling its findings to be incorporated herein. The vulnerability of the Salish Sea to a spill of dilbit crude oil is further heightened by Trudeau.Inc proposal that connects the vast supplies of bitumen in Alberta, Canada to an oil terminal in Burnaby, BC.

The proposal would result

INTRODUCTION 10

Tar Sands/Dilbit Crude Oil Movements Within the Salish Sea in an increased capacity to ship dilbit crude from 300,000 bbls/day to 890,000 bbls/day. 3 A 2014 vessel traffic risk assessment, (VTRA 2010) concluded the proposal would result in a 7-fold increase in tanker traffic transiting through the Salish Sea as compared to 2010.

The number of dilbit-carrying oil tankers would increase from approximately 1 per week to 1 per day, significantly increasing the amount of oil being transported through the San Juan Islands in Haro Strait and Boundary Pass (Appendix 1). 4

This paper focuses on existing dilbit shipments between Kinder Morgan's Burnaby, BC terminal and the U.S. Oil & Refining Co. refinery in Tacoma, WA in order to elevate public attention for the need to improve oil spill prevention and response capabilities within the Salish Sea. In addition, it is intended to identify the significant risk associated with Kinder Morgan's and similarly with the Trudeau.Inc.proposed expansion of dilbit crude shipping through the Salish Sea.

Dilbit crude oil is currently shipped from the Burnaby terminal through the Salish Sea on tankers bound to ports on the west coast and overseas. It is also transported within the Salish Sea approximately six times a month (see results section) on barges towed by conventional tugs through the particularly fast currents along Rosario Strait,

Admiralty Inlet and Puget Sound. Though tankers carry more oil than barges, tug and tow marine transport is of higher risk due to the limited maneuvering capabilities and risks of tow wires snapping.

Sause Brothers, a U.S. Oil & Refining Co contractor based in Coos Bay, Oregon owns and operates the barges used in this trade. This is the same company that experienced a tug snapping the tow wire of its barge, Nestucca, in heavy seas along the Olympic Coast in the winter of 1988. 5 The Nestucca was full of heavy, Bunker C oil bound to the ARCO Refinery April 2016 11 at Cherry Point, Washington.

ARCO is now owned and operated by BP. The resulting 231,000 gallon oil spill spread 800 square miles, from Newport Oregon to the west side of Vancouver Island. Much of it remained partially submerged due to its density. Still, it was estimated that over 56,000 seabirds were killed.6 This incident is not intended to reflect on Sause Brothers' current operations, on which we have no information, but to highlight what could occur from increased numbers of

barges operating in the region

More recently, there have been a series of incidents involving tugs towing a variety of cargo along Rosario Strait between 2011 and 2013, including collisions with navigational aids. Coast Guard Sector Puget Sound issued voluntary Marine Safety Advisory 166307 on October 9, 2012 after 5 incidents with tugs and tows in Rosario Strait between October 10, 2011 and December 23, 2011.

Two additional incidents occurred on May 23, 2013 and September 8, 2013 since the issuance of the Safety Advisory. The Advisory was incorporated into the Puget Sound Harbor Safety Plan (Appendix 4) but no state or federal regulations have been proposed since then.

On March 2, 2016 two barges were being towed when high winds blew them to shore near Victoria, BC. One barge, carrying two thousand liters of diesel fuel, was removed the next day. The other, carrying construction debris, took weeks to be removed from the beach. See “Grounded barge was a warning”⁸ and “Work begins to unload, remove barge grounded off Dallas Road.”⁹ Once again on March 15, 2016 a U.S. tug and barge bound for Alaska carrying general cargo touched bottom near Campbell River, BC.¹⁰ Canadian tugs have suffered a similar fate. In 2015 alone, six tugs have sunk in nine incidents along the British Columbia¹¹ coast.

The fact that modern barges are equipped with double hulls does little to assuage concerns about this form of oil transportation. A 2011 study questioned the effectiveness of double hulls in reducing vessel-accident oil spillage.¹² Utilizing U.S. Coast Guard vessel accident pollution incidents between 2001 and 2008 the authors found that on average double hulls reduced the size of oil spills by only 20 percent in barges and 62 percent in tankers;:

<http://www.foe.org/projects/oceans-and-forests/oceangoing-vessels/tar-sands-report>

In conclusion,If the Trudeau.Inc expansion is permitted to proceed, Canada will demonstrate yet again its defiance of international law.

At international UN conferences, the Harper government had 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. And it is with great dismay to begin to realize that with the Trudeau government, “Canada is not yet back”.

Trudeau.Inc proposal would demonstrate to the world that Canada is still not serious about reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Proceeding with the Expansion could be grossly negligent. A major oil spill would devastate the marine environment, and coastal communities of the Salish Sea. There is sufficient evidence of precedents of environmental devastation from spills that a prudent or reasonable person would not permit the Trudeau.Inc expansion in the sensitive waters of the Salish Sea:

Proceeding with the approval if the Trudeau.IncExpansion would also show that Canada disregards commitments to climate change, to the rights of future generations, and that ignores dire warning and social licence.

it is surmised that if Canada does not permit the exxpansion and buy out Kinder Morgan, Kinder Morgan will sue Canada under Chapter 11 of Nafta

Article 1114: Environmental Measures could apply and if Canada Closed the tar sands for domestic health, safety or environmental measures all pipelineas emanating from the tar sands would no longer be necessary; Kinder Morgan would not be able to sue Canada

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.

2. 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.

THREE MORE REASONS FOR CLOSING THE TAR SANDS

1. 'Carbon bubble' could spark global financial crisis, study warns Advances in clean energy expected to cause a sudden drop in demand for fossil fuels, leaving companies with trillions in stranded assets

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/jun/04/carbon-bubble-could-spark-global-financial-crisis-study-warns>

2. Estimated cleanup costs for Alberta's mines jumps to \$23.2-billion

KELLY CRYDERMAN

CALGARY

PUBLISHED MAY 5, 2017

UPDATED MAY 5, 2017

3. Oil refining is a lifeline in America's industrial heartland. In northwest Indiana, a refinery and steel mills dominate the Lake Michigan shoreline, and smokestacks still symbolize opportunity. Workers cheered when the BP Whiting refinery invested \$4.2 billion to process crude extracted from Canada's tar sands. Dozens of U.S. refineries built units called cokers to process heavy crude into petroleum

but huge amounts of petcoke remained. The American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers told the AP that cokers "allow the United States to export petroleum coke to more than 30 countries to meet growing market demand."

Last Updated on Wednesday, 06 June 2018 08:39

289 readings

['Carbon bubble' could spark global financial crisis, study warns Advances in clean energy expected to cause a sudden](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/jun/04/carbon-bubble-could-spark-global-financial-crisis-study-warns)



[drop in demand for fossil fuels, leaving companies with trillions in stranded assets](#)

[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 05 June 2018 03:28

'Carbon bubble' could spark global financial crisis, study warns

Advances in clean energy expected to cause a sudden drop in demand for fossil fuels, leaving companies with trillions in stranded assets

Fiona Harvey Environment correspondent

[**https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/jun/04/carbon-bubble-could-spark-global-financial-crisis-study-warns**](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/jun/04/carbon-bubble-could-spark-global-financial-crisis-study-warns)



[Carbon Bubble Crisis](#)

A sudden drop in demand for fossil fuels could happen before 2035, a new study shows. Photograph: Florian Gaertner/Photothek via Getty Images

Lignite-fired power station in Poland

A sudden drop in demand for fossil fuels could happen before 2035, a new

study shows. Photograph: Florian Gaertner/Photothek via Getty Images

Plunging prices for renewable energy and rapidly increasing investment in low-carbon technologies could leave fossil fuel companies with trillions in stranded assets and spark a global financial crisis, a new study has found.

A sudden drop in demand for fossil fuels before 2035 is likely, according to the study, given the current global investments and economic advantages in a low-carbon transition.

The existence of a “carbon bubble” – assets in fossil fuels that are currently overvalued because, in the medium and long-term, the world will have to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions – has long been proposed by academics, activists and investors. The new study, published on Monday in the journal *Nature Climate Change*, shows that a sharp slump in the value of fossil fuels would cause this bubble to burst, and posits that such a slump is likely before 2035 based on current patterns of energy use.

What is the carbon bubble and what will happen if it bursts?

Crucially, the findings suggest that a rapid decline in fossil fuel demand is no longer dependent on stronger policies and actions from governments around the world. Instead, the authors’ detailed simulations found the demand drop would take place even if major nations undertake no new climate policies, or reverse some previous commitments.

That is because advances in technologies for energy efficiency and renewable power, and the accompanying drop in their price, have made low-carbon energy much more economically and technically attractive.

Dr Jean-François Mercure, the lead author, from Radboud and Cambridge universities, told the *Guardian*: “This is happening already – we have observed the data and made projections from there. With more policies from governments, this would happen faster. But without strong [climate] policies, it is already happening. To some degree at least you can’t stop it. But if people

stop putting funds now in fossil fuels, they may at least limit their losses.”

By moving to a lower-carbon footing, companies and investors could take advantage of the transition that is occurring, rather than trying to fight the growing trend. Mercure said fossil fuel companies were likely to fight among each other for the remaining market, rather than have a strong impact on renewable energy businesses.

Prof Jorge Viñuales, co-author, said: “Contrary to investor expectations, the stranding of fossil fuel assets may happen even without new climate policies. Individual nations cannot avoid the situation by ignoring the Paris agreement or burying their heads in coal and tar sands.”

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However, Mercure also warned that the transition was happening too slowly to stave off the worst effects of climate change. Although the trajectory towards a low-carbon economy would continue, to keep within 2C above pre-industrial levels – the limit set under the Paris agreement – would require much stronger government action and new policies.

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That could also help investors by pointing the way to deflation of the carbon bubble before they make new investments in fossil fuel assets.

The paper supports the view of some policy and investment experts that economics and technology are now driving action on climate change, where before impetus was all from policymakers. Former UN climate chief Christiana Figueres told the Guardian, a year after Donald Trump announced the withdrawal of the US from the Paris agreement: “There is a big difference between the economics of climate change and the politics of climate change. Is Trump going to stop that advance [by businesses towards low-carbon technologies]? I don’t think so.”




Frédéric Samama, of Europe's biggest asset manager Amundi, also believes investors have reached a "tipping point", in relation to taking action on greenhouse gases through their portfolio management. He told Bloomberg last month that "until recently, the question" of climate change was "not on their radar screen".

Separately, an analysis in Nature Energy forecast that global energy demand would be about 40% lower than today by 2050, despite rises in population and income, and a growing global economy. The authors found that such a scenario would allow the world to stay within 1.5C of warming, the aspirational goal set under the Paris agreement.

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Last Updated on Tuesday, 12 June 2018 10:33

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[IUCN Director General's statement for World Environment Day and World Oceans Day 2018](#)   

[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 05 June 2018 07:40

IUCN Director General's statement for World Environment Day and World Oceans Day 2018

Tue, 05 Jun 2018

We have all seen the images of plastic polluting beaches and entangling marine animals from the tropics to the Arctic. Plastic pollution has become a truly global environmental problem, just as plastic itself is an all-pervasive part of our lives. On this World Environment Day, we are reminded that this challenge has no easy solutions. As such, we must accept that looking for a silver bullet will create the illusion of progress while the real problem only gets worse.

Marine life faces growing threats from plastic entering the world's oceans.



PrevNext

Marine life faces growing threats from plastic entering the world's oceans. Every minute, the equivalent of a garbage truck full of plastic enters our oceans. Plastic pollution threatens human and marine health.

The sheer scale of humanity's plastic 'habit' can be daunting. Today, we consume our way through over 300 million tonnes of plastic per year, and mounds of plastic waste follow. Every minute, the equivalent of a garbage truck of plastic is dumped into the ocean.

Marine life bears the brunt of the plastic contaminating our oceans, but the consequences for us humans are also disastrous.

Apart from the physical damage plastic causes, it contains harmful chemicals, damaging to both humans and wildlife. Plastics additives such as phthalates, and chlorinated, brominated and fluorinated compounds pose significant risks to human health. In the absence of decisive action, 1.2 million tonnes of additives per year could enter our oceans by 2050, and, together with the plastic in soil and freshwater, they will continue to contaminate our food chain and water supplies. The oceans provide protein-rich food for billions of people, so the chemical contamination they introduce into the food chain poses a serious threat to food security and health. Worldwide, marine plastic pollution is costing us between US\$ 13 to 40 billion per year as tourism, fisheries and shipping revenue is lost.

As the dire consequences of plastic pollution come into focus in the eye of global public opinion, so does the urgency of the situation. We need to act quickly. We only have 11 years left to reach the Sustainable Development Goals, and plastic pollution is undermining our progress towards healthy oceans (SDG 14), food security (SDG 2), sustainable production and consumption (SDG 12), as well as many other global goals. But, given how ingrained plastic has become in our lives, there is no silver bullet.

This means that we must accept that the material will be here to stay, at least for the foreseeable future. But it does not mean that we need to accept it polluting our planet.

Our approach to tackling the plastics dilemma needs to address both consumption and how plastic enters the environment. This means that we must first question the way we use plastic in our throw-away culture. We are overconsuming plastic, needlessly adding to our energy and water consumption through its production, as well as to the related waste flows. So above all, it is imperative that we reduce the overall amount of plastic that we use.

And there are examples that we can follow. Take packaging, which accounts for about one-third of all plastic produced, much of it designed for single-use. Last week, the European Commission proposed a ban on some single-use plastic products including straws, cutlery and plates. IUCN welcomes the momentum brought to this issue by the UN, as reflected by the theme of this year's World Environment Day and World Oceans Day.

Then we must stop the flow of that plastic into the environment, in part by better controlling the plastic journey from factory to the recycling plant. Doing so will require significant investment in solid waste management infrastructure and public awareness. Governments, industry and civil society all have a responsibility here.

And there is much more to plastic pollution than meets the eye. Tracing the complex pathways along which plastic leaks into the environment is key to closing the plastic tap. For instance, a 2017 IUCN report found that the tiny plastic particles washed off products such as tyres or clothes are a significant source of plastic pollution in developed countries. This means that beating plastic pollution requires a rethink of the entire plastic lifecycle. We need profound technical, economic and political

changes, from filters in washing machines to retain the plastic particles washed off clothes, to more robust legal frameworks that move us closer to a circular economy.

Plastic pollution is one of the great dilemmas of our time. This is why both World Environment Day and World Oceans Day have chosen this challenge for their theme in 2018. It is a global problem of great complexity. So it stands to reason that the solutions will be at least as complex, involving people from every part of the world and in every walk of life. Only by bringing this great diversity of actors together under a common cause can we finally turn the tide on plastic pollution.

323 readings

[An Evening of One Planet Storytelling with Pooran Desai](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 05 June 2018 16:25

Date & Time: June 20, 2018 (7:00pm - 9:00pm)

Category: Saanich Community Events (See all events in this category)

Join us for a conversation about the One Planet Saanich initiative
Hear stories from around the world about businesses, schools and communities that are driving change using the One Planet Living framework.

The One Planet Living principles - from health and happiness and sustainable food to zero carbon energy - provide a common language to talk about sustainability and drive change.

The District of Saanich and other Saanich stakeholders - including schools and businesses - are participating in the One Planet Cities Initiative along with three other cities from around the world.

Pooran Desai, Bioregional's founder and initiator of the ground-breaking BedZED project in London (UK), will share lessons learned in applying the framework's ten simple principles. You will hear about his experience leading action planning teams throughout the world, and about how we can apply these lessons in Saanich.

Wednesday June 20 (7-9 p.m.)

Free event

University of Victoria
Human and Social Development (HSD) ? Lecture Hall A240

This special event is co-hosted by Conversations for a One Planet Region, UVic in the Anthropocene, the District of Saanich, One Earth and Bioregional. Admission is free.

We are recruiting Saanich-based businesses, schools or community groups to join the project - to build their own One Planet Action Plans using the One Planet Living Framework. Contact us to find out more!

221 readings

[South African Lawsuit Could Bring Sweeping Changes to Land and Mining Rights](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 05 June 2018 18:26

By Mark Olalde

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Amadiba residents gather to oppose a mine that has the support of a local chief and that has gained approval from the minerals department. Photo courtesy of Nonhle Mbuthuma

Residents of the Eastern Cape's Amadiba coastal area gather in September 2015. Many fear mining would threaten their way of life by destroying grazing land and creating rifts in the community.

Courtesy: Nonhle Mbuthuma

PRETORIA, Jun 5 2018 (IPS) – South Africans await judgement to be handed down in a court case that could set a sweeping precedent by empowering communities on communal land with the right to reject new mining projects.

Calling the case a referendum on “the right to say no,” residents of several rural villages along the country’s eastern coast are asking the court to reinterpret current minerals extraction legislation to compel mining companies to gain explicit community consent prior to breaking ground on new operations.

The court case, for which arguments were heard in late April in Pretoria, stems from a dispute over a proposed titanium mine that has raged for more than a decade in the country’s rural Eastern Cape province in an area known as the “Wild Coast.” The project has pitted Australian mining company Mineral Commodities Ltd

against a group of five local villages, collectively known as Amadiba. Locals consistently turned back the company's attempts to mine, but bouts of violence have left several people dead.

"Their way of life is intrinsically linked to the land. Customary communities tend to suffer disproportionately from the impacts of mining," the plaintiffs argued in their submission to the court, noting environmental degradation, displacement and loss of agricultural land. "Without free, prior and informed consent, they are at real risk of losing not only rights in their land, but their very way of being."

Nonhle Mbuthuma is the secretary and acting leader of the Amadiba Crisis Committee, which represents many residents of the villages. She took over the group's mantle of leadership when the committee's chairperson, Sikhosphi 'Bazooka' Radebe, was gunned down in front of his home in March 2016. Radebe was widely thought to have been murdered for his activism against the mine, and Mbuthuma's name is believed to be written on a hit list alongside his.

"The land is our identity. When we lose that land, we lose who we are. And when you lose who you are, that's no different than just someone killing you," Mbuthuma said.

Nonhle Mbuthuma of the Amadiba Crisis Committee is believed to be on a hit list due to her opposition to a proposed titanium mining project on South Africa's east coast. Credit: Mark Olalde/IPS
Nonhle Mbuthuma of the Amadiba Crisis Committee is believed to be on a hit list due to her opposition to a proposed titanium mining project on South Africa's east coast. Credit: Mark Olalde/IPS

The communities and civil society organizations that have joined the plaintiffs asked that if the court does not side with their argument for consent, that it at least grants them the ability to negotiate terms such as royalties prior to mining. If the court declines that too, then the plaintiffs asked that the current legislation be found unconstitutional.

In the court filings, a subsidiary of Mineral Commodities argued that the plaintiffs misinterpreted the law well beyond its intended purpose in an effort to halt the mine, which already earned permits. The company noted that "if granted, [the plaintiffs' application] will affect land and mining rights all over the

country.”

“We hope that if the judge rules in favor of us, it will help all African communities, not only Xolobeni, because the problem of mining pushing people off their land is all over Africa,” Mbutuma said, referencing one of the five villages in Amadiba that has become synonymous with the conflict.

Formerly under the control of the oppressive apartheid system, South Africa democratically elected a new government in 1994, which worked to return the country’s mineral wealth to its citizens while also fitting into international, capitalist markets. Under current legislation, mineral rights were claimed for the state in an attempt to foster economic development.

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Bringing South Africa’s Small-Scale Miners Out of the Shadows
Alternative Mining Indaba Makes Its Voice Heard

However, as the government handed out mining licenses, conflicts arose between mining companies and rural communities living on communal land. About 13 percent of the country’s land area remains held communally in the vestiges of apartheid-era “homelands” that were created as sham independent states to remove black South Africans from urban areas. An estimated 18 million South Africans live on these lands.

Traditional leaders such as chiefs, kings and queens and councils preside over communal land, but their mandate comes from the people, according to customary law. In this set of laws, these leaders cannot make decisions for their communities without the consent of the people.

In many cases, though, traditional leaders strike deals with mining companies that open up communal land to mining, often without community-level consent. This happened in Amadiba, where one chief supported the proposed mine and was made a director of a company linked to the project. In return, the chief said in a signed statement provided to the South African Police Service, he was promised that challenges to his chieftaincy would disappear and that he would earn profits from the mine.

Through a company spokesperson, Mineral Commodities CEO Mark Caruso

declined to comment for this story.

Johan Lorenzen is an associate at Richard Spoor Inc. Attorneys, which is part of the community's legal team. He said that such conflicts are common in rural areas that are struggling to realize the full benefits of a democratic South Africa.

"The majority of rural South Africans live on communal land such as the Amadiba community. Particularly as the world's largest platinum producer, South Africa has seen a wave of mining right applications over customary land, and, without clarity over this question of whether there's the right to say no, it has had sweeping effects on tens-of-thousands of people in rural South Africa," Lorenzen said. He estimates a judgement will be delivered in several months.

The minister of the Department of Mineral Resources announced an 18-month moratorium that temporarily halted both the project as well as any new permit applications for the area. That is set to expire later this year, and it remains unclear what will happen when it does.

As part of the moratorium, the department committed to commission "independent social specialist/s to...investigate the deeply rooted cause of the problems and document the causes and possible solutions" of conflict surrounding the mine.

In a statement to IPS, the department admitted to eschewing that obligation. "There was no independent investigation conducted, due to the well-publicised challenges between the parties in the area," the statement said, also noting that the department was yet to decide whether to renew the moratorium.

As an alternative way of elevating these residents' voices, British photographer Thom Pierce recently shot a series of portraits of Xolobeni residents and made the frames into postcards that he plans to mail to the minister of the Department of Mineral Resources. On the postcards, community members described the importance of holding the final say over their own land.

Themba Yalo invoked the memory of the Pondoland Revolt, a 1960s uprising where residents of Amadiba and surrounding communities took up arms against the apartheid government and its supporters. "My grandparents fought for this land, for me to live freely. I

will never agree to a mine coming here and destroying the land and the graves of my family,” he wrote.

Others, including Mamthithala Yalo, argued for agriculture instead of mining: “I have pigs, cows and goats that I farm on this land. I also grow all of the food that I need. I will never allow the mining to come and change the way I live. This land is not for sale.”

245 readings

[Poet and accomplished foreign minister elected to be President of the UN General Assembly](#)



[Peace News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 06 June 2018 04:26

By Alan Ware

www.unfoldzero.org/1696-

The United Nations yesterday (June 5, 2018) [elected Ecuador Foreign Minister Maria Fernanda Espinosa](#) to be the incoming President of the UN General Assembly. She will become the 73rd person, and the fourth woman ever, to hold the UNGA presidency.

Sra Espinosa is a former Defence Minister, Ambassador to the UN in Geneva and an accomplished poet, having published five volumes of poetry and receiving the Ecuadorian National Poetry Prize in 1990.

Sra Espinosa has also been a long-time advocate for peace, human rights, nuclear disarmament and environmental protection. She [serves as a Council Member](#) of the influential [World Future Council](#), and has partnered in a number of events and initiatives with key international peace and disarmament organisations including [Abolition 2000](#), [Basel Peace Office](#), [Parliamentarians for Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament](#) and [UNFOLD ZERO](#).

During her term as Ecuador Ambassador to the UN in Geneva, for example, she co-hosted a number of nuclear disarmament events with these NGOs at the UN, including some of the annual commemoration events for the [International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons](#).

At the 2015 commemoration event for the International Day, Sra Espinosa presented [A Nuclear-Weapon-Free World: Our Common Good](#), a joint statement of religious leaders, mayors and parliamentarians to the United Nations. See [Religious leaders and legislators present nuclear abolition call to the UN](#).

Ms. Espinosa has also been Coordinator of the project “Political Dialogues for Sustainable Development in Latin America”, served as Environmental Adviser for UNICEF on environmental and girls’ education in Niger and worked as Liaison Officer on forest-related indigenous knowledge and intellectual property rights at the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests at the United Nations.

Sra Espinosa will take on the UNGA Presidency in September this year, and the term lasts one

year.

Just after she begins her presidency the World Future Council (and partner organisations) will hold [Count the Nuclear Weapons Money](#), a major event in New York for nuclear disarmament and sustainable development.



Also early in the Presidency of Sra Espinosa will be a decision by the UN General Assembly on the *UN High-Level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament* – whether or not it will be scuttled due to opposition by nuclear-armed States, or re-scheduled for 2019 (see [Nuclear Weapon States' Long Arm Seen Behind Deferral of Landmark UN Conference](#)).

In addition to being a poet, Sra. Espinosa is an accomplished academic, having published more than 30 academic articles on the Amazon River, culture, heritage, development, climate change, intellectual property, foreign policy, integration, defence and security.

In the UN vote for the position, Sra Espinosa defeated Ambassador Mary Elizabeth Flores Flake of Honduras by 128 votes to 62, with two abstentions.

UNFOLD ZERO extends our sincerest congratulations to Sra Espinosa for her election and wishes her success during her term in this important global position.

262 readings

[Alberta oilsands waste exported by American refineries to pollution-choked India](#)  

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 06 June 2018 10:15

By the Associated Press • Posted: Dec 01, 2017 9:25 AM MT | Last Updated: December 1, 2017

'We should not become the dust bin of the rest of the world'

U.S. oil refineries that are unable to sell a dirty fuel waste product at home are exporting vast quantities of it to India instead. (AP Photo/Charlie Riedel, File) (The Associated Press)
U.S. oil refineries that are unable to sell a dirty fuel waste product at home are exporting vast quantities of it to India instead.

Petroleum coke, the bottom-of-the-barrel leftover from refining Canadian oilsands crude and other heavy oils, is cheaper and burns hotter than coal. But it also contains more planet-warming carbon and far more heart- and lung-damaging sulfur — a key reason few American companies use it.

Refineries instead are sending it around the world, especially to energy-hungry India, which last year got almost a fourth of all the fuel-grade "petcoke" the U.S. shipped out, an Associated Press investigation found. In 2016, the U.S. sent more than 8 million metric tons of petcoke to India. That's about 20 times more than in 2010, and enough to fill the Empire State Building eight times.

The petcoke being burned in countless factories and plants is contributing to dangerously filthy air in India, which already has

many of the world's most polluted cities.

'My lungs are finished'

Delhi resident Satye Bir does not know all the reasons Delhi's air is so dirty, but he says he feels both fury and resignation.

"My life is finished....My lungs are finished," said the 63-year-old Bir, wheezing as he pulls an asthma inhaler out of his pocket. "This is how I survive. Otherwise, I can't breathe."

Laboratory tests on imported petcoke used near New Delhi found it contained 17 times more sulfur than the limit set for coal, and a staggering 1,380 times more than for diesel, according to India's court-appointed Environmental Pollution Control Authority. India's own petcoke, produced domestically, adds to the pollution.

"We should not become the dust bin of the rest of the world."

- Sunita Narain, Center for Science and the Environment

Industry officials say petcoke has been an important and valuable fuel for decades, and its use recycles a waste product. Health and environmental advocates, though, say the U.S. is simply exporting an environmental problem. The U.S. is the world's largest producer and exporter of petcoke, federal and international data show.

"We should not become the dust bin of the rest of the world," said Sunita Narain, a member of the pollution authority who also heads the Delhi-based Center for Science and the Environment. "We certainly can't afford it; we're choking to death already."

Oil refining is a lifeline

For more than a century, oil refining has served as a lifeline in America's industrial heartland, where thousands of manufacturing jobs have been lost in recent decades.

Pollution causing more deaths worldwide than war or smoking: Lancet

In gritty northwest Indiana, a sprawling oil refinery and steel mills dominate the Lake Michigan shoreline. Freight trains chug through working-class neighbourhoods. And smokestacks and distillation towers still symbolize opportunity.

Local officials and workers cheered when the BP Whiting refinery invested \$4.2 billion so it could process crude extracted from oilsands in the boreal forest of Alberta, Canada.

U.S. refineries embrace doilsands oil and other heavy crudes, when domestic oil production was stagnant before the hydraulic fracturing boom. Some of the biggest built expensive units called cokers to process the gunky crude into gasoline, diesel, ship fuel and asphalt, which leaves huge amounts of petroleum coke as waste. When BP Whiting's coker in Whiting, Indiana was finished in 2013, its petcoke output tripled, to 2.2 million tons a year.

Petcoke traditionally was used in the U.S. to make aluminum and steel after its impurities were removed. But when those mills closed or moved to other countries, the need for petcoke waned, although some power plants still use it. Other industries that had burned petcoke in the past did not want to invest in costly upgrades to control emissions of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, so they shifted to cleaner natural gas.

'It's a commodity that defies explanation'

The American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers, a petroleum industry trade group, released a statement to the AP saying that cokers "allow the United States to export petroleum coke to more than 30 countries to meet growing market demand."

"Petroleum coke is used globally as a cost-effective fuel, as well as an integral component in manufacturing," AFPM said.

But experts say it's not market forces that are driving U.S. refiners to make this waste product from heavy oil refining.

New Delhi's toxic smog poses serious health threat, warns doctor
The refineries just need to get rid of it, and are willing to discount it steeply — or even take a loss — which helps drive the demand in developing countries, experts said.

"It's a commodity that defies explanation (because) there's not a financial market," said Stuart Ehrenreich, an oil industry analyst who once managed petcoke export terminals for Koch Industries. "But at the end of the day, the coke has got to move."

So it's usually priced cheaper than even coal, sold around the world through a network of businesses — from boat captains and stevedores to buyers, brokers and middlemen — and sent on an epic, weeks-long journey by rail, barge and ship.

'It's like the Wild West'

There are fewer than a dozen big traders globally. Among the largest are Oxbow Energy Solutions and Koch Carbon, both led by members of the politically conservative and climate-skeptical Koch family. Neither they nor a dozen U.S. oil companies and traders contacted by the AP would talk about petcoke. They cited past controversies over the mountains of the waste stored at Midwest refineries, or said they wanted to avoid angering business partners.

In India, no factory managers would allow AP access, and federal officials did not respond to repeated requests for interviews.

With the petcoke market volatile and competitive, industry holds information close, hoping to maintain an edge and make a profit.

"It's like the Wild West," said Ehrenreich.

Dirty air

Petcoke, critics say, is making a bad situation worse across India. About 1.1 million Indians die prematurely as a result of outdoor air pollution every year, according to the Health Effects Institute, a non-profit funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and industry.

In the capital of New Delhi, pollution has sharply increased over the past decade with more cars, a construction boom, seasonal crop burning and small factories on the outskirts that burn dirty fossil fuels with little oversight. In October and November, for the second year in a row, city air pollution levels were so high they couldn't be measured by the city's monitoring equipment. People wore masks to venture out into grey air, and newspaper headlines warned of an "Airpocalypse."

Humans have produced 8.3 billion tonnes of plastic, researchers say "Fifty per cent of children in Delhi have abnormalities in their lung function — asthma, bronchitis, a recurring spasmodic cough. That's 2.2 million children, just in Delhi," said Dr. Sai Kiran Chaudhuri, head of the pulmonary department at the Delhi Heart & Lung Institute.

The country has seen a dramatic increase in sulfur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide emissions in recent years, concentrated in areas where power plants and steel factories are clustered. Those pollutants are converted into microscopic particles that lodge deep

in the lungs and enter the bloodstream, causing breathing and heart problems.

It's impossible to gauge precisely how much is from petcoke versus coal, fuel oil, vehicles and other sources. But experts say it certainly is contributing.

'It is definitely alarming'

Indian purchases of U.S. fuel-grade petcoke skyrocketed two years ago after China threatened to ban the import of high-sulfur fuels. Although Indian factories and plants buy some petcoke from Saudi Arabia and other countries, 65 per cent of imports in 2016 were from the U.S., according to trade data provider Export Genius.

"It is definitely alarming," Chaudhari said. "The government should know what they're getting, what they're using and what are its harmful effects."

Fort McMurray fires cause air pollution spike on other side of continent

In the north Indian industrial district of Moradabad, several hours' drive from the capital, villagers see the skies getting dingier but have little information about what happens behind factory gates.

Only four factories are on record as using petcoke. But dozens buy it from middlemen running open-air fuel depots, according to Sarvesh Bansal, a natural gas distributor in the north Indian city who leads the ad-hoc local environmental group called WatAir.

"We want the factories moved very far away from here," said a 25-year-old rice farmer named Mohammad Sarfaraz, who lives in nearby Farid Nagar. He and others aren't sure what pollutants are being spewed, but they nevertheless protested at nearby factories a few years ago until shooed away by guards.

Scientists invent more accurate way to measure oilsands pollution

"Many illnesses occur because of the factories. Small kids and old people fall sick very easily. There is breathlessness, heart disease, pain in the hands and legs."

India's cement companies were first to bring in petcoke, and still import the most, though cement experts say some sulfur is absorbed during manufacturing.

As word spread of the cheap, high-heat fuel, other industries began using it in their furnaces — producing everything from paper and textiles to brakes, batteries and glass, according to import records compiled by Export Genius. The government was caught off guard by the shift, and there are scant records of how much petcoke is being burned.

Petcoke's use was further encouraged by low import tariffs and a lack of regulations on its most potent pollutants.

Nearly a million hectares of oilsands exploration leases abandoned Industries also like that petcoke, which is around 90 per cent carbon, burns hot. So they can use less of it to produce the same heat as coal — though coal still overshadows petcoke in factory furnaces.

Within a decade, India's petcoke appetite grew so voracious that it began producing and selling its own, and Indian refineries today are making about as much as the country is importing. One of the biggest refiners — Mumbai-based Reliance Industries Ltd., owned by India's wealthiest businessman, Mukesh Ambani — has ramped up petcoke production.

Still, U.S. petcoke remains popular.

Indians typically buy petcoke with about 6-7 per cent sulfur — more than double than with most coal — because it's the least expensive, said Vedanth Vasanth, director of Viva Carbon Pvt. Ltd., a supplier based in the southern city of Chennai that helps broker petcoke contracts between Indian buyers and sellers abroad.

'We rejected the imports'

J.P. Gupta, whose factory in Moradabad district makes acrylic fibers used in clothing, said his factory burns through some 4,000 metric tons of Indian-made petcoke every month.

The factory spent about \$300,000 on equipment to control sulfur, he said, but would have spent 50 per cent more on pollution control if it had opted for U.S. petcoke, which he says is dirtier.

"We rejected the imports...", he said. "But there are some who are not bothering about the pollution."

At an open-air brick kiln just 10 kilometres (six miles) down the road, workers shovelled a mix of petcoke and coal into a fiery furnace. Other than thick wooden sandals to protect their feet from the heat, they wore no safety gear or breathing masks. And there was no equipment to control the gases or soot billowing from the chimney.

India to spray capital from on high amid deepening smog emergency
Such small factories operating off the electricity grid in India's vast informal sector account for 25 to 30 per cent of the country's total energy generation. Often crammed into city outskirts, these outfits manufacturing everything from plastic bangles to metal screws rely on fossil fuels to keep their furnaces afire — the cheaper, the better.

Few adhere to pollution standards, said Ajay Mathur, head of The Energy Research Institute, a non-profit policy research organization in New Delhi. "This is an area where we need to have regulations sooner rather than later," he said

An uncertain future

Although petcoke has been an industrial resource since the 1930s, the high sulfur content and sheer petcoke volume — and growing concern about climate change, as well as particle pollution — could restrict or halt its production, experts said.

Governments could decide to tax high-carbon fuels such as petcoke. They could ban high-sulfur or high-carbon fuels. Or they could set pollution limits that make petcoke use impractical.

In India, judges of the National Green Tribunal demanded in May that the government investigate the environmental and health impacts of petcoke.

This is a completely disgusting state of affairs.

- Legal ruling, environment ministry

"The government was not doing anything," said the WatAir leader Bansal, whose environmental group launched the lawsuit. "There is no law in India, no control. So the whole world's petcoke is coming to India, and it's getting consumed here."

The government's environment ministry has dismissed the idea that petcoke threatens public health in the nation's capital. But the country's Supreme Court, which has consistently demanded or enacted

tougher pollution control measures, recently banned petcoke use by some industries as of Nov. 1 in the three states surrounding pollution-choked New Delhi. It also demanded tighter pollution standards that — if enforced — could further limit its use nationwide.

“This is a completely disgusting state of affairs,” the judges said in their (Oct. 24) ruling, “and this is hardly the way in which the Ministry ought to function if it is expected to perform its duties sincerely, honestly and with dedication.”

The court last month also urged all states across India to pass similar bans.

The ministry refused months of requests for interviews, both before and after the court’s ruling. But analysts say that, short of a nationwide ban, petcoke use could be mostly unaffected.

It’s a classic case of environmental dumping.

– Lorne Stockman, Oil Change International

“The petcoke markets grew so fast across the country that a ban around New Delhi isn’t going to put a huge dent in the overall demand for petcoke,” said Jeffrey McDonald, an analyst at S&P; Global Platts.

Refineries could choose to stop producing petcoke, by using more expensive refining methods that would essentially convert all the heavy oil to other products.

But it’s more likely that if new pollution limits do affect its use, U.S. refiners will just find new petcoke customers in other developing nations, especially in Asia and Africa, experts and environmentalists said.

“It’s a classic case of environmental dumping,” said Lorne Stockman, director of the environmental group Oil Change International. “They need to get rid of it, so it’s dumped into a poor, developing country.”

Last Updated on Wednesday, 06 June 2018 14:42

259 readings

[Oilsands crude headed for price shock in 2020 due to new fuel standards](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 08 June 2018 18:34

The coming marine shipping rules could double or even triple the discount on heavy oil, pushing it much wider than the US\$30 a barrel discount from earlier this year

Raw oilsands. Tighter pollution rules by the International Maritime Organization is expected to wallop prices for heavy oil containing high levels of sulphur. Jeff McIntosh/The Canadian Press

The Canadian Press

Dan Healing

<http://business.financialpost.com/commodities/energy/new-marine-fuel-standards-expected-to-hit-prices-for-oilsands-crude-in-2020> June 7, 2018

1:43 PM EDT



CALGARY — Canada's oilsands industry, hard hit by a price storm this year, could be sailing straight into a pricing typhoon stirred up by new fuel standards for the international shipping industry.

The tighter pollution rules by the International Maritime Organization, dubbed IMO 2020, are set to take effect Jan. 1, 2020, resulting in the

sulphur content limit of “bunker” fuel on ships dropping from 3.5 per cent to just 0.5 per cent.

The switch is expected to wallop prices for heavy oil containing high levels of sulphur — exactly the kind of the raw bitumen that makes up about half of Canada’s 4.4 million barrels per day of crude oil production.

“It’s bad news for any producers of heavy, sour crude oil,” said Martin Tallett, president of Massachusetts-based oil market research firm EnSys Energy.

“The shock is going to go through the system and affect all products, all regions.”

Canada’s energy industry faced a widening spread between Canadian heavy crude prices compared with New York-traded West Texas Intermediate earlier this year that many observers blamed on a shortage of capacity on export pipelines out of Canada.

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Like it or not, crude oil is the biggest reason for Canada’s prosperity
Canadian oil producers enjoying higher crude prices as pipeline congestion eases

The coming marine shipping rules could double or even triple the discount on Canadian heavy, pushing it potentially much wider than the US\$30 a barrel discount producers encountered earlier this year, Tallett said.

The resulting decline in demand for bitumen compared with lighter crudes could result in higher discount prices that last until 2022, according to a report from RBC Dominion Securities researchers.

The looming deadline is a concern at Calgary-based Cenovus Energy Inc., where about 360,000 barrels per day or 91 per cent of its overall production is bitumen, produced from its steam-driven oilsands wells in northern Alberta.

The IMO 2020 rules, along with uncertainty about when pipeline bottlenecks will be cleared, and limits on the company’s ability to process its oil at the U.S. refineries it co-owns, are issues to consider before any moves are made to expand production, said downstream senior vice-president Keith Chiasson.

“We are obviously watching that space,” he said on a recent conference call, adding, “Do we want to bring new production growth into that market if we start seeing (new pipelines) deferred and delayed as well as the IMO impact coming?”

The US\$30 discount paid for bitumen-blend Western Canadian Select versus WTI in the first quarter, up from its typical discount in the mid-teens, prompted Canadian Natural Resources Ltd. to rein in bitumen production and led Husky Energy Inc. to buy more oil from others because it was cheaper than producing its own.

Uncertainty continues to plague proposed new export pipelines including TransCanada's Keystone XL project, the expansion of the Trans Mountain pipeline (despite it being sold to the federal government) and Enbridge's Line 3 pipeline replacement as environmental opposition to the projects remains high.

Environmental concerns have also prompted action in the marine shipping industry, which is considered a highly energy efficient way to move goods over long distances but still harmful due to emissions.

Most bunker fuel burned on ships is derived from the "residue" that remains after all of the more valuable light fuels such as gasoline and diesel have been removed from crude oil in a refinery.

Following combustion in the engine, the sulphur in the fuel becomes sulphur oxide, a pollutant that causes respiratory symptoms and lung disease as well as acid rain, which can harm crops, forests and aquatic species, and contributes to the acidification of the oceans.

The IMO first began restricting emissions in 2005 and its limits on sulphur in bunker fuel have been progressively tightened. Four "emission control areas" in Europe and North America already have a 0.1 per cent limit.

Bunker fuel prices are expected to rise as the IMO 2020 standards lead to expensive upgrades at refineries around the world — by up to US\$60 billion per year if there's full compliance with the new rules, consultancy Wood Mackenzie said in an April study.

It estimates demand for bunker fuels will total about 5.3 million barrels per day in 2020, far exceeding the anticipated world supply of about 1.2 million bpd of ultra-low sulphur fuels from refineries.

That means ships will have to either switch to alternative fuels, which could include marine gas oil, liquefied natural gas or biofuels, or install scrubbers to remove sulphur from exhaust gas.

Tallett said not all oilsands output will suffer because of IMO 2020 — synthetic crude produced from upgraders at oilsands mining operations is considered a light oil and, as such, would still attract prices similar to WTI.

Suncor CEO Steve Williams said in a conference call last month that he thinks the company will come out ahead.

“We think net-net we will actually gain by the IMO 2020 and that’s to do with the diesel yields off of our average barrel across the company and the fact that we think demand and prices will be relatively strong,” he said.

“So, overall, the impact for Suncor is a positive one.”

Suncor produced 425,000 bpd of upgraded crude oil in the first quarter, representing about 77 per cent of its overall oilsands production. It also owns refineries that can buy and process its raw bitumen for further price protection.

While most observers agree that IMO 2020 negatively affects the price outlook for Canadian bitumen producers, there are differences in opinion about how much.

Researchers at Calgary-based GMP FirstEnergy Capital say the impact will be reduced by factors including new pipeline startups, increased U.S. demand for Canadian bitumen to replace declining imports of sour heavy oil from Mexico and Venezuela, and an erosion in the value of the Canadian dollar, which will improve the return for Canadian oil sold in American currency.

“For now, we are treating it as a small negative for prices leading into 2020.”

3

Comments

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259 readings

[Pope warns oil executives: Climate change may ‘destroy civilization’](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 09 June 2018 08:39

**BY AVERY ANAPOL - 06/09/18 07:21 AM EDT 1,549
2,069**

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/391470-pope-warns-oil-executives-climate-change-may-destroy-civilization>



© Getty Images

Pope warns oil executives: Climate change may 'destroy civilization'

© Getty Images

Pope Francis on Saturday issued a dire warning to top oil executives, saying that climate change could “destroy civilization.”

At a two-day conference at the Vatican, the pope called climate change a challenge of “epochal proportions,” according to Reuters.

He also said that the world must move toward using clean energy and a reduction in the use of fossil fuels.

“Civilization requires energy but energy use must not destroy civilization,” Francis said.

The conference, organized by the University of Notre Dame in the United States, brought together executives from asset manager BlackRock, BP and Norwegian oil and energy company Equinor, among others.

The event was prompted by Francis’s 2015 papal encyclical blaming humans for climate change and criticizing world leaders for not acting swiftly enough to address it.

The conference comes a little less than a year after President Trump pulled the U.S. out of the Paris climate accord. Trump has referred to global warming as a “hoax” and drawn criticism from the scientific community for stacking his administration with officials who deny the human role in climate change. During a meeting with Trump, the pope gave him a copy of the encyclical. The pope told the group Saturday that global issues like poverty are “interconnected” to concerns about global warming and access to electricity.

“We know that the challenges facing us are interconnected,” he said, according to Reuters. “If we are to eliminate poverty and hunger ... the more than one billion people without electricity today need to gain access to it.”

“But that energy should also be clean, by a reduction in the systematic use of fossil fuels,” he added. “Our desire to ensure energy for all must not lead to the

undesired effect of a spiral of extreme climate changes due to a catastrophic rise in global temperatures, harsher environments and increased levels of poverty.”

244 readings

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Posted by Dragonslayer

Tuesday, 12 June 2018 10:01

1. Disrupt Cultural norms (class warfare)
2. Create privileged class
3. Give business free reign
4. Destroy world economic trade order
5. Destroy world military alliance order
6. Build military and trade alliances with weaker enemies
7. Eat up old world order with military
8. Use new global order to create self as "World Ruler"

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[Italy won't ratify EU free-trade deal with Canada, says new farm minister](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 14 June 2018 08:38

All 28 EU member states must approve the agreement for it to take full effect

Thomson Reuters • Posted: Jun 14, 2018 9:13 AM ET | Last Updated: an hour ago

Quality control employee Fabrizio Giberti inspects a Parmigiano Reggiano Parmesan cheese wheel amongst those stacked in the Credito Emiliano bank temperature-controlled vault, in Montecavolo, near Reggio Emilia, Italy, Thursday Aug. 20, 2009. In the 28-member European Union, Italy has the most food products with PDO and PGI labels, including Parmigiano Reggiano cheese and Prosciutto di Parma ham. (The Associated Press)

739 comments

Italy will not ratify the European Union's free trade agreement with Canada, its new agriculture minister said on Thursday,

ratcheting up an international trade spat and potentially scuppering the EU's biggest accord in years.

The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) is the first major trade deal the European Union has signed since it began implementing its South Korea agreement in 2011.

All 28 EU member states must approve the agreement for it to take full effect.

In an interview with daily La Stampa, Minister Gian Marco Centinaio said the Italian government would ask the parliament not to ratify the treaty since it does not ensure sufficient protection for the country's speciality foods.

"We will not ratify the free-trade treaty with Canada because it protects only a small part of our PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) and PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) products," Centinaio told the newspaper.

"Doubts over this agreement are shared by many of my European colleagues." In the 28-member European Union, Italy has the most food products with PDO and PGI labels, including Parmigiano Reggiano cheese and Prosciutto di Parma ham.

'Missed opportunity': Dairy industry disappointed as Canada relents on EU cheese imports

Italy's farmers 'demonizing' Canadian wheat in bid to protect domestic industry

Cheese dispute puts July 1 target for Canada-EU trade deal in jeopardy

Under CETA, Canada has recognised more than 40 Italian PDO and PGI labels out of a total of 292 for the food-obsessed country.

Coldiretti, the influential association of Italian agricultural companies, backed Centinaio's intention, saying in a statement CETA was "wrong and risky" for Italy.

It said Italian food exports, equal to 41 billion euros last year, could triple with a serious fight against international food counterfeiting. The treaty did enter in force on a provisional basis in September 2017, sweeping away tariffs on a large number of goods and widening access to Canadian beef in Europe and EU cheese and wine in Canada.

Italy's Minister of Agriculture Gian Marco Centinaio is seen during the sworn-in ceremony at the Quirinal palace in Rome, Italy, June 1, 2018. (Tony Gentile/Reuters)

Its supporters say it would increase trade between the partners by 20 percent and boost the EU economy by 12 billion euros (\$14 billion) a year and Canada's by \$12 billion.

Italy's threat comes amidst trade war with Trump

Some farm associations and critics in European states have expressed concerns about the threat of rapidly rising pork and beef imports from Canada.

Coldiretti also mentioned risks posed by the annulment of duties on Canadian wheat, a country where the herbicide glyphosate can be used.

Centinaio belongs to the far-right League party and is considered close to its leader and Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini. Salvini is emerging as the pivot in the new government that the League formed this month with the anti-establishment 5-Star Movement.

The minister was not immediately available to comment on the interview and it was not possible to get a reaction from the office of the prime minister on the issue.

Canada's International Trade Minister François-Philippe Champagne was in Italy just a few days ago to talk to the new government about the deal.

"He conveyed the benefits to the new government and together with those 12 nations who have already taken the step to ratify domestically, will continue to work on national ratification throughout the EU," said Champagne's press secretary Pierre-Olivier Herbert in an email to CBC News.

Asked about Italy's position on CETA, the European Commission said it was working closely with EU members to ensure that the EU trade accords were mutually beneficial.

The government programme that forms the basis of the League-5-Star coalition mentioned CETA, saying the executive would oppose "the aspects [of the treaty] that imply an excessive weakening of the

protection of citizens' rights."

The government's programme also pledged to "protect the highest-quality products of Made in Italy."

Italy's challenge to CETA comes after U.S. President Donald Trump backed out of a joint communique agreed by Group of Seven leaders in Canada at the weekend that mentioned the need for "free, fair and mutually beneficial" trade and the importance of fighting protectionism.

The United States has imposed tariffs on steel and aluminium imports from Canada, Mexico and the European Union and is weighing up the possibility of slapping additional duties on automobile imports. Trump says his tariffs are meant to protect U.S. industry and workers from unfair international competition as part of his "America First" agenda.



Last Updated on Friday, 15 June 2018 10:12

201 readings

[Japan suspends sale of Canadian wheat after GMO wheat found in Alberta](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 15 June 2018 10:13

by Yuka Obayashi, Rod Nickel

<https://ca.reuters.com/article/domesticNews/idCAKBN1JB100-OCADN>

TOKYO/WINNIPEG, Manitoba (Reuters) - Japan's farm ministry said on

Friday it has suspended its tender and sale of wheat from Canada after grain containing a genetically modified trait was discovered last summer in Canada's Alberta province.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) said on Thursday the wheat containing a genetically modified trait, developed by Monsanto Co (BAYGn.DE) to tolerate the Roundup weed-killer, was discovered in Alberta.

"We are suspending the tender and sale of Canadian wheat until we confirm that the Canadian wheat that Japan buys contains no GMO," an official at the Japanese farm ministry said.

Canada is one of the world's largest wheat exporters. While other crops such as corn and soybeans have been widely genetically modified to improve yield or withstand threats, GMO wheat has not been approved anywhere for commercial production because of consumers' concerns.

The wheat, discovered near a rural road after it survived herbicide spraying, has not been approved for commercial use.

Officials with Japan's ministry of agriculture, forestry and fisheries are scheduled to visit Canada next week to seek more information, said Cam Dahl, president of industry group Cereals Canada, whose members include Cargill Ltd [CARGIL.UL] and Richardson International.

He said he is concerned that South Korea and China may be next to suspend Canadian wheat imports.

Bayer AG

100.08

BAYGN.DEXETRA

-0.72 (-0.71%)

BAYGn.DE

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In 2016, Japan and South Korea temporarily suspended U.S. wheat imports after a similar GMO wheat finding.

Losing Japanese buyers, who pay a premium for high-quality, high-protein wheat, hurts Canada and creates opportunities for U.S. and Australian wheat exporters, Dahl said.

Japan's move also leaves an undetermined volume of Canadian wheat already loaded on vessels needing to find a new market, possibly at bargain rates to Indonesia or Bangladesh, Dahl said.

Reporting by Yuka Obayashi in Tokyo and Rod Nickel in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Editing by Sherry Jacob-Phillips and Dan Grebler

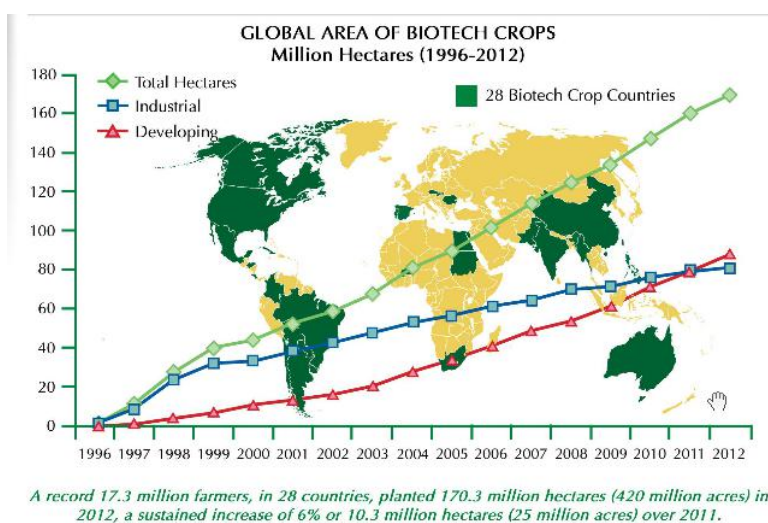
[GLOBAL PETITION CALLING FOR THE BANNING OF GENETICALLY ENGINEERED FOOD AND CROPS](#) 

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 15 June 2018 10:40

Finally countries are moving to ban genetically engineered food and crops, and refusing to enter into trade agreements with countries that produce GE food and crops. I have been circulating this petition for years

by Joan Russow Global Compliance Research Project, Ecological Rights Association *



Please circulate on e-mail

To sign a petition on facebook please go to Change.org

<http://www.change.org/en-CA/petitions/the-un-general-assembly-institute-a-global-ban-on-genetically-engineered-food-and-crops>

Genetically engineered food and crops have contaminated the Global food system and undermined food security and must be banned.




The institutional Collusion, in relation to genetically engineered food and crops, among corporations, governments, universities and regulatory agencies has been endemic; this collusion has sadly spread to certain scientific publications. For the sake of food security for present and future generations: (i) this collusion must end; (ii) the precautionary principle must be invoked, (iv) genetically engineered food and crops, banned; (v) the charters of Monsanto et al, revoked; and (vi) charges of gross/criminal negligence against these corporations, levied.

We are living in a wake of corporate/government/university/negligence from previous harmful substances that were once deemed safe for human health and the environment. Given the unattended consequences of genetically engineered foods and crops, and the global commitment to the precautionary principle, it becomes imperative to institute a complete ban on genetically engineered foods and crops. There is sufficient emerging scientific evidence to justify the banning to prohibit all further production and export of genetically engineered foods and crops.

Last Updated on Friday, 15 June 2018 10:50

FULL ARTICLE NOT AVAILABLE

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[Diabolical Plan to Make Rich Richer](#)   

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Dragonslayer

Friday, 15 June 2018 11:58

Stop standing around like deer in the headlights...Stop this process from happening.

1. Start World Trade War
2. Invite foreign companies to move to US to avoid Tariffs
3. Create poor working class using immigrant children from Walmart detainees
4. Add the new factories to the detained centres so that detainees can live in Walmart barracks and work in factories next door.
5. Nationalize these new industries and get buddies to run them thus creating a rich American oligarchy just like Russia

Bonus...Donald Chump gets his **wall** created by building **Walmarts** along the border using cheap child labour. That's how he can get Mexico to pay for his wall

Last Updated on Friday, 15 June 2018 12:41

233 readings

[Former Bank of Canada Head: Pipeline Protesters May Be Killed. So Be It.](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 15 June 2018 16:57

"North American governments have shown the 'fortitude' necessary to kill indigenous people often enough that this is no idle threat," warns Bill McKibben.

<https://www.commondreams.org/news/2018/06/15/former-bank-canada-head-pipeline-protesters-may-be-killed-so-be-it>

byAndrea Germanos, staff writer Common Dreams



Protesters at a rally in Vancouver to show opposition to the Trans Mountain pipeline on September 9th, 2017. (Photo: William Chen/flickr/cc)

As Canada's controversial Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project faces ongoing opposition, the former governor of the Bank of Canada said that protesters may die but that the government should push the project through anyway.

Speaking at an event Wednesday, David Dodge said, "We're going to have some very unpleasant circumstances," the Edmonton Journal reported. "There are some people that are going to die in protesting construction of this pipeline. We have to understand that."

"Nevertheless, we have to be willing to enforce the law once it's there," Dodge said. "It's going to take some fortitude to stand

up.”

In an interview with the Journal, he elaborated by saying, “We have seen it other places, that equivalent of religious zeal leading to flouting of the law in a way that could lead to death.”

Dodge’s comments prompted outrage from climate activists.

Author and 350-org co-founder Bill McKibben warned, “North American governments have shown the ‘fortitude’ necessary to kill indigenous people often enough that this is no idle threat,” while Canadian author Naomi Klein called the threat a “disgrace.” She added, “If the worst happens, we now know they went into this with their eyes wide open.”

276 readings

[Trump repeats falsehood that Democrats are to blame for forced family separations at the US-Mexico border](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 17 June 2018 07:24

Trump repeats falsehood that Democrats are to blame for forced family separations at the US-Mexico border

Ellen Cranley and Michelle Mark

<http://uk.businessinsider.com/trump-falsely-claims-democrats-border-family-separations-immigration-2018-6>

[Evan Vucci/AP](#)

trump red tie white house pressEvan Vucci/AP

President Donald Trump repeated a false claim that Democrats are behind his administration’s “zero-tolerance” policy that separates families at the US-Mexico border.

US immigration law does not require families to be split up at the border

Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced the policy in May.

New immigration legislation introduced by House Republicans Friday does nothing to change the policy.

Almost 2,000 children have reportedly been separated from their families at the border over six weeks under the policy.

President Donald Trump repeated a false claim in a tweet Saturday that blames Democrats for the policy of separating immigrant parents from their children upon crossing the southern border between the US and Mexico. Trump has tweeted the claim before, and he made the same assertion in front of a White House press gaggle earlier this week.

340 readings

[1972 hOW LONG MUST HUMANITY WAIT Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment](#)
[Earth News](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 18 June 2018 16:46

Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 18 June 2018 07:21

[From Report of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, Stockholm, June 1972.]

Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment

The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, having met at Stockholm from 5 to 16 June 1972, having considered the need for a common outlook and for common principles to inspire and guide the peoples of the world in the preservation and enhancement of the human environment,

Proclaims that:

1. Man is both creature and moulder of his environment, which gives him physical sustenance and affords him the opportunity for intellectual, moral, social and spiritual growth. In the long and tortuous evolution of the human race on this planet a stage has been reached when, through the rapid acceleration of science and technology, man has acquired the power to transform his environment in countless ways and on an unprecedented scale. Both aspects of man's environment, the natural and the man-made, are essential to his well-being and to the enjoyment of basic human rights the right to life itself.

2. The protection and improvement of the human environment is a

major issue which affects the well-being of peoples and economic development throughout the world; it is the urgent desire of the peoples of the whole world and the duty of all Governments.

3. Man has constantly to sum up experience and go on discovering, inventing, creating and advancing. In our time, man's capability to transform his surroundings, if used wisely, can bring to all peoples the benefits of development and the opportunity to enhance the quality of life. Wrongly or heedlessly applied, the same power can do incalculable harm to human beings and the human environment. We see around us growing evidence of man-made harm in many regions of the earth: dangerous levels of pollution in water, air, earth and living beings; major and undesirable disturbances to the ecological balance of the biosphere; destruction and depletion of irreplaceable resources; and gross deficiencies, harmful to the physical, mental and social health of man, in the man-made environment, particularly in the living and working environment.

4. In the developing countries most of the environmental problems are caused by under-development. Millions continue to live far below the minimum levels required for a decent human existence, deprived of adequate food and clothing, shelter and education, health and sanitation. Therefore, the developing countries must direct their efforts to development, bearing in mind their priorities and the need to safeguard and improve the environment. For the same purpose, the industrialized countries should make efforts to reduce the gap themselves and the developing countries. In the industrialized countries, environmental problems are generally related to industrialization and technological development.

5. The natural growth of population continuously presents problems for the preservation of the environment, and adequate policies and measures should be adopted, as appropriate, to face these problems. Of all things in the world, people are the most precious. It is the people that propel social progress, create social wealth, develop science and technology and, through their hard work, continuously transform the human environment. Along with social progress and the advance of production, science and technology, the capability of man to improve the environment increases with each passing day.

6. A point has been reached in history when we must shape our actions throughout the world with a more prudent care for their environmental consequences. Through ignorance or indifference we

can do massive and irreversible harm to the earthly environment on which our life and well being depend. Conversely, through fuller knowledge and wiser action, we can achieve for ourselves and our posterity a better life in an environment more in keeping with human needs and hopes. There are broad vistas for the enhancement of environmental quality and the creation of a good life. What is needed is an enthusiastic but calm state of mind and intense but orderly work. For the purpose of attaining freedom in the world of nature, man must use knowledge to build, in collaboration with nature, a better environment. To defend and improve the human environment for present and future generations has become an imperative goal for mankind—a goal to be pursued together with, and in harmony with, the established and fundamental goals of peace and of worldwide economic and social development.

7. To achieve this environmental goal will demand the acceptance of responsibility by citizens and communities and by enterprises and institutions at every level, all sharing equitably in common efforts. Individuals in all walks of life as well as organizations in many fields, by their values and the sum of their actions, will shape the world environment of the future.

Local and national governments will bear the greatest burden for large-scale environmental policy and action within their jurisdictions. International cooperation is also needed in order to raise resources to support the developing countries in carrying out their responsibilities in this field. A growing class of environmental problems, because they are regional or global in extent or because they affect the common international realm, will require extensive cooperation among nations and action by international organizations in the common interest.

The Conference calls upon Governments and peoples to exert common efforts for the preservation and improvement of the human environment, for the benefit of all the people and for their posterity.

=

Principles

States the common conviction that:

PRINCIPLE 1

Man has the fundamental right to freedom, equality and adequate conditions of life, in an environment of a quality that permits a

life of dignity and well-being, and he bears a solemn responsibility to protect and improve the environment for present and future generations. In this respect, policies promoting or perpetuating apartheid, racial segregation, discrimination, colonial and other forms of oppression and foreign domination stand condemned and must be eliminated.

PRINCIPLE 2

The natural resources of the earth, including the air, water, land, flora and fauna and especially representative samples of natural ecosystems, must be safeguarded for the benefit of present and future generations through careful planning or management, as appropriate.

PRINCIPLE 3

The capacity of the earth to produce vital renewable resources must be maintained and, wherever practicable, restored or improved.

PRINCIPLE 4

Man has a special responsibility to safeguard and wisely manage the heritage of wildlife and its habitat, which are now gravely imperilled by a combination of adverse factors. Nature conservation, including wildlife, must therefore receive importance in planning for economic development.

PRINCIPLE 5

The non-renewable resources of the earth must be employed in such a way as to guard against the danger of their future exhaustion and to ensure that benefits from such employment are shared by all mankind.

PRINCIPLE 6

The discharge of toxic substances or of other substances and the release of heat, in such quantities or concentrations as to exceed the capacity of the environment to render them harmless, must be halted in order to ensure that serious or irreversible damage is not inflicted upon ecosystems. The just struggle of the peoples of ill countries against pollution should be supported.

PRINCIPLE 7

States shall take all possible steps to prevent pollution of the seas by substances that are liable to create hazards to human health, to harm living resources and marine life, to damage amenities or to interfere with other legitimate uses of the sea.

PRINCIPLE 8

Economic and social development is essential for ensuring a favorable living and working environment for man and for creating conditions on earth that are necessary for the improvement of the quality of life.

PRINCIPLE 9

Environmental deficiencies generated by the conditions of underdevelopment and natural disasters pose grave problems and can best be remedied by accelerated development through the transfer of substantial quantities of financial and technological assistance as a supplement to the domestic effort of the developing countries and such timely assistance as may be required.

PRINCIPLE 10

For the developing countries, stability of prices and adequate earnings for primary commodities and raw materials are essential to environmental management, since economic factors as well as ecological processes must be taken into account.

PRINCIPLE 11

The environmental policies of all States should enhance and not adversely affect the present or future development potential of developing countries, nor should they hamper the attainment

of better living conditions for all, and appropriate steps should be taken by States and international organizations with a view to reaching agreement on meeting the possible national and international economic consequences resulting from the application of environmental measures.

PRINCIPLE 12

Resources should be made available to preserve and improve the environment, taking into account the circumstances and particular requirements of developing countries and any costs which may emanate from their incorporating environmental safeguards into their development planning and the need for making available to them, upon their request, additional international technical and financial assistance for this purpose.

PRINCIPLE 13

In order to achieve a more rational management of resources and thus to improve the environment, States should adopt an integrated and coordinated approach to their development planning so as to ensure that development is compatible with the need to protect and improve environment for the benefit of their population.

PRINCIPLE 14

Rational planning constitutes an essential tool for reconciling any conflict between the needs of development and the need to protect and improve the environment.

PRINCIPLE 15

Planning must be applied to human settlements and urbanization with a view to avoiding adverse effects on the environment and obtaining maximum social, economic and environmental benefits for all. In this respect projects which are designed for colonialist and racist domination must be abandoned.

PRINCIPLE 16

Demographic policies which are without prejudice to basic human rights and which are deemed appropriate by Governments concerned should be applied in those regions where the rate of population growth or excessive population concentrations are likely to have adverse effects on the environment of the human environment and impede development.

PRINCIPLE 17

Appropriate national institutions must be entrusted with the task of planning, managing or controlling the environmental resources of States with a view to enhancing environmental quality.

PRINCIPLE 18

Science and technology, as part of their contribution to economic and social development, must be applied to the identification, avoidance and control of environmental risks and the solution of environmental problems and for the common good of mankind.

PRINCIPLE 19

Education in environmental matters, for the younger generation as well as adults, giving due consideration to the underprivileged, is essential in order to broaden the basis for an enlightened opinion and responsible conduct by individuals, enterprises and communities in protecting and improving the environment in its full human dimension. It is also essential that mass media of communications avoid contributing to the deterioration of the environment, but, on the contrary, disseminates information of an educational nature on the need to protect and improve the environment in order to enable man to develop in every respect.

PRINCIPLE 20

Scientific research and development in the context of environmental problems, both national and multinational, must be promoted in all countries, especially the developing countries. In this connection, the free flow of up-to-date scientific information and transfer of experience must be supported and assisted, to facilitate the solution of environmental problems; environmental technologies should be made available to developing countries on terms which would encourage their wide dissemination without constituting an economic burden on the developing countries.

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.

PRINCIPLE 22

States shall cooperate to develop further the international law regarding liability and compensation for the victims of pollution

and other environmental damage caused by activities within the jurisdiction or control of such States to areas beyond their jurisdiction.

PRINCIPLE 23

Without prejudice to such criteria as may be agreed upon by the international community, or to standards which will have to be determined nationally, it will be essential in all cases to consider the systems of values prevailing in each country, and the extent of the applicability of standards which are valid for the most advanced countries but which may be inappropriate and of unwarranted social cost for the developing countries.

PRINCIPLE 24

International matters concerning the protection and improvement of the environment should be handled in a cooperative spirit by all countries, big and small, on an equal footing. Cooperation through multilateral or bilateral arrangements or other appropriate means is essential to effectively control, prevent, reduce and eliminate adverse environmental effects resulting from activities conducted in all spheres, in such a way that due account is taken of the sovereignty and interests of all States.

PRINCIPLE 25

States shall ensure that international organizations play a coordinated, efficient and dynamic role for the protection and improvement of the environment.

PRINCIPLE 26

Man and his environment must be spared the effects of nuclear weapons and all other means of mass destruction. States must strive to reach prompt agreement, in the relevant international organs, on the elimination and complete destruction of such weapons.

Last Updated on Monday, 18 June 2018 16:49

199 readings

[Looking to the Sky for Solutions to Mexico's Water Scarcity](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 21 June 2018 08:40

By Emilio Godoy - Reprint

Photomontage by the organisation Isla Urbana, a pioneer in the promotion of rainwater harvesting as part of a new model in the management of water supply and consumption in Mexico, where the benefits of the system to get access to water are recreated in informal settlements in the west of the capital. Credit: Isla Urbana

MEXICO CITY, Jun 20 2018 (IPS) - Twenty-five years ago, Mexican engineer Gustavo Rodriguez decided to collect rainwater to solve the scarcity of water in his home and contribute to the care of natural resources.

“We did it to seek a better integration with the care of nature. We wanted to have a sustainable home,” this resident of the indigenous town of San Bartolo Ameyalco, on the west side of Mexico City, told IPS.

Rodriguez installed a roof catchment, cistern, filters and piping, a system that retains 90 cubic metres (m³) of water and meets for at least seven months a year the water needs of the 12 people who live in three houses on his land.

“We use between 80 and 90 liters per person per day,” said Rodríguez, who has also incorporated a biodigester to generate biomass as energy to increase the sustainability of his farm.

San Bartolo Ameyalco, which means “place of springs” in the Nahuatl language, with a population of some 20,000 people, is supplied with water from a spring connected to the local water network which it feeds. But many people lack piped water, even though they pay for it.

“There is trade in water in tanker trucks and this has caused tension with its management. There is access to water, but not all people receive it and this is because the valves are manipulated to get people to pay political favours” in exchange for the supply, said Rodriguez, who has not received piped water for four

months.

Rain can help this Latin American country of 130 million people to cope with the water crisis projected by experts from 2030 onwards, while it is currently causing floods, landslides and generally ending up in the drains.

At the same time, it can help Mexico achieve the goal of ensuring availability and sustainable management of clean water and sanitation for all, the sixth of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals to be met by 2030.

The country receives an estimated 1.45 billion m³ of water per year in the form of precipitation, according to Mexico's Water Statistics 2017.

In Mexico, rainwater ends up in the drains, when collecting it could supply water to households that lack the service. In the picture, a storm hits Mexico City on April 28, 2018. Credit: Emilio Godoy/IPS

Of the rainfall, 72 percent evaporates and returns to the atmosphere, 21 percent drains through water bodies and 6.3 percent infiltrates the subsoil and recharges aquifers, of which 105 out of 653 are overexploited.

In Mexico, rainwater ends up in the drains, when collecting it could supply water to households that lack the service. In the picture, a storm hits Mexico City on April 28, 2018. Credit: Emilio Godoy/IPS

In Mexico, rainwater ends up in the drains, when collecting it could supply water to households that lack the service. In the picture, a storm hits Mexico City on April 28, 2018. Credit: Emilio Godoy/IPS

Between 1981 and 2010, 740 millimeters of annual rainfall fell on this nation, while in 2016, rainfall rose slightly to 744 millimeters.

Data from the government's National Water Commission indicate that the average natural availability of the resource fell from 18,035 m³ per inhabitant per year in 1950 to 3,687 m³ in 2016.

Despite the decrease, availability is not a problem, according to the parameters set by the United Nations, which establishes that a country with less than 1,000 m³ per inhabitant per year has a shortage of water and a country with a range between 1,000 and 1,700 m³ per person of water supply suffers water stress.

Data from the non-governmental Oxfam in Mexico indicate that almost 10 million people have no water in their homes, in violation of the right to water established in the constitution since 2012.

In addition, Mexico is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, such as

prolonged droughts and heavy rainfall within a wet season that traditionally goes from May to October. Several studies foresee a water crisis by 2040, especially from the centre to the north of the country.

There are 8.8 million people living in Mexico City proper and more than 20 million in Greater Mexico City, and on average almost 16 m³ of water per inhabitant per day are extracted and only about 11 are replaced.

Water shortages prompted Matilde Jiménez to seek rainwater collection for her home in the Cerrada del Bosque Xochitonalá shantytown in the Santa Cruz Alcapizca neighbourhood of Xochimilco, one of the 16 boroughs into which Mexico City is divided, on the south side of the city.

“We didn’t have water, and a neighbour heard about the Isla Urbana organisation, their people visited us and registered several neighbours to get collectors installed,” Jiménez, a homemaker who is studying creative writing, told IPS.

After paying 150 dollars, her home, where she lives with her husband and three children, now has a collection system that has provided them with about 11,000 litres since its installation, which covers more than five months of consumption. They no longer have to spend money to buy water from the tanker trucks.

A large rainwater collection tank that serves for irrigation, water for animal consumption and, once properly purified, human consumption. Neta Cero has installed more than 2,000 of these systems in four states of Mexico. Credit: Neta Cero

A large rainwater collection tank that serves for irrigation, water for animal consumption and, once properly purified, human consumption. Neta Cero has installed more than 2,000 of these systems in four states of Mexico. Credit: Neta Cero

A large rainwater collection tank that serves for irrigation, water for animal consumption and, once properly purified, human consumption. Neta Cero has installed more than 2,000 of these systems in four states of Mexico. Credit: Neta Cero

Rainfall reduces the need to obtain or import water from conventional sources, allows for the creation of supplies at specific locations, and does not depend on the traditional system, thus reducing the vicious circle of dependency and crisis.

Seven out of 16 boroughs in the capital suffer from water insecurity, calculated from the degree of marginalisation, access to water and distribution of the resource, according to the non-governmental organisation Isla Urbana, a pioneer in the promotion of rainwater harvesting in the country.

This organisation estimates that 21,693 hectares of rooftops would contribute 16 million m³ per month. The city consumes 32 m³ per second, so rainfall could provide 20 percent of that demand.

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Farmers from Central America and Brazil Join Forces to Live with Drought

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Rainwater Harvesting Improves Lives in El Salvador

Water scarcity has led several organisations to develop rainwater harvesting systems in remote areas of the country, such as the social enterprise Neta Cero.

“There are communities without access to water. What we are doing is solving these problems with these systems that represent a very important source for these communities,” its founder, Tirian Mink, from the United States, told IPS.

This social entrepreneur, who created the organisation in 2013, recalled how he himself built the first “spring-roof” that year in the town of Palo de Marca, in the municipality of Huautla de Jiménez, which has a population of over 31,000 people and is located in the southern state of Oaxaca.

“It was in a preschool, it was a very important learning experience. We installed it in a couple of weeks with local materials, the tank was filled in less than a week,” said Mink, who chose the site because of the high levels of water stress and heavy rainfall and where nine systems already operate to provide a supply of water to the community.

The water is stored in tanks with a capacity of between 200,000 and 500,000 litres, at a cost of between 4,800 and 146,000 dollars, depending on the complexity and size of the facility, and with a total capacity to collect up to five million litres. Neta Cero has already connected 2,315 systems in four states since 2013.

The Mexican government is implementing the National Programme for Rainwater Harvesting and Eco-techniques in Rural Areas, which in 2017 was implemented in 94 highly marginalised areas in eight of the country's 32 states, with the installation of 944 rainwater harvesting systems.

The government of Mexico City has also installed hundreds of rainwater systems in an attempt to alleviate the crisis that threatens to worsen in the long term.

Engineer Rodríguez proposed the promotion of rainwater harvesting. “There is little awareness, aggravated by political patronage. Politicians need to be aware of the problem and its solutions. The problem is not technical, it is social, a problem of governance. There is a lack of incentives,” he said.

Mink proposed more funding for the installation and maintenance of systems.

“We seek interventions with greater impact with the least investment. The biggest impact is achieved with large systems, but one difficulty is that the water service is free of charge so there is no maintenance. That is a challenge, and to have sustainable systems” environmentally and financially, said Mink.

Photomontage by the organisation Isla Urbana, a pioneer in the promotion of rainwater harvesting as part of a new model in the management of water supply and consumption in Mexico, where the benefits of the system to get access to water are recreated in informal settlements in the west of the capital. Credit: Isla Urbana

Last Updated on Thursday, 21 June 2018 23:40

207 readings

[Group photo opposing Trumps policy of zero tolerance](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 21 June 2018 10:18

Photo taken on June 20 World Refugee Day on the Steps of the BC Legislature

The United States is the only country that has not ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child

Under the Convention on the Rights of the Child is the recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world: (Convention On the Rights of the child)

1. To not detain refugee claimants (and other immigrants) as a matter of routine, for lengthy periods of time because they lack money or family is unable to post bond. The UNHCR has published guidelines on the detention of asylum seekers objecting to such detention. The concern is that the grounds and powers of arrest result in abuses of fundamental human rights. powers of arrest result in abuses of fundamental human rights.

In a debate, a Trump supporter exclaimed that Trump would be a hero if he announced that the children would no longer be separated from their parents, his opponent said that is like praising the arsonist who put out the fire [given it was Trump who initially gave the zero Tolerance edict]

Last Updated on Friday, 22 June 2018 09:45

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Posted by Dragonslayer

Thursday, 21 June 2018 11:43

Well Donald ... Your dream of being on the cover of TIME has come true. For someone who thinks any news is good news; how do you like this



Last Updated on Thursday, 21 June 2018 11:48

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[How US policy in Honduras set the stage for today' s mass migration](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 21 June 2018 13:45

October 31, 2016 9.00pm EDT - Author

Joseph Nevins Associate Professor of Geography, Vassar College

Disclosure statement

Joseph Nevins is a member of the editorial committee of the North American

Congress on Latin America (NACLA).

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U.S. Marines in Honduras in July 2016.

Central American migrants – particularly unaccompanied minors – are again crossing the U.S.-Mexico boundary in large numbers.

In 2014, more than 68,000 unaccompanied Central American children were apprehended at the U.S.-Mexico boundary. This year so far there have been close to 60,000.

The mainstream narrative often reduces the causes of migration to factors unfolding in migrants' home countries. In reality, migration is often a manifestation of a profoundly unequal and exploitative relationship between migrant-sending countries and countries of destination. Understanding this is vital to making immigration policy more effective and ethical.

Through my research on immigration and border policing, I have learned a lot about these dynamics. One example involves relations between Honduras and the United States.

U.S. roots of Honduran emigration

I first visited Honduras in 1987 to do research. As I walked around the city of Comayagua, many thought that I, a white male with short hair in his early 20's, was a U.S. soldier. This was because hundreds of U.S. soldiers were stationed at the nearby Palmerola Air Base at the time. Until shortly before my arrival, many of them would frequent Comayagua, particularly its "red zone" of female sex workers.

U.S. military presence in Honduras and the roots of Honduran migration to the United States are closely linked. It began in the late 1890s, when U.S.-based banana companies first became active there. As historian Walter LaFeber writes in "Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America," American companies "built railroads, established their own banking systems, and bribed government officials at a dizzying pace." As a result, the Caribbean coast "became a foreign-controlled enclave that systematically swung the whole of Honduras into a one-crop economy whose wealth was carried off to New Orleans, New York, and later Boston."

By 1914, U.S. banana interests owned almost 1 million acres of Honduras' best land. These holdings grew through the 1920s to such an extent that, as LaFeber asserts, Honduran peasants "had no hope of access to their nation's good soil." Over a few decades, U.S. capital also came to dominate the country's banking and mining sectors, a process facilitated by the weak state of Honduras' domestic business sector. This was coupled with direct U.S. political and military interventions to protect U.S. interests in 1907 and 1911.

Such developments made Honduras' ruling class dependent on Washington for support. A central component of this ruling class was and remains the Honduran military. By the mid-1960s it had become, in LaFeber's words, the country's "most developed political institution," – one that Washington played a key role in shaping.

The Reagan era

A U.S. military advisor instructs Honduran troopers in Puerto Castilla, Honduras, in 1983. AP Photo

This was especially the case during the presidency of Ronald Reagan in the 1980s. At that time, U.S. political and military policy was so influential that many referred to the Central American country as the "U.S.S. Honduras" and the Pentagon Republic.

As part of its effort to overthrow the Sandinista government in neighboring Nicaragua and "roll back" the region's leftist movements, the Reagan administration "temporarily" stationed several hundred U.S. soldiers in Honduras. Moreover, it trained and sustained Nicaragua's "contra" rebels on Honduran soil, while greatly increasing military aid and arm sales to the country.

The Reagan years also saw the construction of numerous joint Honduran-U.S. military bases and installations. Such moves greatly strengthened the militarization of Honduran society. In turn, political repression rose. There was a dramatic increase in the number of political assassinations, "disappearances" and illegal detentions.

The Reagan administration also played a big role in restructuring the Honduran economy. It did so by strongly pushing for internal economic reforms, with a focus on exporting manufactured goods. It also helped deregulate and destabilize the global coffee trade, upon which Honduras heavily depended. These changes made Honduras more amenable to the interests of global capital. They disrupted traditional forms of agriculture and undermined an already weak social safety net.

These decades of U.S. involvement in Honduras set the stage for Honduran emigration to the United States, which began to markedly increase in the 1990s.

In the post-Reagan era, Honduras remained a country scarred by a heavy-handed military, significant human rights abuses and pervasive poverty. Still, liberalizing tendencies of successive governments and grassroots pressure provided openings for democratic forces.

They contributed, for example, to the election of Manuel Zelaya, a liberal reformist, as president in 2006. He led on progressive measures such as raising the minimum wage. He also tried to organize a plebiscite to allow for a constituent assembly to replace the country's constitution, which had been written during a military government. However, these efforts incurred the ire of the country's oligarchy, leading to his overthrow by the military in June 2009.

Post-coup Honduras

The 2009 coup, more than any other development, explains the increase in Honduran migration across the southern U.S. border in the last few years. The Obama administration has played an important role in these developments. Although it officially decried Zelaya's ouster, it equivocated on whether or not it constituted a coup, which would have required the U.S. to stop sending most aid to the country.

Then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton meets with Honduran foreign minister in 2010. AP Photo/Evan Vucci

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, in particular, sent conflicting messages, and worked to ensure that Zelaya did not return to power. This was contrary to the wishes of the Organization of American States, the leading hemispheric political

forum composed of the 35 member-countries of the Americas, including the Caribbean. Several months after the coup, Clinton supported a highly questionable election aimed at legitimating the post-coup government.

Strong military ties between the U.S. and Honduras persist: several hundred U.S. troops are stationed at Soto Cano Air Base (formerly Palmerola) in the name of fighting the drug war and providing humanitarian aid.

Since the coup, writes historian Dana Frank, “a series of corrupt administrations has unleashed open criminal control of Honduras, from top to bottom of the government.”

Organized crime, drug traffickers and the country’s police heavily overlap. Impunity reigns in a country with frequent politically-motivated killings. It is the world’s most dangerous country for environmental activists, according to Global Witness, an international nongovernmental organization.

Although its once sky-high murder rate has declined, the continuing exodus of many youth demonstrates that violent gangs still plague urban neighborhoods.

Meanwhile, post-coup governments have intensified an increasingly unregulated, “free market” form of capitalism that makes life unworkable for many. Government spending on health and education, for example, has declined in Honduras. Meanwhile, the country’s poverty rate has risen markedly. These contribute to the growing pressures that push many people to migrate.

While the next U.S. president will deliberate about what to do about unwanted immigration from “south of the border,” this history provides lessons as to the roots of migration. It also raises ethical questions as to the responsibility of the United States toward those now fleeing from the ravages U.S. policy has helped to produce roots of Honduran emigration

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https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/12/04/the-crisis-in-honduras-should-matter-to-the-u-s/?utm_term=.6aac59da9c21

**** the country's security forces, enriched and empowered in the shadow of the U.S. war on drugs, have been accused of human rights abuses and targeting dissidents, including allegations surrounding [the 2016 assassination of Berta Cáceres](#), an environmental activist and outspoken opponent of Hernández.

“The Honduran security forces are using our tax payer dollars to repress peaceful demonstrations against stolen elections,” said Cáceres's U.S.-based nephew, Silvio Carillo, [Last Updated on Thursday, 21 June 2018 22:03](#)

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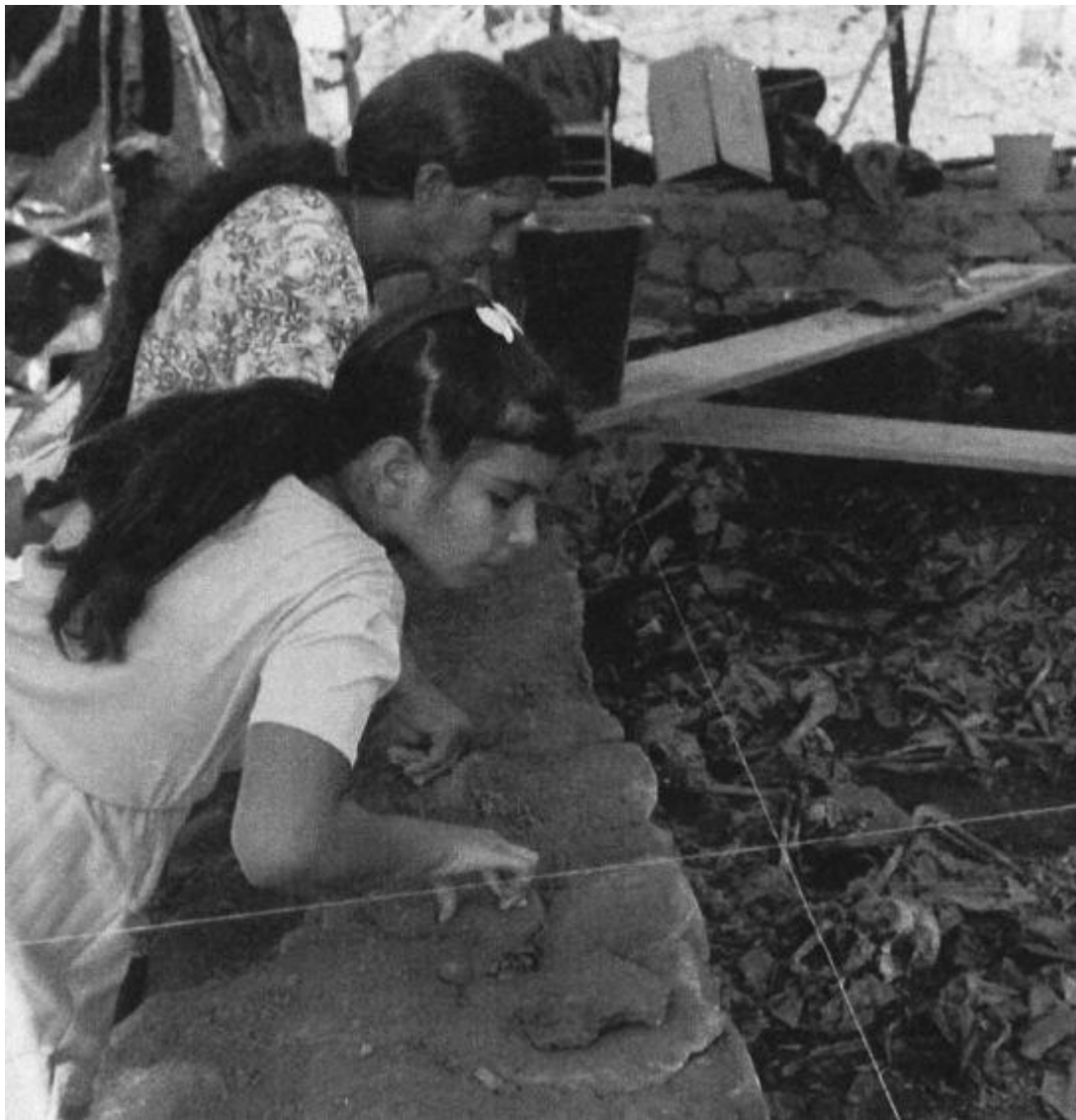
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Time for a US Apology to El Salvador

Obama expressed regret for US support of Argentina's "dirty war." It's time Washington did the same regarding our active backing of right-wing butchery in El Salvador.

By Raymond Bonner APRIL 15, 2016

<https://www.thenation.com/article/time-for-a-us-apology-to-el-salvador/>



Women look over the excavation site where the remains of their friends and

relatives

El Mozote, El Salvador

Women look over the excavation site where the remains of their friends and relatives are being exhumed by forensic anthropologists in El Mozote, El Salvador. (AP Photo / Luis Romero)

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Over the ages, the United States has routinely intervened in Latin America, overthrowing left-wing governments and propping up right-wing dictators. President Obama pressed a reset button of sorts last month when he traveled to Cuba and Argentina. Now it' s time for him to visit a Latin America country that is geographically smallest but where Washington' s footprint is large and the stain of intervention perhaps greatest—El Salvador.

In Argentina, on the 40th anniversary of a military coup that ushered in that country' s “dirty war,” President Obama said it was time for the United States to reflect on its policies during those “dark days.” In the name of fighting communism, the Argentine government hunted down, tortured, and killed suspected leftists—sometimes throwing their bodies out of helicopters into the sea. “We’ ve been slow to speak out for human rights and that was the case here,” Obama said.

That failure to speak out looks benign in contrast to the active role Washington played in the “dirty war” in El Salvador in the 1980s, which pitted a right-wing government against Marxist guerrillas. The United States sent military advisers to help the Salvadoran military fight its dirty war, as well as hundreds of millions of dollars in economic and military aid.

In Argentina, the security forces killed some 30,000 civilians. In El Salvador, more than 75,000 lost their lives during the civil war, which lasted from 1980 until the 1992 peace agreement. The guerrillas committed atrocities, but the United Nations Truth Commission, established as part of the accord, found that more than 85 percent of the killings, kidnappings, and torture had been the work of government forces, which included paramilitaries, death squads, and army units trained by the United States.

The Reagan administration often sought to cover up the brutality, to protect perpetrators of even the most heinous crimes.

The United States went well beyond remaining largely silent in the face of

human-rights abuses in El Salvador. The State Department and White House often sought to cover up the brutality, to protect the perpetrators of even the most heinous crimes.

In March of 1980, the much beloved and respected Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero was murdered. A voice for the poor and repressed, Romero, in his final Sunday sermon, had issued a plea to the country's military junta that rings through the ages: "In the name of God, in the name of this suffering people whose cries rise to heaven more loudly each day, I implore you, I beg you, I order you in the name of God: stop the repression." The next day, he was cut down by a single bullet while he was saying a private mass. (In 2015, Pope Francis declared that Romero died a martyr, the final step before sainthood.)

Eight months after the assassination, a military informant gave the US embassy in El Salvador evidence that it had been plotted by Roberto D' Aubuisson, a charismatic and notorious right-wing leader. D' Aubuisson had presided over a meeting in which soldiers drew lots for the right to kill the archbishop, the informant said. While any number of right-wing death squads might have wanted to kill Romero, only a few, like D' Aubuisson's, were "fanatical and daring" enough to actually do it, the CIA concluded in a report for the White House.

Yet, D' Aubuisson continued to be welcomed at the US embassy in El Salvador, and when Elliott Abrams, the State Department's point man on Central America during the Reagan administration, testified before Congress, he said he would not consider D' Aubuisson an extremist. "You would have to be engaged in murder," Abrams said, before he would call him an extremist. But D' Aubuisson was engaged in murder, and Washington knew it. (He died of throat cancer in 1992, at the age of 48. Abrams was convicted in 1991 of misleading Congress about the shipment of arms to the anti-Sandinista forces in Nicaragua, the so-called "Iran/Contra" affair. He was pardoned by President George H.W. Bush, later served as special adviser to President George W. Bush on democracy and human rights, and is now a foreign-policy adviser to GOP presidential candidate Ted Cruz.)

* * *

The administration knew the Salvadoran military murdered four US churchwomen in 1980—but denied the evidence.

No act of barbarism is more emblematic of the deceit that marked Washington's policy in El Salvador in the 1980s than the sexual assault and murder of four US churchwomen—three Roman Catholic nuns and a lay missionary—in December 1980, a month after Ronald Reagan was elected president.

The American ambassador, Robert White, who had been appointed by President Jimmy Carter, knew immediately that the Salvadoran military was responsible—even if he didn't have the names of the perpetrators—but that was not what

the incoming administration wanted to hear.

One of Reagan's top foreign-policy advisers, Jeane Kirkpatrick, when asked if she thought the government had been involved, said, "The answer is unequivocal. No, I don't think the government was responsible." She then sought to besmirch the women. "The nuns were not just nuns," she told The Tampa Tribune. "The nuns were also political activists," with a leftist political coalition (Kirkpatrick died in 2006).

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In Argentina, President Obama praised two American diplomats, Tex Harris and Patt Derian, for their commitment to documenting the human-rights abuses in Argentina.

Two American diplomats in El Salvador deserve similar presidential recognition. Ambassador White, a career diplomat, lost his job and was forced out of the foreign service by Secretary of State Alexander Haig when he refused to participate in a cover-up of the Salvadoran military's involvement in the murder of the American churchwomen. Haig told a congressional committee that the women may have been trying to run a roadblock when they were killed (Haig died in 2010; White died in 2015).

At considerable risk to his career and his life, a junior diplomat in the US embassy, H. Carl Gettinger, wasn't deterred by the chicanery in Washington and carried out his own investigation. It was Gettinger who had learned from the Salvadoran military informant about D' Aubuisson's role in the assassination of Archbishop Romero, and he turned to the man, an army lieutenant, to help him solve the churchwomen's case. The lieutenant, who had so much blood on his own hands during the dirty war that Gettinger dubbed him "Killer," gave Gettinger, and the United States, the name of the sergeant who led the operation and that of four other soldiers who had participated, a crime that senior Salvadoran military commanders had successfully covered up until then (the men were convicted in 1984).

"Carl is an unsung hero," Carol Doerflein, who was the assistant public affairs officer in the US embassy in El Salvador at the time, told me recently.

One year after the churchwomen were murdered, one of the worst massacres in modern Latin American history occurred when soldiers from the US-trained Atlacatl Battalion carried out an operation in the mountainous region of northeastern El Salvador. Altogether more than 700 men, women, and children were killed in El Mozote and surrounding villages.

In 1981, the military massacred over 700 civilians at El Mozote—and

Reagan’ s officials dismissed it as “propaganda.”

The Reagan administration steadfastly denied there had been a massacre by government troops. Reports of the massacre, by myself in The New York Times and Alma Guillermoprieto in The Washington Post, were dismissed by administration officials and their right-wing supporters as “guerrilla propaganda.”

But cables and documents declassified by the Clinton administration in the early 1990s—as well as the findings of the UN Truth Commission—have confirmed the massacre in grisly detail. “As many as several hundred men, women and children were allegedly massacred by the Atlacatl Battalion during the December 10-13, 1981, El Salvadoran Armed Forces (ESAF) offensive,” the State Department wrote in a secret eight-page report to the Truth Commission. The commission removed the “allegedly.” On the morning after arriving in the area, according to the commission, the soldiers had “proceeded to interrogate, torture and execute the men. . . . Around noon, they began taking out the women in groups, separating them from their children and machine-gunning them. Finally, they killed the children.”

In 2012, on the 20th anniversary of the civil war’ s end, El Salvador’ s president, Mauricio Funes, went to El Mozote to apologize. “For this massacre, for the abhorrent violations of human rights and the abuses perpetrated in the name of the Salvadoran state, I ask forgiveness of the families of the victims,” he said, wiping away tears. He laid flowers on the monument that had been erected.

In Argentina, Obama tossed white roses into the water at a memorial to the victims of that country’ s dirty war. No US official, not even a mid-level one, has ever visited the monument at El Mozote or apologized or expressed regrets about that massacre or, more broadly, for Washington’ s active role in funding and encouraging El Salvador’ s dirty war.

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THIS POLITICAL THEORIST PREDICTED THE RISE OF TRUMPISM. HIS NAME WAS HUNTER S. THOMPSON.

Raymond BonnerRaymond Bonner, a former New York Times correspondent who covered Central America from 1980 to 1982, is the author of *Weakness and Deceit: America and El Salvador's Dirty War*, which is being reissued by OR Books this month.

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States of Emergency

Imagining a politics for an age of accelerated climate change.

By Alyssa Battistoni TODAY 7:00 AM

[fbtwwmailPrint](#)

Illustration by Tim Robinson.

Climate change has been a political issue in America for almost my entire life—James Hansen first testified to the reality of global warming before the Senate in 1988—but the prospects for the planet keep getting worse. At first, climate change was discussed as a distant problem, something to fix for future generations. Then it was discussed as geographically remote, something that was happening in some other part of the world. Now it's

recognized as something that's happening today to people living in the United States—and yet what are we doing about it? Usually, it seems, very little. Kim Stanley Robinson has dubbed this period of doing-nothing-much the Dithering; Amitav Ghosh suggests calling it the Great Derangement. Something has gone terribly wrong: A problem that is widely recognized as threatening millions of lives, perhaps even the future of human life on Earth, has not been addressed seriously and doesn't seem likely to be.

REVIEWED

CLIMATE LEVIATHAN: A POLITICAL THEORY OF OUR PLANETARY FUTURE

By Geoff Mann and Joel Wainwright

Buy this book

For a while, democracy was deemed to be the culprit: Democratic politics, some argued, simply isn't suited to addressing problems that lie in the future or extend beyond national boundaries. Climate change is just too complicated for most people to understand; better to leave it to the experts. It's too hard a subject to broach during a political campaign; no one really wants to think about something so depressing, and what politician in his or her right mind would call for lowering living standards in order to decrease carbon emissions?

Now that capitalism is again on the table as a political issue, it also gets its share of blame. The political problem, it's now said, isn't democracy alone, but rather that democracy is held hostage by oil money and the politicians purchased by it. Even some capitalists are starting to acknowledge that the system could use some tweaks. (Others, like Elon Musk, are planning to decamp to Mars: the Great Derangement indeed.) Swapping corporations for democracy as the root of the problem is a welcome development. Yet serious political thinking about climate change remains in short supply. Most people are now worried about it, but few are putting climate change at the heart of their political thought and practice.

In this context, Geoff Mann and Joel Wainwright's new work of political theory, *Climate Leviathan*, is a welcome addition to the small but growing body of climate writing on the left. It's a book explicitly aimed at understanding the political dimensions of climate change instead of relegating them to a paragraph or two in the concluding section. It also takes a different tack than most works on climate politics. The authors are not interested in why we aren't acting to curb carbon emissions; instead, they're interested in the kinds of political scenarios that are likely to emerge in response to the approaching ecological crises.

Climate change will be so central to human life and global politics in the coming years, Mann and Wainwright argue, that the response to it will shape the entire future world order, not merely the statements that issue out of the United Nations at the end of every year. If the left is to play a part in shaping this new world, they continue, it needs to think seriously about the "political tools, strategies, and tactics" at its disposal. Climate change,

though a novel and previously unimaginable problem, does not actually require a radical departure from traditional left struggles for freedom, equality, and justice; it simply poses new versions of familiar dilemmas. Our political thought doesn't need to address climate change directly to offer insights into the role that the left can play in responding to it, but we will need to develop old ideas in new directions if we are to navigate a world that is now changing radically.

Toward this end, *Climate Leviathan* engages a wide range of political thought, from Gramsci to Hegel, Kant to Naomi Klein. But as the title suggests, at the heart of the book is Thomas Hobbes, whose *Leviathan* remains the fundamental work on the sovereign power that underpins modern states. Hobbes looked at a nation torn asunder by the English Civil War and reckoned that it was better to relinquish one's freedom to the authority of an all-powerful sovereign than to live through such nastiness and brutality. Such a sovereign power did not yet exist in Hobbes's time, but in describing it, Hobbes sought to understand a political form that he thought might soon come into being.

Mann and Wainwright argue that we are in another such moment, a time when political forms are in flux and one can begin to see the shape of the growing leviathan. They therefore follow Hobbes into a speculative mode, describing the forms of power they think are likely to emerge in the future while recognizing that none have done so yet.

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Their other key resource in thinking about this leviathan is the German political theorist and Nazi sympathizer Carl Schmitt, who draws on Hobbes in constructing his own theory of sovereignty. Everyday decision-making is governed by law, Schmitt argues, but sovereignty is to be found in the moments when emergency demands extralegal action. For Schmitt, it was crucial that the sovereign be able to take action against a community's enemies as it deemed necessary. Sovereignty here consists of the political power that allows a state to override the law in defense of its friends.

As with Hobbes, people accept this extreme form of rule in exchange for protection. The left rediscovered Schmitt during the Bush years, when, as the Italian theorist Giorgio Agamben noted, a "state of exception" had, under the guise of the amorphous "war on terror," become the norm. But this view of the state has rarely been extended to thinking about the kind of emergency politics that will arise as a result of climate change. Drawing on Hobbes and Schmitt, the authors begin to do this work: *Climate Leviathan* imagines how ecological disruption will create the conditions for a new sovereign authority to "seize command, declare an emergency, and bring order to Earth, all in the name of saving life"—and this time on a planetary instead of national scale.

Yet this sovereignty is still nascent, and other political forms might yet challenge it. At the core of Climate Leviathan are four types of political formation that the authors believe are likely to emerge in response to climate change. “Climate Leviathan” would be a system of global capitalism governed by a planetary sovereign—not necessarily the individual ruler Hobbes imagined, but nevertheless a hegemonic power capable of taking drastic action; “Climate Mao,” an anti-capitalist system governed by sovereign power at the level of the nation-state or the planet; “Climate Behemoth,” a capitalist system within the autarchic confines of the nation-state; and “Climate X,” which rejects both capitalism and sovereignty for something yet to be determined. These four possible futures, Mann and Wainwright admit, are thus far inchoate. But as we blow past our carbon targets and the impacts of climate change become increasingly destructive, one of these is likely to emerge as the dominant mode of politics.

The most likely victor, the authors think, is Climate Leviathan: It is, after all, already in the ascendancy, epitomized by international pacts like the Paris Agreement and global institutions like the UN Conference of the Parties (COP). These institutions are not currently sovereign in the Hobbesian sense; to the contrary, they are explicitly international, working to coordinate action between sovereign nation-states. But Mann and Wainwright think they nevertheless point the way toward a form of sovereignty that has been anticipated for centuries: one encompassing the world. Thinkers from Kant to Einstein have typically imagined a world state in response to the threat of war; Climate Leviathan would be just such a world state in an age of ecological disaster.

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Rising temperatures will produce new emergencies, from tsunamis and hurricanes to famines and refugee crises, and with them new opportunities for powerful states to expand their reach by declaring a state of exception. A major climate disaster could prompt northern capitalist states to take action—up to and including geoengineering—via the United Nations or a European Union-like supranational authority. By calling for agreements at the annual COPs, many climate activists have legitimized Climate Leviathan rather than challenging it. But what these institutions cannot do, Mann and Wainwright argue, is solve the climate crisis: They were created to manage capitalism, and will continue to do so even in the face of catastrophic warming.

Yet while global capitalist institutions have been the primary site of climate politics for the past two decades, Climate Leviathan has a rival: Climate Behemoth represents a “reactionary populism” that turns away from the global elitism of planetary forums on climate change and toward a nationalist capitalism—a dynamic perfectly encapsulated by Donald Trump’s claim that he was “elected to represent the citizens of Pittsburgh, not

Paris.”

Visible in Trump’s America, Narendra Modi’s India, and the surge of right-wing Euroskeptic parties across Europe, the backers of Climate Behemoth are a mix of fossil-fuel capitalists, petit-bourgeois reactionaries, and disillusioned working-class people who want to stick it to the cosmopolitan elites and the political establishment. Its contradictory but potent mix of ethno-nationalism, religion, masculinity, and scientific denial make it a powerful but ultimately unstable form; it is likely, Mann and Wainwright argue, to burn out—but in the meantime, it could do plenty of damage.

The revolutionary possibilities represented by Climate Mao and Climate X, meanwhile, are less immediately proximate, visible at present only in fragments. Climate Mao describes a revolutionary transformation led by a noncapitalist state acting quickly to address climate breakdown. In Mann and Wainwright’s account, it follows its namesake but also Robespierre and Lenin in suggesting “the necessity of a just terror in the interests of the future of the collective”: It pits the power of the planetary sovereign against that of capital. Climate Mao, that is, portends a renewal of “authoritarian state socialisms” that act to reduce carbon emissions and address climate emergencies, eventually on the level of the planet.

China’s unilateral restrictions on corporations and citizens alike show a glimpse of this future, though one not operating at full strength. Indeed, Mann and Wainwright take pains to argue that China isn’t currently on a path toward Climate Mao. The Communist Party can close steel mills in a matter of months to minimize emissions, but China is no longer plausibly described as communist; to the contrary, it has committed to working with the Western capitalist powers to build the international system that characterizes Climate Leviathan (think, for example, of Barack Obama’s much-lauded negotiations with Xi Jinping).

Nevertheless, Mann and Wainwright insist that in the near future, Climate Mao is only likely to emerge in Asia: Latin America may have a more robust legacy of radical ecological politics, but only Asia has the necessary combination of powerful states and major economies paired with vast numbers of peasants, proletarians, and surplus populations whose expectations are likely to be frustrated by the disruptive effects of climate change. Only in Asia, in other words, is it possible to imagine popular movements seizing state and economic power in a way that would meaningfully affect the world’s use of resources.

Some of these futures may be worse than others, but none, to the authors, seems likely to be particularly just. That’s where Climate X comes in: It names a democratic movement against both capitalism and sovereignty, the “X” intentionally suggesting a journey into the unknown. Though X’s meaning is teased throughout the book, it is not until the very last chapter that Mann and Wainwright finally delve into its details.

It's disappointing, though not entirely surprising, to find that this is also where the book's otherwise lucid, often sparkling analysis falters. Coming up with a politics adequate to an existentially threatening and essentially unprecedented problem is a deeply daunting prospect, as the authors acknowledge time and time again, and they're understandably reluctant to describe in too much detail what it might look like. In the hopes of "illuminating possible paths through apparently impossible problems," they offer a set of loose rather than programmatic ideas: three principles, two "openings," and two trajectories. The principles, drawn from the left's traditions as well as contemporary climate-justice movements, are equality, democracy, and solidarity. Equality affirms that we all share the earth; democracy assures the "inclusion and dignity of all"; and solidarity recognizes the common cause of preserving life on this shared planet while affirming many ways of living on it, a "world of many worlds."

The openings offer tentative possibilities for left praxis instead of prescriptive certainty: The first is found in the "categorical refusal" that animated Marx's reluctance to detail the communist future in favor of ongoing revolutionary thought and practice, and the second is found in the stance of bearing "witness to crisis," which is surely already in our midst. The two trajectories that ground Climate X are the longer histories in which these principles and possibilities are rooted. One is the left's anti-capitalist tradition stemming from Marxist political economy; the other is composed of the alternatives to sovereignty found in indigenous and anti-colonial movements, forms of knowledge, and ways of life. This second trajectory, the authors believe, also offers some resources for "living differently, radically differently" —not simply by making the 21st century superficially greener, but by helping to change our relationship to the land and the planet altogether.

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As these nebulous offerings suggest, Mann and Wainwright don't pretend to have Climate X fully figured out. Examples of actually existing movements that more or less fit the mold of Climate X, they grant, remain far from overthrowing either capitalism or sovereignty. The Zapatistas, who launched an offensive against the Mexican state in 1994 and have since retreated to the countryside, offer a view of Climate X's promise but also its limits: Though entire communities have withdrawn from the reach of the state to live according to their own principles, they remain surrounded and contained by its power. It's certainly unclear how they might effectively counter climate change from this position. These and other contradictions, Mann and Wainwright admit, may lead readers to sympathize with Climate Leviathan or Climate Mao, which at least get things done. But despite these challenges, they maintain, we must insist on noncapitalist nonsovereignty. As Adorno says, "It could come."

This conclusion is starkly at odds with the book's opening cry for strategic thinking on the left: Shrewd analysis gives way to repeated avowals that things must, and therefore can, be otherwise—never mind how, exactly.

“The priority,” Mann and Wainwright argue, “must be to organize for a rapid reduction of carbon emissions by collective boycott and strike.” And yet, almost immediately, they pull back from this position—too utopian—and then lurch forward again: After all, we need to be utopian. “We must create something new,” they explain. “More of the same is not an option.” Surely they are right on this count. But absent further discussion, calls for massive and immediate boycotts and strikes as a means of putting an end to a global economy built on fossil-fuel use register as wishful thinking at best. At times, this seems not merely utopian but unjustifiably so: If things are as bad as Mann and Wainwright claim—and they are—principled refusal and gestures toward living otherwise are no longer sufficient, if they ever were. If the response to the “marked unimaginativeness” of most climate politics is a flight into imaginative fancy, we truly are doomed.

Similarly, the call to heed indigenous approaches to sovereignty is left mostly unexplored. Indigenous politics have been particularly effective in struggles against fossil-fuel infrastructure not only because of underlying philosophies regarding sovereignty or nature, but because indigenous groups have acted strategically: Native claims to land are useful in blocking pipelines, and First Nations groups in Canada, in particular, have embarked on an aggressive legal campaign to reclaim unceded lands. Likewise, in Latin America, internationally recognized indigenous rights have proved a potent legal tool in the fight against new oil or mining projects in the region. These complicated political efforts demand more substantial analysis; they aren't merely metonyms for nonsovereignty. At the same time, their lessons are not easily transferred to other political struggles. How far can these projects for self-determination take the climate movement, with which they are sometimes but not always aligned? What insights do they hold for actors without similar legal claims, cultural identities, or political histories?

Meanwhile, deeming sovereignty inherently and irredeemably unjust has the effect of categorically ruling out too wide an array of political possibilities. It suggests that movements must act in opposition to both the state and capital simultaneously, and must do so prefiguratively—that is, by modeling the relations they hope to bring about. But if a Zapatista-like movement is unable to effectively fight a powerfully repressive state and globally mobile capital, why should we take it as a model for undoing them? (Indeed, the Zapatistas themselves have engaged in a range of tactics over time, including, these days, electoral politics: The Zapatista Army of National Liberation recently endorsed a candidate, María de Jesús Patricia Martínez, who is running in the 2018 Mexican presidential election and seeking to represent indigenous communities.) As the authors observe, the problems that climate change poses are part of a much longer history of struggles for freedom and justice—the only difference is that now we have an

ecological deadline. Surely this means buying time must be an essential part of left strategy, even if it means working to mitigate the worst effects of climate change within systems that we eventually aim to dismantle or transform.

The difficulty of solving for Climate X ultimately reflects the limits of the book's typology, wherein planetary sovereignty and global capitalism are presented as all-or-nothing choices. Exploring ideal types can be clarifying, but what would be more useful in our present moment is an effort to dig into the possibilities of working within, through, and beyond the Climate Leviathans and Climate Behemoths that already exist—perhaps the latter most of all. Indeed, in the face of a rising tide of reactionary Behemoths, which shows little sign of receding, planetary sovereignty seems like something of a red herring: Global capitalism surely isn't done for, but there is little to suggest that the planetary sovereign is waiting in the wings.

Must movements really be opposed to all forms of sovereignty, on all scales, in order to oppose a capitalism-reproducing world state or achieve any measure of justice? Is there truly no left-populist Climate X that could act as a counter to Behemoth at the level of the nation, no way to channel planetary solidarity through international—not necessarily global—institutions? The difference between, say, Jeremy Corbyn's pledge to nationalize and decarbonize the British energy industry and Justin Trudeau's sign-off on private pipeline projects in Canada may not be enough to save the planet, but it would seem to deserve at least the status of an opening. Instead, the ways that actually existing states have acted in relation to their subjects as well as in relation to capital are collapsed by the authors into an argument about sovereignty—for or against.

Mann and Wainwright are by no means alone in hedging about what is to be done. Two other recent books on the eco-left—Jason Moore and Raj Patel's *A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things*, and Andreas Malm's *The Progress of This Storm*—end in more or less the same place. All recognize that the “global fascism” that Mann and Wainwright name Behemoth is far more potent today than any eco-left formation, but try to muster hope by looking to some movements for climate justice, all the while insinuating that a much greater upheaval is necessary.

Like Mann and Wainwright, Moore and Patel decline to draw a “road map for class struggle that simultaneously reinvents humans' relations with and within the web of life”; instead, they suggest their own five principles—recognition, reparation, redistribution, re-imagination, and re-creation—and their own movement of movements. Their expansive view of capitalism, which takes seriously the place of unwaged work, colonial appropriation, and coerced extraction, makes it possible to understand a much broader coalition of struggles as anti-capitalist and capable of helping to head off climate change: the indigenous movement Idle No More; the peasant movement led by La Via Campesina; the work of disability-rights activists and Argentine socialist feminists. They also suggest that a more salutary political

formation can be found in the “alternative nationalisms” of indigenous and aboriginal nations that exist “in opposition to capitalism’s ecology.” Yet while Moore and Patel detail the long history of popular resistance to capitalism, the effect is more discomfiting than heartening when one remembers that literally centuries of struggle have yet to achieve their aim. What, exactly, would make the next couple of crucial decades any different?

Malm’s *The Progress of This Storm*, meanwhile, issues a welcome call to get serious about political agency but ends on an unapologetically apocalyptic note that borders on adventurism. “The warming condition spells the death of affirmative politics,” he declares. “Negativity is our only chance now.” Perhaps this is why he concludes, like Mann and Wainwright, with Walter Benjamin—in Malm’s case, with Benjamin’s idea of a “destructive character” that reduces existence “to rubble—not for the sake of the rubble, but for that of the way of leading through it.” We must destroy fossil-fuel capital, he suggests, before nature destroys us.

When Marx scorned the project of writing “recipes for the cook-shops of the future,” he called instead for a “critical analysis of actual facts.” The actual facts are not auspicious—yet we have no choice but to face them. The threat posed by climate change demands that we imagine a very different world, one that does not exist now and never has; and one, moreover, that is not oriented toward our current ideas of progress and the future. As each of these authors observes, the threat posed by climate change requires political action of a different order and magnitude than anything currently on offer: Business as usual will not suffice. It is worrying that thinkers so astute about the dynamics of capitalism and nature appear stymied by how we can escape them. But they are undoubtedly correct that climate change will shape politics for the foreseeable future, which shrinks by the day.

So while Mann and Wainwright and other supporters of a possible Climate X need not draw blueprints, some hard questions demand answering. How is the massive global fossil-fuel industry to be dismantled without state coercion? How would an anti-sovereignty and anti-capitalist movement prevent the enormously wealthy from decamping to some reasonably stable patch of the world? How are massive boycotts and strikes to be not just imagined but organized? What’s to prevent private coercion from replacing the public kind?

Certainly, many on the left are too blithe about the state, presumably on the grounds that you seize it first and ask questions later. Those who tend to think that state power is necessary to undertake the kinds of projects needed to address climate change should say more, too: How do we think the “good state” of welfare and public schools can be detached from the “bad state” of war and prisons? How do we imagine actually winning enough state power to usefully wield it? And how can we then transform it rather than finding ourselves transformed by it?

These are real questions, not rhetorical ones, and they have urgent

implications. Climate Leviathan helps us understand what they mean and why they matter, and offers rich conceptual resources with which to think them through. These questions will ultimately have to be answered in practice more than in theory, but they deserve our attention—and soon.

cOMMENT; Joan Russow

2014, I was an international observer for the Salvdorian Presidential election. At that time there were a number of articles in the right wing paper from the US such as if the FMLN wins it will be because of election fraud

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[Report of Panel on Venezuela to the ICC- the Canadian and American Connections](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 23 June 2018 14:14

By Joan Russow

Global Compliance Research Project

THE INFLUENCE OF IRWIN COTLER AND UN WATCH

The panel's members — Santiago Canton of Argentina, Irwin Cotler of Canada and Manuel Ventura of Costa Rica — called for a formal investigation into the charges and asked the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), Luis Almagro, to submit their report to the ICC.



Irwin Cotler is a member of UN watch a right wing group that has targeted socialist countries and countries that have criticized Israel. Venezuela has been their target since at least 2012 when Capriles, a Jewish opposition Leader ran against Chavez. The head of the group is Hillel Neuer a lawyer from Montreal. The group was also concerned about Chavez protesting against Israeli treatment of Gaza and in 2009 and against the expelling of the Israeli embassy. On Chavez death, Hillel Neuer, the head of UN Watch, a pro-Israeli front group referred to Chavez, internationally, as a “symbol of evil;” and decreed that Chavez was given a one-minute of silence tribute at the UN Human Rights Council.

UN watch has targeted President Chavez over the years and has had an inordinate amount of access to the international media. Disturbingly one of UN Watch’s directors is another Canadian, MP Irwin Cotler.

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.

http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8981: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&catid=74:ijustice-news&Itemid=216

UNITED STATES HAND IN UNDERMINING DEMOCRACY IN VENEZUELA

http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10915:the-united-states-hand-in-undermining-democracy-in-venezuela&catid=74:ijustice-news&Itemid=216

“The Trump administration’s financial sanctions—more than all previous destabilization efforts, which were significant—have made it nearly impossible for the government to get out of the mess without outside help.

As if this profoundly distressing situation weren' t enough, media outlets have frequently published exaggerated accounts of the conditions in Venezuela, depicting widespread starvation, for instance. To be sure, soaring food prices have contributed to increased undernourishment throughout the country, but this is a far cry from a large scale famine. More importantly, there has been scant US media reporting on the further economic damage provoked by the Trump administration' s financial sanctions, announced in late August last year (shortly after Trump' s statement about a "military option" for Venezuela).

As my colleague Mark Weisbrot has explained, Trump' s unilateral and illegal financial embargo - which cuts Venezuela off from most financial markets - has had two major consequences, both of which entail increased economic hardship for the Venezuelan people. First, it causes even greater shortages of essential goods, including food and medicine. Second, it makes economic recovery nearly impossible, since the government cannot borrow or restructure its foreign debt, and in some cases even carry out normal import transactions, including for medicines.

Aside from fomenting greater economic havoc in Venezuela, Trump and his coterie of advisors on Venezuela, including Republican Senator Marco Rubio, have supported opposition hardliners in their efforts to scuttle attempts at dialogue and undermine elections, even when these offer the possibility of a peaceful political transition.

Case in point: this Sunday' s presidential elections. Opposition leader Henri Falcón— a former governor and campaign manager of the opposition' s 2013 presidential candidate, Henrique Capriles—is running as an independent candidate against Maduro and three other candidates. Several major opposition parties are boycotting the election because, among other reasons, they object to the early date of the elections, which they say leaves them insufficient time to organize a strong campaign—the electoral authority did, however, agree to a one-month delay from the initial date. Two opposition parties, First Justice and Popular Will, were also unable to register candidates because they allegedly didn' t meet the formal requirements to do so."

These sanctions have had a destabilizing effect on Venezuela

ELECTION PLOY; "WE DON' T WANT OUR COUNTRY TO TURN OUT LIKE VENEZUELA"

When I was an international observer in 2014 in the Presidential election in El Salvador, the right wing candidate used the reported situation in Venezuela to support his campaign, "we do not want our country to fail as Venezuela has". There were constant references in the Right wing paper the Prensa Graphic and TV reports profiling suffering Venezuelans and warning Salvadoreans not to vote for the FMLN candidate

Presidential candidate Norman Quijano, from the right wing ARENA party warned that the FMLN Sanchez Ceren would follow the path of Venezuela' s socialist government, which has taken over private businesses,

and Norman promised he would not allow others to send El Salvador down the road of Venezuela

The situation in Venezuela was also used by the right wing in the Colombian election

Time magazine reports on what is described as “The specter of Venezuela’ Petro’ s anti-corruption platform has turned him into a real contender in this election. But he has the misfortune of running at a time when neighboring Venezuela is imploding. More than 200,000 Venezuelans streamed into (and through) Colombia last year to escape crushing poverty and lack of basic goods and medicines, a six-fold increase from the year before. The perpetually looming collapse of Venezuela is a constant reminder to voters of Petro’ s former admiration of the late Hugo Chavez.

Hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans have sought refuge in Colombia as their own country has descended into economic chaos. And while Venezuelans cannot vote here, their advocacy, activism — and calls for divine intervention — may help push Duque over the finish line on Election Day. (Miami herald)

THE U.S. IS MEDDLING IN VENEZUELAN ELECTION
May 18, 2018

As Venezuelans go to the polls Sunday, the U.S. is working to disrupt the re-election of Nicolas Maduro and rollback left-wing governments in the region, reports Roger D. Harris.

By Roger D. Harris Special to Consortium News

Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro is the frontrunner in the presidential elections that will take place on Sunday. If past pronouncements and practice by the United States are any indication, every effort will be made to oust an avowed socialist from the U.S. “backyard.”

U.S. antipathy towards the Venezuelan government started with the election of Hugo Chávez in 1998, followed by a brief and unsuccessful U.S.-backed coup in 2002. Chávez made the magnanimous, but politically imprudent, gesture of pardoning the golpistas, who are still trying to achieve by extra-parliamentary means what they have been unable to realize democratically.

In addition to summoning Venezuela’ s sycophantic domestic opposition, who support sanctions against their own people, the U.S. has gone on the offensive using the regional Lima Group to destabilize Venezuela. The group was established last August in Lima, the capital of Peru, as a block to oppose Venezuela.

The eighth Summit of the Americas was held in Lima in April under the lofty slogan of “democratic governance against corruption.” Unfortunately for the imperialists, the president of the host country was unable to greet the other U.S. clones. A few days earlier he had been forced to resign because

of corruption. Venezuelan President Maduro was barred from attending. Along with Peru and the U.S. ' ever faithful junior partner Canada, other members of the Lima Group are: Mexico, Panama Argentina For the complete article <https://consortiumnews.com/2018/05/18/us-not-sitting-idly-by-on-eve-of-venezuelan-election/>

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[STERILIZING A "RED INFECTION" CONGRESS, THE CIA, AND GUATEMALA, 1954](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 24 June 2018 11:11

The destabilization of Latin America ; the Guatemala example . It is important to take into consideration the role of the US in destabilizing Latin America, along with the US role in the School of Americas; the US obsession over the years with stamping he " red infection "cannot be ignored in the discussion of refugees. The three enclosed articles provide background of the US involvement in destabilizing Guatemala, in supporting dictators and in protecting corporate interests.

Joan Russow

Global Compliance Research Project.



Guatemalan President Jacobo Arbenz (center facing camera) in 1951, before a U.S.-led overthrow (HO/AFP/Getty)

Congress, the CIA, and Guatemala, 1954

STERILIZING A "RED INFECTION"
CONGRESS, THE CIA, AND GUATEMALA, 1954
DAVID M. BARRETT

One of the paradoxes of legislative oversight of intelligence in the early Cold War period was that the United States Congress could give strong, if de facto, support of aggressive covert action while, with the exception of a few leaders, not really knowing which such policies were being carried out. Guatemala is a perfect example. Following its 1944 revolution, which brought democratically elected leftist governments to power, this Central American government faced an increasingly hostile neighbor to the north, the United States. Guatemala's treatment of US-based corporations, especially the United Fruit Company, in expropriating land and other assets, did nothing to improve relations. Elites in Guatemala helped persuade US journalists and members of Congress, not to mention the executive branch, that their government was veering further and further leftward toward Communism in the early 1950s.

Late in the Truman presidency, the US government aborted an attempt to support Guatemalans who aimed to overthrow President Jacobo Arbenz. Those at CIA Headquarters who were involved in the effort felt "grimly" about that "horrifying" turn of events, one Agency leader noted in his diary. But, not surprisingly, new administration leaders--President Dwight Eisenhower, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, and DCI Allen Dulles--also persuaded themselves that the Guatemalan government was "red." The CIA leader had help from the Board of National Estimates, which informed him on 22 April 1954 that "The Communists now effectively control the political life of Guatemala." 1 A deal made by Arbenz's government to purchase Soviet-made armaments from Czechoslovakia that spring only sealed the matter in the American leaders' minds.

What unfolded in May and June of 1954 is now a familiar story in US intelligence and diplomatic history: Washington used the CIA and US Ambassador John Peurifoy to support and direct certain Guatemalan military leaders in overthrowing Arbenz's government. It was also psychological warfare--cleverly deceptive efforts to persuade Guatemala's citizens and political/military leaders that a major invasion force was steadily moving toward the nation's capital so unnerved Arbenz and others that the government fell without much of a battle.

The story has been told most notably by historian Richard Immerman, who carefully analyzes the American and Guatemalan political environments. 2 While the overthrow of Arbenz was unfolding, the US government pretended to have nothing to do with it. In the year or so after President Castillo Armas's anti-Communist government was brought into power with Agency assistance, CIA quietly judged that his government was "inept," despite his "virtually dictatorial powers," and that there were growing "public demands for a return to constitutional democracy." Still, while American news reports and Congressional debates began to acknowledge that the United States had been involved, the overthrow became one of CIA's "well-known successes." This was the analysis of a Washington Evening Star article in early 1956, for example. Even critics of CIA in the 1950s and 1960s were reluctant to challenge that interpretation of events.

In the late Cold War period and since, however, the American overthrow of the Arbenz government came to be widely seen as shameful. This is mostly because the governments that followed the 1954 coup in the subsequent five decades were far more repressive than Arbenz's elective government. Even intelligence scholar Christopher Andrew, an Eisenhower admirer, describes the Guatemala affair as a "disreputable moment"--Eisenhower was "directly responsible" for "death and destruction," yet showed no signs of embarrassment then or later over his "bullying of a banana republic." A culminating moment in the evolving historical memory of the United States and Guatemala in 1954 came in 1999, when President Clinton visited Guatemala and said, "Support for military forces and intelligence units which engaged in violence and widespread repression was wrong, and the United States must not repeat that mistake." 3

Aside from morality, there were other unfortunate legacies of the Guatemalan "success:" Allen Dulles used it as a model in advising President Kennedy seven years later to pursue the ill-fated Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. Also, since the early Eisenhower-Dulles period, the CIA has had a vastly exaggerated reputation worldwide for causing all sorts of havoc.

A CONGRESSIONAL ROLE IN INTELLIGENCE POLICY?

While it is accurate to view CIA's involvement in overthrowing the Guatemalan government as

mandated by higher political authorities in the US government, it is a mistake to assign responsibility and blame for the covert operation solely on the Eisenhower White House. While direct evidence of what Congressional leaders knew of the operation before, during, and immediately after its occurrence is fragmentary, a suggestion that they did not know something of what was happening is thoroughly implausible. Congressional intent--judged by speeches, votes, and interactions between the administration and key legislators--was clearly that the US government should do whatever it might take, short of outright war, to stop ongoing "Soviet aggression" in Central America.

The claim here that Congress played some role in bringing about CIA's involvement in ridding Guatemala of the Arbenz government flies in the face of most conventional wisdom about legislative oversight of the Agency in the early Cold War period. Many published accounts hold that Congressional monitoring of the CIA was virtually nonexistent before the 1970s. A more accurate view can be summarized this way: Congressional oversight of CIA in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s was limited and informal in comparison to the current oversight system, which features House and Senates committees on intelligence, created after the upheavals of the 1970s. But limited oversight was not "no oversight." In fact, on periodic occasions, legislators became persistent and aggressive in monitoring the Agency.

Essentially, early Cold War Congresses delegated major intelligence oversight responsibility to the Armed Services and Appropriations Committees of the House and Senate. In turn, those four committees delegated such powers to small, informal, and highly secretive subcommittees on the CIA. Of equal significance, those four subcommittees deferred heavily to their chairs and ranking minority members. (In this, they resembled most Congressional committees and subcommittees of the time.) Across nearly three decades, those subcommittees almost never leaked confidential information.

Therefore, most members of Congress knew little about CIA's functioning; members of the four appropriations and Armed Services subcommittees typically knew a fair amount about the Agency activities and budget; their chairs and ranking minority members usually knew a good deal about CIA's operations. In addition, the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy (JACE) interacted with, relied on, and sometimes criticized CIA for its intelligence on the nuclear capabilities of other countries, especially the USSR. And a few other Congressional leaders, such as the chairs of foreign affairs committees, often insisted with some success on knowing what CIA was doing. 4

THE CASE OF THE GUATEMALAN COUP

In the winter and spring of 1954, a number of Congressional leaders had frequent private contacts with the Dulles brothers and the White House about Guatemala. Among these was Senator Alexander Wiley of Wisconsin, chair of the Foreign Relations Committee, who believed that a "Communist octopus" had for years used its tentacles to control events in Guatemala. "Homegrown Communism" was a myth, according to Wiley: "There is no Communism but the Communism which takes orders from the despots of the Kremlin in Moscow." The Wisconsin senior senator was far less known than the other senator from his home state, but he garnered more respect within the Senate itself. In his two years (1953-1954) as chair of Foreign Relations, Wiley persistently urged the Eisenhower administration to go beyond limp diplomatic means to get rid of Arbenz's government. A few years before things came to a head, Wiley had explained the urgency behind his unchanging and unambiguous views to Senator Theodore Green of Rhode Island: "It seems to me that Guatemala is going to be a source of Red infection throughout Central America, and the sooner we help sterilize that source, the better."

Wiley readily agreed to the DCI's request to go public in describing the shipment of Soviet-made armaments from Czechoslovakia to Guatemala in May as "part of the master plan of world Communism." So, too, did Senator George Smathers of Florida, relying on "information gathered by me and my staff." The Senator did not mention his source, the CIA. But he did warn that "the Politburo of Guatemala" was "taking orders from Moscow." The cargo ship that left Stettin, Poland, on 17 April, laden with armaments and arrived at Puerto Barrios, Guatemala, on 15 May was concrete evidence of Soviet intervention. "Are we not solemnly pledged to prevent and to frustrate such intervention?" Smathers asked. 5

Various Senators' urgency and frustration with what seemed like a slow-moving Eisenhower administration was shared across parties and by many in the House. In the spring of 1954, Representative Charles Kersten of Wisconsin was among House members pushing the administration to act decisively. While Kersten's interactions with the CIA are unknown, he was long interested in the Agency and intelligence matters. (After losing a reelection bid later in 1954, Kersten would become a consultant on psychological warfare for the Eisenhower White House in 1955 and 1956.) As Richard

Immerman explains, Kersten reasoned that "the Guatemalans had a right to revolt against the Communists, [so]...the United States had a right to assist the revolt." 6

THE JOHNSON RESOLUTION

A long-forgotten Congressional debate in June 1954 over a sense-of-the-Congress resolution displayed this unambiguous intent. The resolution's author was a man who would become famous ten years later for fathering a different, overwhelmingly supported, hastily passed resolution to enactment--Lyndon Johnson. The Senate minority leader was reacting to published reports of Guatemala's arms purchases from Czechoslovakia. In consultation with the State Department, Johnson offered his colleagues and those in the House an opportunity to give unstinting support to Eisenhower with "an unmistakable warning that we are determined to keep Communism out of the Western Hemisphere."

Johnson's and other Senators' language was immoderate, to say the least; the challenge facing the United States in Guatemala was "a new type of imperialism," "an open declaration of the aggressive designs of international Communism." Therefore, the United States had to "support" the Organization of American States (the OAS, much influenced by the United States) which fought against the "upsetting of sovereign governments by the international Communist movement or conspiracy." 7

The rhetoric was no less fervent in the House, where support for the Johnson Resolution and hostility toward the Guatemalan government were overwhelming. Senator Johnson took "firm and constructive action," showing "leadership and statesmanship on a high level," said Minority Leader John McCormack of Massachusetts. According to Representative Jack Brooks of Texas the resolution was "so basically American and so basically anti-Communist" that support for it was urgent, in light of the fact that "a Communist-dominated government in Guatemala is only 700 miles from Texas--only 960 miles, or a few hours' bomber time, from the refineries, the chemical plants, and the homes of my own Second District in Texas. The Monroe Doctrine--1823--is still a vital, living force. But it needs restatement in light of modern conditions," said Brooks. Fellow Texan Martin Dies agreed: "The Soviet government...has challenged the Monroe Doctrine. To that challenge there can be but one response." 8

A DISSENTING VOTE

When the House voted on 29 June, the result was a unanimous "yes." No one referred to the CIA, and no one raised the possibility that the United States might be in the process of interfering in the internal affairs of Guatemala. The House vote was immensely satisfying to the Eisenhower White House; only slightly less gratifying was the Senate vote, where only one member voted "no." It was William Langer of North Dakota, widely dismissed as an old-fashioned isolationist. This was not entirely fair: in part, the Senator was a critic of the morality of certain aspects of US foreign policy in the early Cold War era. While a fair number of legislators periodically questioned the competence of CIA or other foreign policy agencies, few focused on ethical questions. Langer's statement in explanation of his vote--at a time when Joseph McCarthy's anti-Communist crusade was in full flower--is, in retrospect, not easily dismissed:

I am as much opposed to international Communism as is any other member of this House.... I trust that there are sufficient remains of an atmosphere of reason in this country so that Senators can disagree without being called Communists.... I am opposed to the Johnson Resolution. I do not think the United States should jump into the Guatemala situation, a sensitive and very grave threat to world peace, with such elephantine delicacy. I do not believe that the Members of the Senate have been adequately informed as yet as to what is going on in Guatemala. We have had inadequate time to consider such a major declaration on foreign policy.... Is there a foreign invasion of Guatemala, or is there a civil war? If it is a foreign invasion, exactly who are the invading forces, and who are behind them? I ask any Senator if he can answer those questions, and answer them intelligently? ...There has been much talk about the malevolent influence of the \$548 million United Fruit Company in Guatemala, which some have charged is bigger than the government itself. ...Of course we are opposed to external interference with the affairs of any nation, especially so with regard to our sister republics of Latin America. But even more, we will, or we ought to be, committed to the principle that every sovereign nation has a right to determine for itself its own form of government. 9

Langer's statement and his vote were the talk of Capitol Hill, but no Senator replied to him on the floor, a sign of how at odds he was with the political times.

THE DEGREE OF KNOWLEDGE

While Congressional intent--that Arbenz should be removed from power--was clear, Congressional knowledge of specific, unfolding events remains obscure. One question Langer raised, for example, is still hard to answer: how much did members of Congress know about what was actually occurring in

Central America in June of 1954? Langer also might have asked: how much did Congressional members know about the involvement of the CIA, the State Department, and the Eisenhower White House in the attempt to overturn Arbenz's government?

On the first question, it would be a mistake to think that Congress at large was simply ignorant. While the Eisenhower administration issued innumerable statements--from the White House, the State Department, and at the UN--claiming that a conflict wholly involving Guatemalans was unfolding, US newspapers did report alternate versions of the story. While tending to accept the administration's view in their editorial pages and in many news stories, they also reported claims from the Guatemalan and Soviet Governments, from many newspapers in Latin America, and others that the United States was behind the conflict. Even the British government expressed reservations about the US account of the Guatemalan crisis. So, any interested member of Congress at least knew that the US Government was being charged with a hidden role in the affair.

PRESS COVERAGE

The words "Central Intelligence Agency" hardly ever showed up in newspapers, though. During the entire month of June 1954, The Washington Post never suggested--in news stories, editorials, opinion columns, or letters to the editor--that the Agency played a role in the Guatemalan crisis. The New York Times was a first-rate newspaper in the 1950s, with reasonably comprehensive treatment of events in Washington and internationally, while the Post was inferior, even in its coverage of Washington politics. Still, both papers' editorials argued that the United States had to stop the Soviet Union from solidifying its Guatemalan "beachhead" in Central America. Neither newspaper explained specifically how this was to be done. The Post's and Times's writing resembled editorials in other major newspapers. For example, The Philadelphia Inquirer wrote:

In recent weeks, the Communists--the real government [in Guatemala]--have been building up a reign of terror and suppression that sent hundreds fleeing across the borders to safety. And now they are streaming back into their own country with the avowed purpose of smashing the Russian plot and liberating Guatemala from the most dangerous threat the Western Hemisphere has had to face.

The Times's news pages, more so than other American newspapers, prominently featured accusations from around the world that the US government was behind the little war in Guatemala. A good example is from 20 June--the very day that Allen Dulles let Eisenhower know that events were coming to a head in Central America, but that the outcome was "very much in doubt." That day's issue, on page one, indicated that the State Department "said that it had no evidence indicating that the violent developments of the last 24 hours were anything but a `revolt of Guatemalans against the government'." The Foreign Minister of Guatemala said that "aggression" had the "firm support" of the United States Department of State. The Soviet Union charged that "the United States had `prepared and inspired' the attack on the Guatemalan government."

Furthermore, the newspaper actually mentioned Allen Dulles and the CIA in connection with the crisis, though just twice, and only on its op-ed page. The first reference to Dulles was by James Reston, also on 20 June, in his regular column written from Washington. (Here it is worth emphasizing the Times's influence in Washington, DC, of the mid-1950s. One analyst of the press in the early Cold War decades found that "State Department staff members often remarked that their jobs would be impossible were it not for The New York Times , a paper described on Capitol Hill as `everyone's Bible of information' and `every man's CIA'.") 10 In the "Bible" on 20 June, Reston's column was titled, "With the Dulles Brothers in Darkest Guatemala." It began:

John Foster Dulles, the Secretary of State, seldom intervenes in the internal affairs of other countries, but his brother Allen is more enterprising. If somebody wants to start a revolution in, say, Guatemala, it is no good talking to Foster Dulles. But Allen Dulles, head of the Central Intelligence Agency, is a more active man. He has been watching the Guatemalan situation for a long time.

Though he underestimated Foster Dulles's role, Reston's column was a rare case of realism in the US press about the parties behind the conflict in Guatemala. While he recognized that a coup would not solve Guatemala's problems, the Times columnist was no critic of Allen Dulles or CIA:

Moscow is now definitely fishing in these long-troubled waters. It sees the possibility of Latin America's disillusion. It resents the strong Latin American support for the United States at the UN. It fears United States bases of operation near its own frontiers and is now obviously trying to establish Communist governments near ours. Mr. Dulles (Allen, that is) can no doubt help block this objective in Guatemala, but it will take Foster Dulles and the Congress to bring about a policy change that will

deal with the central economic problems of the hemisphere.

Curiously, but no doubt willingly, the Times ignored CIA's role in the Guatemalan crisis in a 21 June editorial and instead gave credence to US claims that the crisis was purely a matter of freedom-loving Guatemalans, led by Castillo Armas, versus Communists, led by Arbenz. (The Times also kept reporter Sydney Gruson, based in Mexico City and learning about US activities to the south, out of Guatemala during the coup, at the request of Allen Dulles.)

The second prominent mention by The New York Times of CIA in relation to Guatemala came in response to that editorial. A lengthy letter from a reader had prime placement in the 24 June Times . It castigated the Times for its own inconsistencies:

We will not escape the consequences of this aggression by proxy by taking a "who, me?" attitude. In your issue of 20 June, James Reston frankly admitted Allen Dulles's role in the invasion of Guatemala. Ambassador Peurifoy's cynical answer to the Guatemalans' complaint about American planes bombing and strafing Guatemalan towns that "there are American planes everywhere in the world" will be thrown into our teeth wherever and whenever we try to persuade people that our presence serves exclusively peaceful ends. It is easy to conform in the name of "my country, right or wrong." True patriotism says: "my country--to be put right when she is wrong." Will your great paper set patriotism above conformity and help to put our country right in Guatemala?

HUSH-HUSH TREATMENT

Given the near-universal readership of the Times on Capitol Hill, the CIA's involvement in the Guatemala affair was a widely suspected "secret," even among legislators with little seniority and power. Still, no members of Congress talked for public consumption about the Agency's suspected activities. 11

Among leaders in Congress, what more specific knowledge was there of the CIA covert action program carried out in Guatemala, with direction from the State Department and White House? Here, again, the answers are not easy to come by, because the record is so limited. Walter Pforzheimer, the first Legislative Counsel for the CIA, asked if he remembers any reactions from the subcommittees on CIA to events in Guatemala, says, "I don't remember any reactions, but, of course, I knew the guys running the Guatemalan operation. I'm sure the committees were informed. It was on my watch." Without claiming a specific memory, Pforzheimer says the House Appropriations Subcommittee on CIA (headed by an aggressive John Taber of New York) would have been closely consulted, and there would have been "no holding back of details." 12

My exploration of the papers of a dozen leaders of the legislative subcommittees on CIA from the early Cold War period supports Pforzheimer's general recollection that, while DCIs did not share details on all covert operations with those legislators, "Of course, you're going to brief them on Guatemala." Also, notes prepared for Allen Dulles to use in briefing one of the Appropriations subcommittees on CIA in March 1954, while not mentioning names of specific countries, are straightforward in describing the work of the CIA's Clandestine Service and defending the necessity of covert action: "We attempt to influence foreign peoples and governments in support of US foreign policies in such manner that the hand of the US Government is not apparent. The sensitiveness of foreign governments is such that covert political action to influence them is often more effective than overt measures." Dulles took along a chart for the hearing, listing not just successes, but also failed paramilitary and other covert actions in the Agency's brief history. 13

Concerning Guatemala, two documents in declassified CIA files show some interactions between Agency personnel and unspecified Congressional committee staff members in February and April 1954. The staffers were passing on information from individuals who themselves had information on persons inside the Guatemalan Government. The staffers provided the names "as possible assistance [to] KUBARK [that is, CIA] activities." Agency leaders passed on the information to PBSUCCESS [the CIA cryptonym for the Guatemala operation] leaders in Guatemala. Regarding those sources revealed to the Agency by the Congressional figures, CIA wanted in April to "obtain names of most likely defection possibilities in WSBURNT [Guatemalan government] hierarchy plus information on their personalities, weaknesses, plus channels and methods of approach." The significance of this is that Congressional staffers exchanging information with CIA leaders regarding the Guatemalan operation did so, presumably, with the knowledge of one or more superiors on the unnamed committee(s). 14

Immerman's *The CIA in Guatemala* says that a few powerful legislators--especially Senate majority

leader William Knowland of California and Appropriations Chair Styles Bridges of New Hampshire, in addition to Senators Wiley, Johnson, and others--interacted with Eisenhower or State and CIA leaders, pressing them to do "more" about the Guatemalan government, and were given at least oblique assurances that such was being done. 15

Bridges headed one of the four CIA subcommittees in Congress. What other subcommittee chairs and ranking minority members, like Taber, Senator Richard Russell of Georgia, and Senator Leverett Saltonstall of Massachusetts, knew of specifics is open to question. Saltonstall, chair of the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee, saw Allen Dulles every few weeks on business and social occasions. His son and legislative aide, William, assumed in a memo to his father some years later that the Senator had had prior knowledge of the CIA's role in overthrowing Arbenz. His assumption was credible, for rumors of past CIA involvement in Guatemala were among topics scheduled to be discussed in an apparently unrecorded meeting of the subcommittee with Allen Dulles on 22 March 1954. 16

Overall, available evidence suggests that Congress--counting both leaders and followers--had not just a permissive, but an enthusiastic attitude toward getting rid of the Arbenz government. Legislative leaders are likely to have had far greater knowledge of events unfolding between the CIA and Guatemala's government in the spring and summer of 1954 than did the rest of Congress.

CIA'S VIEW OF CONGRESSIONAL INTENT

Dulles, Pforzheimer, and others could easily judge legislative preferences in The Congressional Record and in conversations with leaders. They never doubted, later on, that CIA's 1954 operation had reflected those preferences. But what documentary record is there of CIA's views of Congressional sentiment at the time? Perhaps the best piece of evidence comes from notes of one of the weekly PBSUCCESS meetings in March 1954, with attendees (their names still sanitized from the document at 20th century's end) from CIA, the State Department, and possibly other organizations. This, of course, was a time when more and more members of Congress, Senator Margaret Chase Smith of Maine, for example, vocalized on Guatemala: "We might as well do away with the diplomatic niceties right away." And Eisenhower had already assured Knowland that he anticipated dealing soon with a new government of Guatemala. In this political atmosphere, the meeting's participants connected Congressional opinion to the coming months' imperatives in Guatemala:

Mr. [name deleted] then stated that he and Mr. [name deleted] were there to take stock of the present situation, to determine where we stand now and what are the future prospects. Are things going downhill so fast in Guatemala that PBSUCCESS, as it now stands, may not be enough? Consideration must be given to the much greater pressure which may come from Congress and public opinion on the present administration if the situation in Guatemala does deteriorate. It may be necessary to take more calculated risks than before.... Mr. [name deleted] then asked Mr. [name deleted] exactly what was meant by possible additional calculated risks. Messrs. [name deleted] and [name deleted] replied: (a) We might reconsider exploiting the conclusion arrived at by [Dominican Republic leader] Trujillo last year and transmitted to [Venezuelan leader] Perez Jimenez that the best way to bring about the fall of the Arbenz government would be to eliminate 15 to 20 of its leaders with Trujillo's trained pistoleros.... Mr. [name deleted] replied that he thought the operation could be brought to a conclusion by 15 June; that the program was complex but that we believe the Agency has the capability of doing the job.... Mr. [name deleted] "...If attributable to the United States, it should not be done. High-level thinking is that an act which can be pinned on the United States will set us back in our relations with Latin American countries by 50 years." [Name deleted] then expressed himself as opposed to the elimination of 15 to 20 Guatemalan leaders as a possible solution to the problem, although stating that such elimination was part of the plan and could be done. 17

CIA leaders in Washington and Central America, along with members of the State Department continued to discuss the assassination option off and on in the three months leading up to the overthrow of the Arbenz government. It appears that no assassinations occurred, however.

The notable feature of the March discussion, though--aside from the fact that assassination was an option in the days of PBSUCCESS--is that participants linked the necessity of "more calculated risks" such as assassination to "pressure which may come from Congress...." 18

CONCLUSION

The extent of detailed discussions of the Guatemalan operation between CIA and Congressional leaders may never be known, but there was little doubt at CIA or the White House as to overarching Congressional intent before or after the overthrow. Senator Smathers, typical of the Congressional

enthusiasts in the spring of 1954 for doing what was "necessary" to get rid of Arbenz's government, reflected legislative sentiment when word emerged out of Guatemala on 30 June that the government had fallen: "In all candor, we must admit that the democratic nations of the Western Hemisphere could not permit the continued existence of a Communist base in Latin America, so close to home." 19

Any lingering views that the US policy toward Guatemala in 1954 was simply the product of a hawkish executive branch, with Congress having little complicity in the policy, can safely be put to rest.

NOTES

1. ADDI Diary, 12 December 1952; Harold Bull to Dulles, 22 April 1954; in CIA Declassified Reference Materials (CIA/DRM), Box 185, National Archives.

2. Immerman, *The CIA in Guatemala : The Foreign Policy of Intervention* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982).

3. Sherman Kent to Dulles, 23 February 1955, CIA/DRM, Box 185, National Archives. Even "the relevant branch of DDP" (the Plans Directorate, which carried out the operation) agreed with the analysis. "Product of CIA Expenses Queried on Capitol Hill," *Washington Evening Star*, 21 February 1956, reprinted in *The Congressional Record (CR)*, 9 April 1956, pp. 5932-3; Andrew, *For the President's Eyes Only: Secret Intelligence and the American Presidency From Washington to Bush* (New York: Harper Collins, 1995), pp. 209-210. Clinton, quoted in *The New York Times*, 11 March 1999.

4. For an elaboration, see David M. Barrett, "Glimpses of a Hidden History: Senator Richard Russell, Congress, and Oversight of the CIA," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol. 11, No. 3, Fall 1998, pp. 271-298.

5. Wiley, quoted in Immerman, pp. 103, 115, 156; Smathers, (*CR*), 28 May 1954, pp. 7336-8.

6. Kersten, quoted in Immerman, p. 153.

7. The quotes are from Johnson and Republican leader William Knowland; see *CR*, 25 June 1954, pp. 8922-8926.

8. *CR*, House, 29 June 1954, pp. 9176-9179.

9. *CR*, Senate, 28 June 1954, pp. 9065-9066.

10. Bernard C. Cohen, *The Press and Foreign Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963), pp. 40-41, 134-135, cited in Immerman, p. 115.

11. *The New York Times*, 20 June 1954, pp. 1, and 8E; 24 June 1954, p. 26; *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 22 June 1954, p. 20. I examined every issue of the *Times* and *The Washington Post* in May and June 1954. Dulles to Eisenhower, 20 June 1954, Ann Whitman File, Admin. Series, Box 13, DDE Library. On the Gruson story, see his obituary in the *Times*, 9 March 1998.

12. Pforzheimer, interviewed by the author, 30 September 1994; my description of Taber is based on a review of his papers at Cornell University.

13. The notes survived the usually heavy hand of censors in 1998, apparently because no specific operations or countries are mentioned, and the chart listing successes and failures is not included in the CIA/DRM, Box 4, National Archives.

14. The two documents are cryptic CIA cables referring to PBSUCCESS and noting that the Congressional staffers had some information on some type of "infiltration." CIA Records, Guatemala, 1952-54, Box 1, National Archives.

15. Immerman, p. 152.

16. William L. Saltonstall to Senator Saltonstall, 6-1-66, Saltonstall Papers, Box 43, Massachusetts Historical Society. The younger Saltonstall was preparing his father for forthcoming Senate debate over increasing legislative oversight of the CIA. "Guatemala" was treated as one of a group of CIA "successes" in the memo, which suggested that the Senator might find it "useful to say, if you can, how far ahead you knew about these and how much detail you had on them." William Darden to Saltonstall, 19 March 1954, Senate Armed Services Committee, Box 230, National Archives.

17. "Weekly PBSUCCESS meeting with [word(s) deleted]," 9 March 1954, CIA-Guatemala Records, 1952-1943, Box 1, National Archives; Smith quotation and Eisenhower-Knowland interaction, both in Immerman, pp. 151-3.

18. See also the 1995 paper from CIA's History Staff: Gerald K. Haines, "CIA and Guatemala Assassination Proposals, 1952-1954" in CIA Records, National Archives. An overview of the Guatemala affair, also produced by the same office, is in print: Nick Cullather, *Secret History: The CIA's Classified Account of its Operation in Guatemala, 1952-1954* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

Papers Show U.S. Role in Guatemalan Abuses

By Douglas Farah

Washington Post Foreign Service

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During the 1960s, the United States was intimately involved in equipping and training Guatemalan security forces that murdered thousands of civilians in the nation's civil war, according to newly declassified U.S. intelligence documents.

The documents show, moreover, that the CIA retained close ties to the Guatemalan army in the 1980s, when the army and its paramilitary allies were massacring Indian villagers, and that U.S. officials were aware of the killings at the time. The documents were obtained by the National Security Archive, a private nonprofit group in Washington.

Some of the documents were made available to an independent commission formed to investigate human rights abuses during Guatemala's 36-year civil war, which killed an estimated 200,000 people. The report by the Historical Clarification Commission, which grew out of the U.N.-brokered peace agreement that ended the conflict in 1996, was released last month in Guatemala and blamed

government forces for the overwhelming majority of human rights violations during the conflict.

But some of the documents were not released until yesterday. One was a Jan. 4, 1966 memo from a U.S. State Department security official describing how he set up a "safe house" in the presidential palace for use by Guatemalan security agents and their U.S. contacts. The safe house became the headquarters for Guatemala's "dirty war" against leftist insurgents and suspected allies.

"I have never seen anything like it," said Kate Doyle, Guatemala project director at the archives, expressing amazement at "the description of our intimacy with the Guatemalan security forces."

Three months after the cable about the safe house, on March 6, 1966, security forces arrested 32 people suspected of aiding Marxist guerrillas; those arrested subsequently disappeared. While the Guatemalan government denied any involvement in the case, a CIA cable sent later that year identifies three of those missing, saying, "The following Guatemalan Communists and terrorists were executed secretly by Guatemalan authorities on the night of March 6."

The CIA has a long history of involvement in Guatemala, having helped to orchestrate the army's overthrow of a democratically elected government in 1954. Nevertheless, largely because of human rights concerns, the United States never provided Guatemalan security forces with the same level of support it gave anti-communist forces in neighboring Nicaragua and El Salvador during fighting in the 1980s.

In 1977 the Guatemalan government rejected \$2.1 million in U.S. military aid because it was conditioned on improved performance on human rights. But in the early 1980s, under the Reagan administration, the relationship warmed up again despite occasional clashes over the military's brutal tactics.

As the Cold War raged in the 1960s and '70s, the United States gave the Guatemalan military \$33 million in aid even though U.S. officials were aware of the army's dismal track record on human rights, the documents show.

On Oct. 23, 1967, for example, a secret State Department cable reported that covert Guatemalan security operations included "kidnapping, torture and summary executions." The cable said that "in the past year . . . approximately 500-600 persons have been killed; with the addition of the 'missing' persons this figure might double to 1,000-2,000." It also described the government's Special Commando Unit, which used civilians as well as military personnel and carried out "abductions, bombings, street assassinations and executions of real or alleged communists."

A 1992 CIA cable confirmed that indigenous villages were targeted for destruction because of the army's belief that the Indians supported the guerrillas.

In describing one episode, which occurred shortly before it was written, the cable reported that "several villages have been burned to the ground." It continued, "The well-documented belief by the army that the entire Ixil Indian population is [pro-guerrilla] has created a situation in which the army can be expected to give no quarter to combatants and noncombatants alike."

An April 1994 Defense Intelligence Agency report outlined how, in the 1980s, as U.S. aid grew, Guatemalan military intelligence agents dumped suspected guerrillas – dead and alive – out of airplanes into the ocean.

"In this way they have been able to remove the majority of the evidence showing that the prisoners were tortured and killed," the memo said.

But as grim a picture as the documents portray, said Doyle, the project director, the Clinton administration was to be commended for making them public.

"The commission asked for documents from Argentina, Israel and Taiwan," Doyle said. "Only the United States responded."

Congress, the CIA, and Guatemala, 1954

UNCLASSIFIED

Sterilizing a "Red Infection"

Congress, the CIA, and Guatemala, 1954

David M. Barrett

One of the paradoxes of legislative oversight of intelligence in the early Cold War period was that the United States Congress could give strong, if de facto, support of aggressive covert action while, with the exception of a few leaders, not really knowing which such policies were being carried out. Guatemala is a perfect example. Following its 1944 revolution, which brought democratically elected leftist governments to power, this Central American government faced an increasingly hostile neighbor to the north, the United States. Guatemala's treatment of US-based corporations, especially the United Fruit Company, in expropriating land and other assets, did nothing to improve relations. Elites in Guatemala helped persuade US journalists and members of Congress, not to mention the executive branch, that their government was veering further and further leftward toward Communism in the early 1950s.

Late in the Truman presidency, the US government aborted an attempt to support Guatemalans who aimed to overthrow President Jacobo Arbenz. Those at CIA Headquarters who were involved in the effort felt "grimly" about that "horrifying" turn of events, one Agency leader noted in his diary. But, not surprisingly, new administration leaders--President Dwight Eisenhower, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, and DCI Allen Dulles--also persuaded themselves that the Guatemalan government was "red." The CIA leader had help from the Board of National Estimates, which informed him on 22 April 1954 that "The Communists now effectively control the political life of Guatemala." [1](#) A deal made by Arbenz's government to purchase Soviet-made armaments from Czechoslovakia that spring only sealed the matter in the American leaders' minds.

What unfolded in May and June of 1954 is now a familiar story in US intelligence and diplomatic history: Washington used the CIA and US Ambassador John Peurifoy to support and direct certain Guatemalan military leaders in overthrowing Arbenz's government. It was also psychological warfare--cleverly deceptive efforts to persuade Guatemala's citizens and political/military leaders that a major invasion force was steadily moving toward the nation's capital so unnerved Arbenz and others that the government fell without much of a battle.

The story has been told most notably by historian Richard Immerman, who carefully analyzes the American and Guatemalan political environments. [2](#) While the overthrow of Arbenz was unfolding, the US government pretended to have nothing to do with it. In the year or so after President Castillo Armas's anti-Communist government was brought into power with Agency assistance, CIA quietly judged that his government was "inept," despite his "virtually dictatorial powers," and that there were growing "public demands for a return to constitutional democracy." Still, while American news reports and Congressional debates began to acknowledge that the United States had been involved, the overthrow became one of CIA's "well-known successes." This was the analysis of a Washington Evening Star article in early 1956, for example. Even critics of CIA in the 1950s and 1960s were reluctant to challenge that interpretation of events.

In the late Cold War period and since, however, the American overthrow of the Arbenz government came to be widely seen as shameful. This is mostly because the governments that followed the 1954 coup in the subsequent five decades were far more repressive than Arbenz's elective government. Even intelligence scholar Christopher Andrew, an Eisenhower admirer, describes the Guatemala affair as a "disreputable moment"--Eisenhower was "directly responsible" for "death and destruction," yet showed no signs of embarrassment then or later over his "bullying of a banana republic." A culminating moment in the evolving historical memory of the United States and Guatemala in 1954 came in 1999, when President Clinton visited Guatemala and said, "Support for military forces and intelligence units which engaged in violence and widespread repression was wrong, and the United States must not repeat that mistake." [3](#)

Aside from morality, there were other unfortunate legacies of the Guatemalan "success:" Allen Dulles used it as a model in advising President Kennedy seven years later to pursue the ill-fated Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. Also, since the early Eisenhower-Dulles period, the CIA has had a vastly exaggerated reputation worldwide for causing all sorts of havoc.

A Congressional Role in Intelligence Policy?

While it is accurate to view CIA's involvement in overthrowing the Guatemalan government as mandated by higher political authorities in the US government, it is a mistake to assign responsibility and blame for the covert operation solely on the Eisenhower White House. While direct evidence of

what Congressional leaders knew of the operation before, during, and immediately after its occurrence is fragmentary, a suggestion that they did not know something of what was happening is thoroughly implausible. Congressional intent--judged by speeches, votes, and interactions between the administration and key legislators--was clearly that the US government should do whatever it might take, short of outright war, to stop ongoing "Soviet aggression" in Central America. The claim here that Congress played some role in bringing about CIA's involvement in ridding Guatemala of the Arbenz government flies in the face of most conventional wisdom about legislative oversight of the Agency in the early Cold War period. Many published accounts hold that Congressional monitoring of the CIA was virtually nonexistent before the 1970s. A more accurate view can be summarized this way: Congressional oversight of CIA in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s was limited and informal in comparison to the current oversight system, which features House and Senates committees on intelligence, created after the upheavals of the 1970s. But limited oversight was not "no oversight." In fact, on periodic occasions, legislators became persistent and aggressive in monitoring the Agency.

Essentially, early Cold War Congresses delegated major intelligence oversight responsibility to the Armed Services and Appropriations Committees of the House and Senate. In turn, those four committees delegated such powers to small, informal, and highly secretive subcommittees on the CIA. Of equal significance, those four subcommittees deferred heavily to their chairs and ranking minority members. (In this, they resembled most Congressional committees and subcommittees of the time.) Across nearly three decades, those subcommittees almost never leaked confidential information.

Therefore, most members of Congress knew little about CIA's functioning; members of the four appropriations and Armed Services subcommittees typically knew a fair amount about the Agency activities and budget; their chairs and ranking minority members usually knew a good deal about CIA's operations. In addition, the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy (JACE) interacted with, relied on, and sometimes criticized CIA for its intelligence on the nuclear capabilities of other countries, especially the USSR. And a few other Congressional leaders, such as the chairs of foreign affairs committees, often insisted with some success on knowing what CIA was doing. [4](#)

The Case of the Guatemalan Coup

In the winter and spring of 1954, a number of Congressional leaders had frequent private contacts with the Dulles brothers and the White House about Guatemala. Among these was Senator Alexander Wiley of Wisconsin, chair of the Foreign Relations Committee, who believed that a "Communist octopus" had for years used its tentacles to control events in Guatemala. "Homegrown Communism" was a myth, according to Wiley: "There is no Communism but the Communism which takes orders from the despots of the Kremlin in Moscow." The Wisconsin senior senator was far less known than the other senator from his home state, but he garnered more respect within the Senate itself. In his two years (1953-1954) as chair of Foreign Relations, Wiley persistently urged the Eisenhower administration to go beyond limp diplomatic means to get rid of Arbenz's government. A few years before things came to a head, Wiley had explained the urgency behind his unchanging and unambiguous views to Senator Theodore Green of Rhode Island: "It seems to me that Guatemala is going to be a source of Red infection throughout Central America, and the sooner we help sterilize that source, the better."

Wiley readily agreed to the DCI's request to go public in describing the shipment of Soviet-made armaments from Czechoslovakia to Guatemala in May as "part of the master plan of world Communism." So, too, did Senator George Smathers of Florida, relying on "information gathered by me and my staff." The Senator did not mention his source, the CIA. But he did warn that "the Politburo of Guatemala" was "taking orders from Moscow." The cargo ship that left Stettin, Poland, on 17 April, laden with armaments and arrived at Puerto Barrios, Guatemala, on 15 May was concrete evidence of Soviet intervention. "Are we not solemnly pledged to prevent and to frustrate such intervention?" Smathers asked. [5](#)

Various Senators' urgency and frustration with what seemed like a slow-moving Eisenhower administration was shared across parties and by many in the House. In the spring of 1954, Representative Charles Kersten of Wisconsin was among House members pushing the administration to act decisively. While Kersten's interactions with the CIA are unknown, he was long interested in the Agency and intelligence matters. (After losing a reelection bid later in 1954, Kersten would become a consultant on psychological warfare for the Eisenhower White House in 1955 and 1956.) As Richard Immerman explains, Kersten reasoned that "the Guatemalans had a right to revolt against the Communists, [so]...the United States had a right to assist the revolt." [6](#)

The Johnson Resolution

A long-forgotten Congressional debate in June 1954 over a sense-of-the-Congress resolution displayed this unambiguous intent. The resolution's author was a man who would become famous ten years later for fathering a different, overwhelmingly supported, hastily passed resolution to enactment--Lyndon Johnson. The Senate minority leader was reacting to published reports of Guatemala's arms purchases from Czechoslovakia. In consultation with the State Department, Johnson offered his colleagues and those in the House an opportunity to give unstinting support to Eisenhower with "an

unmistakable warning that we are determined to keep Communism out of the Western Hemisphere." Johnson's and other Senators' language was immoderate, to say the least; the challenge facing the United States in Guatemala was "a new type of imperialism," "an open declaration of the aggressive designs of international Communism." Therefore, the United States had to "support" the Organization of American States (the OAS, much influenced by the United States) which fought against the "upsetting of sovereign governments by the international Communist movement or conspiracy." [7](#) The rhetoric was no less fervent in the House, where support for the Johnson Resolution and hostility toward the Guatemalan government were overwhelming. Senator Johnson took "firm and constructive action," showing "leadership and statesmanship on a high level," said Minority Leader John McCormack of Massachusetts. According to Representative Jack Brooks of Texas the resolution was "so basically American and so basically anti-Communist" that support for it was urgent, in light of the fact that "a Communist-dominated government in Guatemala is only 700 miles from Texas--only 960 miles, or a few hours' bomber time, from the refineries, the chemical plants, and the homes of my own Second District in Texas. The Monroe Doctrine--1823--is still a vital, living force. But it needs restatement in light of modern conditions," said Brooks. Fellow Texan Martin Dies agreed: "The Soviet government...has challenged the Monroe Doctrine. To that challenge there can be but one response." [8](#)

A Dissenting Vote

When the House voted on 29 June, the result was a unanimous "yes." No one referred to the CIA, and no one raised the possibility that the United States might be in the process of interfering in the internal affairs of Guatemala. The House vote was immensely satisfying to the Eisenhower White House; only slightly less gratifying was the Senate vote, where only one member voted "no." It was William Langer of North Dakota, widely dismissed as an old-fashioned isolationist. This was not entirely fair: in part, the Senator was a critic of the morality of certain aspects of US foreign policy in the early Cold War era. While a fair number of legislators periodically questioned the competence of CIA or other foreign policy agencies, few focused on ethical questions. Langer's statement in explanation of his vote--at a time when Joseph McCarthy's anti-Communist crusade was in full flower--is, in retrospect, not easily dismissed:

I am as much opposed to international Communism as is any other member of this House.... I trust that there are sufficient remains of an atmosphere of reason in this country so that Senators can disagree without being called Communists.... I am opposed to the Johnson Resolution. I do not think the United States should jump into the Guatemala situation, a sensitive and very grave threat to world peace, with such elephantine delicacy. I do not believe that the Members of the Senate have been adequately informed as yet as to what is going on in Guatemala. We have had inadequate time to consider such a major declaration on foreign policy.... Is there a foreign invasion of Guatemala, or is there a civil war? If it is a foreign invasion, exactly who are the invading forces, and who are behind them? I ask any Senator if he can answer those questions, and answer them intelligently? ...There has been much talk about the malevolent influence of the \$548 million United Fruit Company in Guatemala, which some have charged is bigger than the government itself. ...Of course we are opposed to external interference with the affairs of any nation, especially so with regard to our sister republics of Latin America. But even more, we will, or we ought to be, committed to the principle that every sovereign nation has a right to determine for itself its own form of government. [9](#) Langer's statement and his vote were the talk of Capitol Hill, but no Senator replied to him on the floor, a sign of how at odds he was with the political times.

The Degree of Knowledge

While Congressional intent--that Arbenz should be removed from power--was clear, Congressional knowledge of specific, unfolding events remains obscure. One question Langer raised, for example, is still hard to answer: how much did members of Congress know about what was actually occurring in Central America in June of 1954? Langer also might have asked: how much did Congressional members know about the involvement of the CIA, the State Department, and the Eisenhower White House in the attempt to overturn Arbenz's government?

On the first question, it would be a mistake to think that Congress at large was simply ignorant. While the Eisenhower administration issued innumerable statements--from the White House, the State Department, and at the UN--claiming that a conflict wholly involving Guatemalans was unfolding, US newspapers did report alternate versions of the story. While tending to accept the administration's view in their editorial pages and in many news stories, they also reported claims from the Guatemalan and Soviet Governments, from many newspapers in Latin America, and others that the United States was behind the conflict. Even the British government expressed reservations about the US account of the Guatemalan crisis. So, any interested member of Congress at least knew that the US Government was being charged with a hidden role in the affair.

Press Coverage

The words "Central Intelligence Agency" hardly ever showed up in newspapers, though. During the entire month of June 1954, The Washington Post never suggested--in news stories, editorials, opinion columns, or letters to the editor--that the Agency played a role in the Guatemalan crisis. The New York Times was a first-rate newspaper in the 1950s, with reasonably comprehensive treatment of

events in Washington and internationally, while the Post was inferior, even in its coverage of Washington politics. Still, both papers' editorials argued that the United States had to stop the Soviet Union from solidifying its Guatemalan "beachhead" in Central America. Neither newspaper explained specifically how this was to be done. The Post's and Times's writing resembled editorials in other major newspapers. For example, The Philadelphia Inquirer wrote:

In recent weeks, the Communists--the real government [in Guatemala]--have been building up a reign of terror and suppression that sent hundreds fleeing across the borders to safety. And now they are streaming back into their own country with the avowed purpose of smashing the Russian plot and liberating Guatemala from the most dangerous threat the Western Hemisphere has had to face.

The Times's news pages, more so than other American newspapers, prominently featured accusations from around the world that the US government was behind the little war in Guatemala. A good example is from 20 June--the very day that Allen Dulles let Eisenhower know that events were coming to a head in Central America, but that the outcome was "very much in doubt." That day's issue, on page one, indicated that the State Department "said that it had no evidence indicating that the violent developments of the last 24 hours were anything but a `revolt of Guatemalans against the government'." The Foreign Minister of Guatemala said that "aggression" had the "firm support" of the United States Department of State. The Soviet Union charged that "the United States had `prepared and inspired' the attack on the Guatemalan government."

Furthermore, the newspaper actually mentioned Allen Dulles and the CIA in connection with the crisis, though just twice, and only on its op-ed page. The first reference to Dulles was by James Reston, also on 20 June, in his regular column written from Washington. (Here it is worth emphasizing the Times's influence in Washington, DC, of the mid-1950s. One analyst of the press in the early Cold War decades found that "State Department staff members often remarked that their jobs would be impossible were it not for The New York Times , a paper described on Capitol Hill as `everyone's Bible of information' and `every man's CIA'.") [10](#) In the "Bible" on 20 June, Reston's column was titled, "With the Dulles Brothers in Darkest Guatemala." It began:

John Foster Dulles, the Secretary of State, seldom intervenes in the internal affairs of other countries, but his brother Allen is more enterprising. If somebody wants to start a revolution in, say, Guatemala, it is no good talking to Foster Dulles. But Allen Dulles, head of the Central Intelligence Agency, is a more active man. He has been watching the Guatemalan situation for a long time.

Though he underestimated Foster Dulles's role, Reston's column was a rare case of realism in the US press about the parties behind the conflict in Guatemala. While he recognized that a coup would not solve Guatemala's problems, the Times columnist was no critic of Allen Dulles or CIA:

Moscow is now definitely fishing in these long-troubled waters. It sees the possibility of Latin America's disillusion. It resents the strong Latin American support for the United States at the UN. It fears United States bases of operation near its own frontiers and is now obviously trying to establish Communist governments near ours. Mr. Dulles (Allen, that is) can no doubt help block this objective in Guatemala, but it will take Foster Dulles and the Congress to bring about a policy change that will deal with the central economic problems of the hemisphere.

Curiously, but no doubt willingly, the Times ignored CIA's role in the Guatemalan crisis in a 21 June editorial and instead gave credence to US claims that the crisis was purely a matter of freedom-loving Guatemalans, led by Castillo Armas, versus Communists, led by Arbenz. (The Times also kept reporter Sydney Gruson, based in Mexico City and learning about US activities to the south, out of Guatemala during the coup, at the request of Allen Dulles.)

The second prominent mention by The New York Times of CIA in relation to Guatemala came in response to that editorial. A lengthy letter from a reader had prime placement in the 24 June Times . It castigated the Times for its own inconsistencies:

We will not escape the consequences of this aggression by proxy by taking a "who, me?" attitude. In your issue of 20 June, James Reston frankly admitted Allen Dulles's role in the invasion of Guatemala. Ambassador Peurifoy's cynical answer to the Guatemalans' complaint about American planes bombing and strafing Guatemalan towns that "there are American planes everywhere in the world" will be thrown into our teeth wherever and whenever we try to persuade people that our presence serves exclusively peaceful ends. It is easy to conform in the name of "my country, right or wrong." True patriotism says: "my country--to be put right when she is wrong." Will your great paper set patriotism above conformity and help to put our country right in Guatemala?

Hush-hush Treatment

Given the near-universal readership of the Times on Capitol Hill, the CIA's involvement in the Guatemala affair was a widely suspected "secret," even among legislators with little seniority and power. Still, no members of Congress talked for public consumption about the Agency's suspected activities. [11](#)

Among leaders in Congress, what more specific knowledge was there of the CIA covert action program carried out in Guatemala, with direction from the State Department and White House? Here, again, the answers are not easy to come by, because the record is so limited. Walter Pforzheimer, the first Legislative Counsel for the CIA, asked if he remembers any reactions from the subcommittees on CIA to events in Guatemala, says, "I don't remember any reactions, but, of course, I knew the guys running the Guatemalan operation. I'm sure the committees were informed. It was on my watch."

Without claiming a specific memory, Pforzheimer says the House Appropriations Subcommittee on CIA (headed by an aggressive John Taber of New York) would have been closely consulted, and there would have been "no holding back of details." [12](#)

My exploration of the papers of a dozen leaders of the legislative subcommittees on CIA from the early Cold War period supports Pforzheimer's general recollection that, while DCIs did not share details on all covert operations with those legislators, "Of course, you're going to brief them on Guatemala." Also, notes prepared for Allen Dulles to use in briefing one of the Appropriations subcommittees on CIA in March 1954, while not mentioning names of specific countries, are straightforward in describing the work of the CIA's Clandestine Service and defending the necessity of covert action: "We attempt to influence foreign peoples and governments in support of US foreign policies in such manner that the hand of the US Government is not apparent. The sensitiveness of foreign governments is such that covert political action to influence them is often more effective than overt measures." Dulles took along a chart for the hearing, listing not just successes, but also failed paramilitary and other covert actions in the Agency's brief history. [13](#)

Concerning Guatemala, two documents in declassified CIA files show some interactions between Agency personnel and unspecified Congressional committee staff members in February and April 1954. The staffers were passing on information from individuals who themselves had information on persons inside the Guatemalan Government. The staffers provided the names "as possible assistance [to] KUBARK [that is, CIA] activities." Agency leaders passed on the information to PBSUCCESS [the CIA cryptonym for the Guatemala operation] leaders in Guatemala. Regarding those sources revealed to the Agency by the Congressional figures, CIA wanted in April to "obtain names of most likely defection possibilities in WSBURNT [Guatemalan government] hierarchy plus information on their personalities, weaknesses, plus channels and methods of approach." The significance of this is that Congressional staffers exchanging information with CIA leaders regarding the Guatemalan operation did so, presumably, with the knowledge of one or more superiors on the unnamed committee(s). [14](#)

Immerman's *The CIA in Guatemala* says that a few powerful legislators--especially Senate majority leader William Knowland of California and Appropriations Chair Styles Bridges of New Hampshire, in addition to Senators Wiley, Johnson, and others--interacted with Eisenhower or State and CIA leaders, pressing them to do "more" about the Guatemalan government, and were given at least oblique assurances that such was being done. [15](#)

Bridges headed one of the four CIA subcommittees in Congress. What other subcommittee chairs and ranking minority members, like Taber, Senator Richard Russell of Georgia, and Senator Leverett Saltonstall of Massachusetts, knew of specifics is open to question. Saltonstall, chair of the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee, saw Allen Dulles every few weeks on business and social occasions. His son and legislative aide, William, assumed in a memo to his father some years later that the Senator had had prior knowledge of the CIA's role in overthrowing Arbenz. His assumption was credible, for rumors of past CIA involvement in Guatemala were among topics scheduled to be discussed in an apparently unrecorded meeting of the subcommittee with Allen Dulles on 22 March 1954. [16](#)

Overall, available evidence suggests that Congress--counting both leaders and followers--had not just a permissive, but an enthusiastic attitude toward getting rid of the Arbenz government. Legislative leaders are likely to have had far greater knowledge of events unfolding between the CIA and Guatemala's government in the spring and summer of 1954 than did the rest of Congress.

CIA's View of Congressional Intent

Dulles, Pforzheimer, and others could easily judge legislative preferences in *The Congressional Record* and in conversations with leaders. They never doubted, later on, that CIA's 1954 operation had reflected those preferences. But what documentary record is there of CIA's views of Congressional sentiment at the time? Perhaps the best piece of evidence comes from notes of one of the weekly PBSUCCESS meetings in March 1954, with attendees (their names still sanitized from the document at 20th century's end) from CIA, the State Department, and possibly other organizations. This, of course, was a time when more and more members of Congress, Senator Margaret Chase Smith of Maine, for example, vocalized on Guatemala: "We might as well do away with the diplomatic niceties right away." And Eisenhower had already assured Knowland that he anticipated dealing soon with a new government of Guatemala. In this political atmosphere, the meeting's participants connected Congressional opinion to the coming months' imperatives in Guatemala:

Mr. [name deleted] then stated that he and Mr. [name deleted] were there to take stock of the present situation, to determine where we stand now and what are the future prospects. Are things going downhill so fast in Guatemala that PBSUCCESS, as it now stands, may not be enough?

Consideration must be given to the much greater pressure which may come from Congress and public opinion on the present administration if the situation in Guatemala does deteriorate. It may be necessary to take more calculated risks than before.... Mr. [name deleted] then asked Mr. [name deleted] exactly what was meant by possible additional calculated risks. Messrs. [name deleted] and [name deleted] replied: (a) We might reconsider exploiting the conclusion arrived at by [Dominican Republic leader] Trujillo last year and transmitted to [Venezuelan leader] Perez Jimenez that the best way to bring about the fall of the Arbenz government would be to eliminate 15 to 20 of its leaders with

Trujillo's trained pistoleros.... Mr. [name deleted] replied that he thought the operation could be brought to a conclusion by 15 June; that the program was complex but that we believe the Agency has the capability of doing the job.... Mr. [name deleted] "...If attributable to the United States, it should not be done. High-level thinking is that an act which can be pinned on the United States will set us back in our relations with Latin American countries by 50 years." [Name deleted] then expressed himself as opposed to the elimination of 15 to 20 Guatemalan leaders as a possible solution to the problem, although stating that such elimination was part of the plan and could be done. [17](#)

CIA leaders in Washington and Central America, along with members of the State Department continued to discuss the assassination option off and on in the three months leading up to the overthrow of the Arbenz government. It appears that no assassinations occurred, however. The notable feature of the March discussion, though--aside from the fact that assassination was an option in the days of PBSUCCESS--is that participants linked the necessity of "more calculated risks" such as assassination to "pressure which may come from Congress...." [18](#)

Conclusion

The extent of detailed discussions of the Guatemalan operation between CIA and Congressional leaders may never be known, but there was little doubt at CIA or the White House as to overarching Congressional intent before or after the overthrow. Senator Smathers, typical of the Congressional enthusiasts in the spring of 1954 for doing what was "necessary" to get rid of Arbenz's government, reflected legislative sentiment when word emerged out of Guatemala on 30 June that the government had fallen: "In all candor, we must admit that the democratic nations of the Western Hemisphere could not permit the continued existence of a Communist base in Latin America, so close to home." [19](#) Any lingering views that the US policy toward Guatemala in 1954 was simply the product of a hawkish executive branch, with Congress having little complicity in the policy, can safely be put to rest.

Notes

[1.](#) ADDI Diary, 12 December 1952; Harold Bull to Dulles, 22 April 1954; in CIA Declassified Reference Materials (CIA/DRM), Box 185, National Archives.

[2.](#) Immerman, *The CIA in Guatemala : The Foreign Policy of Intervention* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982).

[3.](#) Sherman Kent to Dulles, 23 February 1955, CIA/DRM, Box 185, National Archives. Even "the relevant branch of DDP" (the Plans Directorate, which carried out the operation) agreed with the analysis. "Product of CIA Expenses Queried on Capitol Hill," *Washington Evening Star*, 21 February 1956, reprinted in *The Congressional Record (CR)*, 9 April 1956, pp. 5932-3; Andrew, *For the President's Eyes Only: Secret Intelligence and the American Presidency From Washington to Bush* (New York: Harper Collins, 1995), pp. 209-210. Clinton, quoted in *The New York Times*, 11 March 1999.

[4.](#) For an elaboration, see David M. Barrett, "Glimpses of a Hidden History: Senator Richard Russell, Congress, and Oversight of the CIA," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol. 11, No. 3, Fall 1998, pp. 271-298.

[5.](#) Wiley, quoted in Immerman, pp. 103, 115, 156; Smathers, (*CR*), 28 May 1954, pp. 7336-8.

[6.](#) Kersten, quoted in Immerman, p. 153.

[7.](#) The quotes are from Johnson and Republican leader William Knowland; see *CR*, 25 June 1954, pp. 8922-8926.

[8.](#) *CR*, House, 29 June 1954, pp. 9176-9179.

[9.](#) *CR*, Senate, 28 June 1954, pp. 9065-9066.

[10.](#) *Bernard C. Cohen*, *The Press and Foreign Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963), pp. 40-41, 134-135, cited in Immerman, p. 115.

[11.](#) *The New York Times*, 20 June 1954, pp. 1, and 8E; 24 June 1954, p. 26; *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 22 June 1954, p. 20. I examined every issue of the *Times* and *The Washington Post* in May and June 1954. Dulles to Eisenhower, 20 June 1954, Ann Whitman File, Admin. Series, Box 13, DDE Library. On the Gruson story, see his obituary in the *Times*, 9 March 1998.

[12.](#) Pforzheimer, interviewed by the author, 30 September 1994; my description of Taber is based on a review of his papers at Cornell University.

[13.](#) The notes survived the usually heavy hand of censors in 1998, apparently because no specific operations or countries are mentioned, and the chart listing successes and failures is not included in the CIA/DRM, Box 4, National Archives.

[14.](#) The two documents are cryptic CIA cables referring to PBSUCCESS and noting that the Congressional staffers had some information on some type of "infiltration." CIA Records, Guatemala, 1952-54, Box 1, National Archives.

[15.](#) Immerman, p. 152.

[16.](#) William L. Saltonstall to Senator Saltonstall, 6-1-66, Saltonstall Papers, Box 43, Massachusetts Historical Society. The younger Saltonstall was preparing his father for forthcoming Senate debate over increasing legislative oversight of the CIA. "Guatemala" was treated as one of a group of CIA "successes" in the memo, which suggested that the Senator might find it "useful to say, if you can, how far ahead you knew about these and how much detail you had on them." William Darden to Saltonstall, 19 March 1954, Senate Armed Services Committee, Box 230, National Archives.

[17.](#) "Weekly PBSUCCESS meeting with [word(s) deleted]," 9 March 1954, CIA-Guatemala Records, 1952-1943, Box 1, National Archives; Smith quotation and Eisenhower-Knowland interaction, both in Immerman, pp. 151-3.

[18.](#) See also the 1995 paper from CIA's History Staff: Gerald K. Haines, "CIA and Guatemala Assassination Proposals, 1952-1954" in CIA Records, National Archives. An overview of the Guatemala affair, also produced by the same office, is in print: Nick Cullather, *Secret History: The CIA's Classified Account of its Operation in Guatemala, 1952-1954* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

[19.](#) CR, 30 June 1954, p. 9267

Trump and foreign policy entanglements: the cautionary tale of U.S. involvement in Guatemala

By ZACHARY JACOBSON
| NEW YORK DAILY NEWS |
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Trump and foreign policy entanglements: the cautionary tale of U.S. involvement in Guatemala
Guatemalan President Jacobo Arbenz (center facing camera) in 1951, before a U.S.-led overthrow
(HO/AFP/Getty Images)

To many, it has come as a surprise that the United States has no laws instructing the President to de-conflict business ventures that overlap with his duties as commander-in-chief. No laws mandate the selling off of foreign investments. No statutes demand the transformation of companies into blind trusts. As then-President-elect Trump explained shortly after his election to a boardroom full of New York Times staffers, with more than a touch of Nixonian flair: If he's the President, he "can't have a conflict of interest."

And yet, it all begs the question, so what? What kind of petty corruption can really come from foreign emissaries staying in Trump's hotels? So what if there ends up being a few fewer wind farms in Scotland? Will an extra call to Taiwan to massage a business deal really upset the delicate trio danced with China? We certainly do not want to become a kleptocracy, a banana republic in which the President acts as both chief executive and most-favored businessman, enriching himself on a large scale at the expense of his people. But is Trump really going to go to war over the building of a few hotels?

The answer is, it's happened before. In 1954, in Guatemala, in a now too-much forgotten episode of the Cold War, the United States went to war not over hotels, but over the business of bananas.

After a popular uprising in 1944 that became known as the October Revolution and overthrew the previously American-backed dictator and bloody fascist Jorge Ubico, Guatemala began what appeared to be an attempt to transform the Central American nation into a liberal and capitalist democracy. The new state provided its people near-universal suffrage, stricter labor laws, more

spending on public education and a minimum wage.

In 1950, the defense minister, Jacobo Arbenz was popularly elected Guatemala's second post-revolution president. To continue the revolutionary reforms, most notably, Arbenz confiscated and redistributed some of the United Fruit Company's unused banana farmland to near-destitute workers.

The Boston-based UFC (the world's largest exporter of bananas) had operated hand-in-hand with previous Guatemalan dictators. They paid nearly no taxes while becoming not only the nation's largest landowner but also its biggest employer (nearly 40,000 Guatemalans). The company bought up "shares of the railroad, electric utility and telegraph." So entrenched was UFC, Guatemalans called the American enterprise El Pulpo, the Octopus. To maximize profits, the UFC imposed near-slave conditions on its peasant workers.

It was thus a monumental shift that, by 1954, the Arbenz government had redistributed 1.4 million acres of UFC land to 500,000 of his citizens (one sixth of all Guatemalans) while legalizing the right for workers to strike against unfair labor practices.

The UFC was furious. And, as historians including Gabriel Kolko have found, conflicts of interest abounded. Kolko describes "an intricate web of personal and political relations between United Fruit and many of the Republican and Democrat officials dealing with the Guatemalan issue." Relentlessly the UFC lobbied their allies in the government for American intervention and what today we would call regime change.

Finally, the U.S. acted with bipartisan support. After an aborted operation by President Harry Truman, President Dwight Eisenhower launched operation PBSUCCESS in August 1953. His efforts were buoyed by his defense secretary, John Foster Dulles, and his brother, the head of the CIA, Allen Dulles.

The brothers just happened to have a conflict of interest with UFC. They had monetary holdings in the company. John Foster Dulles' law firm in the mid-1930s had composed the contracts between the banana company and Ubico's corrupt regime. Allen Dulles had been on the UFC board of directors.

Under extreme psychological propaganda (\$2.7 million of "psychological warfare" and "subversion"), and harboring a disintegrating officer corps who resented many of his aggressive military reforms and in fear of the great U.S. menace, Arbenz failed to gather the Guatemalan military into a fighting force. In fear of an escalation, the Guatemalan high command forced Arbenz to resign. With U.S. support, Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas was installed as the next president of Guatemala. He took to his role with relish, determined to reinstall the dictatorship.

Within just a few years a guerilla war raged. Armas arrested so many opposition forces that the prisons overflowed, and it was necessary to erect concentration camps to hold all of the new dictator's enemies. The rest of his foes simply "disappeared."

Did the Dulles brothers' financial interests in the UFC serve as the motivation to go to war? It is impossible to prove but impossible to deny. The conflict generated a pall of corruption over the affair which demanded that the brothers could not have been impartial actors judging the merits of war and peace. They had skin in the game that went beyond American national interest. And they had no interest in recusing themselves.

Yet to understand the Guatemalan coup we must still complicate the matter. The interests of UFC and the Dulles brothers' conflicts did not play the only role in convincing first the Truman and then the Eisenhower administrations to go to war against Arbenz. Crystalizing the American crusade was an aversion against Communism, growing throughout the American government, that would not allow for Arbenz's socialist-like land reforms and a Czech arms deal between the Soviet satellite and Guatemala. With a wider lens, we can understand the overthrowing of Arbenz as a continuation of the Monroe Doctrine, an operation to ensure pro-U.S. regimes up and down the western hemisphere.

And so we return to Trump. In the Guatemalan war, the Dulles brothers' financial conflict of interest was but one factor in driving the Americans into war. And just so, the fear is not that Trump's every move will be fueled by an avarice to enrich himself, but that his business interests will be one factor tipping the scales of policy decision-making away from American national interest.

This multi-determinative view is key to instruct us on the question of Trump's financial conflicts of interests. His business dealings may not play the sole consideration in his foreign policy. Yet they may be, along with his pro-business ideology and like the UFC in Guatemala, a key consideration in tipping his decisions for issues as large as war to peace or peace to war.

Former Treasury Secretary Larry Summers has critically termed this practice "deals-based capitalism" (as opposed to rules-based capitalism). The ad hoc practice of "deals-based capitalism" that Summers fears trades consistency, predictability, impartial law and the governing by rules for an economy of inconsistent action, partiality, "corruption, abuse of power, favoritism and selective enforcement" of regulations.

Adding to the problem is that we just don't know. Because the President has refused to release his tax returns, we don't know where his conflicts of interest lie. We are blind to ulterior motive. Is he palling up to Russian President Vladimir Putin because of oil shares in the Urals? Or perhaps worse, because he owes some Russians some indeterminate amount of money? Frankly, without his full tax returns, we haven't a clue.

As The New York Times laid out, we do know that Trump retains business ventures throughout the developing world. No doubt, over the next four years, some of these unsteady regimes will stagger and sway as they attempt to develop into modern, first-world democracies. No doubt some of Trump's holdings will be threatened by insecure even explosive conditions. If Trump retains his business holdings, there is little doubt that situations will arise in which Trump will not be able to act as an impartial observer while deciding whether the United States will intervene. As Trump's Chief-of-Staff Reince Priebus warned (ironically) against the corruption charges surrounding Secretary Hillary Clinton, "when that 3 a.m. phone call comes, Americans deserve to have a President on the line who is not compromised" by foreign business operations.

Jacobson holds a Ph.D. in cold war history from Northwestern University. He is the author of the watch.blog.

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[As Trump tightens asylum rules, thousands of Venezuelans find a warm welcome in Miami](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 24 June 2018 12:08

Venezuelan citizens living in Miami line up last year to vote in a nonbinding referendum against the Venezuelan government. The vote was organized by groups seeking to undermine Venezuela's unpopular president, Nicolás Maduro. (Rhona Wise/AFP/Getty Images)

By Anthony Faiola and Nick Miroff

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/even-as-trump-tightens-asylum-rules-thousands-of-venezuelans-find-a-warm-welcome-in-miami/2018/05/15/5e747fec-52cf-11e8-a551-5b648abe29ef_story.html?utm_term=.357892d28b78 May 18



Venezuelan citizens living in Miami line up last year to vote in a nonbinding referendum against the Venezuelan government. The vote was organized by groups seeking to undermine Venezuela's unpopular president, Nicolás Maduro. (Rhona Wise/AFP/Getty Images)

By [Anthony Faiola](#) and [Nick Miroff](#) May 18 [Email the author](#)

MIAMI — Venezuelans seeking asylum in the United States are arriving to this city in soaring numbers — and receiving a far warmer welcome than the Central American migrants President Trump wants to block at the Mexican border.

Last year, 27,629 Venezuelans petitioned U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services for asylum, an 88 percent increase from 2016 and up from 2,181 in 2014. So far this year, the number of Venezuelans who have applied — nearly all of them in Miami — is almost three times as great as any other nationality, according to the latest USCIS asylum data.

Unlike the Central Americans who waded illegally across the Rio Grande and turn themselves in to U.S. border guards, the Venezuelans typically land at the Miami airport with tourist and business visas.

They are, in general, wealthier and more likely to have legal representation, an advantage that significantly boosts their chances of being allowed to stay, [statistics show](#). And they have the backing of South Florida politicians, especially Cuban American lawmakers who view them as natural allies in uggle against Latin American leftism.

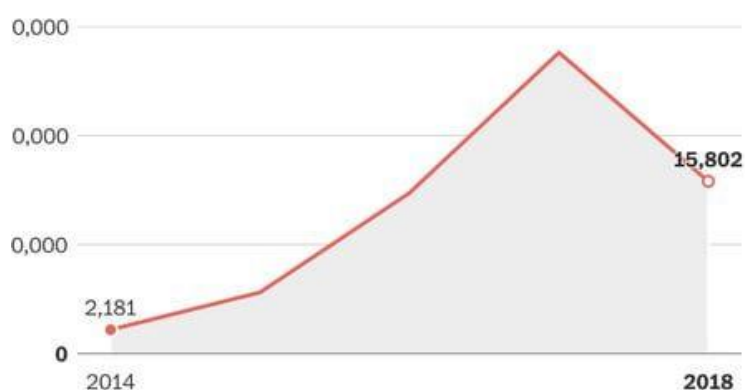
The Venezuelans are fleeing a near-total [societal collapse](#) after two decades of socialist policies as well as years of governmental mismanagement, corruption and waste. The crisis has left nearly 87 percent

of Venezuelans in poverty, generated the world's highest inflation rate, and made food and medicine scarce.

Those who reach Miami are a small and privileged part of a much bigger refugee crisis. According to U.N. data, 180,000 Venezuelans fled their country during the first three months of 2018, compared with 217,000 during all of 2017. Most cross by land into [Brazil and Colombia](#), and the exodus is likely to accelerate if, as expected, leftist Nicolás Maduro wins another six-year term in the May 20 presidential election.

Venezuelans seeking asylum in the United States

Since the start of the current fiscal year on Oct. 1, the number of Venezuelans who have applied for asylum in the United States is almost three times as great as any other nationality.



Source: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

THE WASHINGTON POST

The country's main opposition parties are boycotting the vote, citing a [looming fraud](#).

Venezuelans with the means to reach the United States can be confident that they'll be allowed to stay. The U.S. immigration system considers them "[affirmative asylum](#)" cases because applicants who file such claims typically enter the country legally and then request permission to stay.

That differs from asylum seekers who file a "defensive" claim to avoid deportation, a category that would include the larger pool of Central American migrants arrested along the Mexico border. Affirmative applications can be approved by a USCIS asylum officer, rather than an immigration judge.

Central American migrants who traveled in a caravan to file legal asylum requests at the U.S.-Mexico border drew the ire of Trump this spring, and many of those travelers said they, too, were seeking shelter from gang violence and chaos back home. The majority of caravan members were from Honduras, where U.S.-backed right-wing president Juan Orlando Hernández was reelected last year in a contest whose results were [rejected](#) by international observers.

The percentage of asylum seekers who were denied reached its highest level

in a decade last year, and Central American applicants were among the most likely to be turned down, according to immigration data compiled by the [TRAC project](#) at Syracuse University.






A woman holds a white rose and a sign reading Freedom for Venezuela at a rally in Miami last year. (Lynne Sladky/AP)

Michael Bars, a spokesman for USCIS, said the agency can grant asylum to “those who have been persecuted or have a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion if returned to their native country.”

“Each asylum claim is evaluated on a case-by-case basis and determinations are fact-specific,” Bars said in a statement.

317 readings

[B.C. pension fund manager pouring billions of public workers' retirement dollars into fossil fuels, report finds](#)   
[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 26 June 2018 08:46

B.C. pension fund manager pouring billions of public workers' retirement dollars into fossil fuels, report finds

By JENNY PENGStarMetro Vancouver

<https://www.thestar.com/vancouver/2018/06/25/bc-investment-management-corporation-still-betting-on-fossil-fuels.html> Mon., June 25, 2018



VANCOUVER—Policy analysts and researchers are calling out a large, but low-profile, pension fund manager for pooling billions of dollars worth of public workers’ retirement plans into the fossil fuel industry.

The findings come in a report by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and University of Victoria, which examines where British Columbian public servant pension funds are invested.

An examination of the B.C. Investment Management Corporation’s investment portfolio, the fourth largest such fund manager in Canada, found it invested \$3 billion in the top 200 public fossil fuel companies.

The BCI oversees pensions funds for 500,000 people through 11 provincial government plans, including WorkSafe BC and the teachers’ pension plan.

Critics say investing in oil and gas hinders Canada’s ability to meet its Paris Agreement commitments signed in April 2016, which seeks to limit the rise in Earth’s average temperature to 2 C.

“You see the BCI calling themselves ‘responsible investors’ throughout much of their publications but we find that really, in the context of climate change, this is absolutely misinformation,” said Zoë Yunker, University of Victoria graduate and co-author of the report released Monday.




Yunker also said investments in fossil fuel industries “appear to be on the rise.”

The company also invests heavily in Alberta tar sands companies, she said.

“Their investment in Kinder Morgan rose from \$30 million to over \$60 million between 2016 and 2017,” Yunker said. “It’s pretty dramatic and the companies they’ve invested in have told us through their business model that they intend to push beyond the two-degree limit.”

She added the BCI is “laggard” on taking action combating climate change compared to other large financial and political institutions. New York City and New York state, she pointed out, have made commitments to divest from their fossil fuel holdings. A similar move was made by the Norwegian central bank that suggested their government drain their funds from their oil and gas holdings.

252 readings

[Will it Be “The Economy, Stupid” in Mexico?](#)   

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 28 June 2018 10:53

By Center for Economic Research (CEPR)



On the eve of historic elections, and five years after leaders of Mexico’s then most prominent political parties agreed on a “Pact for Mexico,” the Mexican economy is mired in a “trap of low investment and low growth,” and imperiled by liberalization of financial markets. These are the findings of a new CEPR report. With the left-leaning candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador far ahead in the polls, co-director Mark Weisbrot was interviewed about how the lackluster economy could affect the election (watch here).

CEPR will be live-blogging Mexico’s elections this Sunday, July 1, at our Americas Blog, posting real-time updates from CEPR staff and others who will be on the ground observing the electoral process.

Story Transcript

GREG WILPERT: It’s The Real News Network. I’m Greg Wilpert, coming to you from Quito, Ecuador.

As Mexico’s historic presidential race enters its last week, one of the main issues in this campaign has been the Mexican economy. As a matter of fact, a good part of the last presidential debate dealt with this issue. Here’s a brief clip from what the leftist frontrunner, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, had to say about the Mexican economy.

ANDRES MANUEL LOPEZ OBRADOR: There hasn’t been growth. This year the global projection for growth is 4 percent, and in Mexico it’s 2 percent. But this is a trend of 30 years. If there is no growth, there are no jobs. And if there are no jobs, then there is no welfare. If there is no welfare, is no peace.

GREG WILPERT: Lopez Obrador also points out repeatedly in his campaign that in order to address the Mexico-U.S. immigration issue, Mexico needs to improve its economic performance. Certainly the other two establishment candidates, Ricardo Anaya of the conservative National Action Party and Jose Antonio Meade of the incumbent Institutional Revolutionary Party have also focused on the economy, but present very different proposals

from those of Lopez Obrador.

Joining me to analyze Mexico's economy in the run up to the presidential election is Mark Weisbrot. Mark is the codirector of the Center for Economic and Policy Research, and is the author of the book "Failed: What the Experts Got Wrong About the Global Economy." Thanks for joining us again, Mark.

MARK WEISBROT: Thanks, Gregory.

GREG WILPERT: So back in 2012, the leaders of all of the major political parties at the time signed the so-called Pact for Mexico. That pact included a general economic program that was supposed to bring Mexico out of its long-lasting economic slump. What happened, and what kind of economic policies resulted from this pact?

MARK WEISBROT: Yes. Well, the pact didn't deliver on its promises, clearly. For example, they promised that growth would get go to at least 5 percent annual real growth, and it's not quite half that. They promised to reduce inequality, and yet the income share of the top 10 percent, which was already very high. They had 35 percent of the income went to the top 10 percent. That went up to 36. And the bottom 10 percent stayed at about 1.8 percent, which is pretty small for 10 percent of the population. And so that didn't happen. They were going to reduce poverty, and that didn't happen, either. And you know, the percentage was reduced a little bit. But the number of people in poverty actually increased slightly.

I think what AMLO said was most important. Because most people don't know this, either in the United States and probably Mexico, too, how long this failure, this economic growth failure, really has been. It's almost 40 years now. You know, Mexico was once a fast-growing developing country from 1960 to 1980. The income per person, real income, practically doubled. And then it slowed down to about 9 percent for 20 years from '80 to 2000. And here in the 21st century, Mexico ranks 18th out of 20 Latin American countries in terms of the growth of income per person. So he's right about that. And I think that's one of the reasons you have so many other social problems that you have there, including all the homicides and other pathologies of the drug war, and everything else.

GREG WILPERT: So what do you attribute this poor economic performance to? I mean, it's lasted so long, you must have had plenty of time to figure out what is it that is, what kind of policy decisions, basically, lie behind it.

MARK WEISBROT: Well, there's a whole combination of policy. I mean, part of it is NAFTA itself, right. There, you know, five million farmers were displaced from, you know, U.S. exports of subsidized corn and other agricultural goods. I think that was part of the story. I think the inappropriate fiscal and monetary policies, which are continuing, if you look even at the last five years, for example, you had these big, this big increase in interest rates. It started in December of 2015, where interest rates went from 3 to 7.5 percent, in, you know, which is where they are now. I think that was overkill in the economy.

And then you have this commitment to what the IMF and the government call fiscal consolidation. So when the economy begins to grow, even pick up a little bit, the first thing they want to do is pay down the public debt, which isn't really that large. They don't have a huge debt burden. They're only paying about 2.9 percent annually of GDP and interest, which is not huge. And they don't have a big foreign debt at all, and that's the most dangerous part of the debt for a developing country, because that can cause balance of payments problems.

So I think you have a lot of inappropriate macroeconomic policy. You have very low public investment, which you need, you know, in education, infrastructure. And that has all fallen under the this pact in the last, since 2012, as well. So they really are continuing this model that

really has failed for for almost four decades.

GREG WILPERT: Now, the two main establishment candidates, that is, Ricardo Anaya of the PAN, and Jose Antonio Meade of the PRI, or PRI, they are basically, their parties are signatories of the pact with Mexico. So we could, perhaps, it might be safe to assume that if they were to become, one of them were to become president, they would want to continue the policies of the current president of Enrique Pena Nieto. If that were the case, what would you predict for the Mexican economy? And you know, take into account, also, what external factors there are, that is, with regard to the to the U.S., what its economic effect on Mexico as well.

MARK WEISBROT: Yes. Well, you know, I don't expect any changes from the status quo candidates if they were to win, because they signed onto the pact. And you know you also have this paper, which we used in our own paper on Mexico which is coming out tomorrow on the Mexican economy, which is this agreement with the IMF. It's called an article for consultation. It's not a loan agreement, but it's an agreement on the basic principles of the economy and what their policy is. And you can see all these policies in there.

And the worst part is that, so you have these, you know, big downside risks right now. Because the Fed is committed, the Federal Reserve in the U.S. is committed to raising interest rates four times this year. You're going to get capital flows from that that will go towards the U.S. for the higher interest rates from Mexico. You had that in 1994 when the Fed began a tightening cycle, raising interest rates in 1994. And you had the peso crisis, and they lost nine and a half percent of their economy in that crisis. And then of course, you know, Mexico is very tied to the United States, and is also especially vulnerable to the global financial turbulence that will, is quite likely, as the Fed continues to raise interest rates, we've already seen some of it in places like Argentina and Turkey. And this hits Mexico especially hard because they've liberalized their foreign exchange there, and their financial markets, like almost nobody else in terms of how free it is from any kinds of capital controls.

And so that's often the place where investors go when things start to go bad in so-called emerging market economies. They sell off Mexican assets and stocks and bonds. And so that's, that's a big risk they have going forward. And you don't know what the United States is going to do, also, in response to AMLO's election. I think at first it will be OK, but they have leverage that they can use, as well.

GREG WILPERT: Well, speaking of which, what exactly would be that kind of leverage? I mean, AMLO currently is, that is Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, as he's known, by his initials. It's expected that he's going to win for sure, practically. I mean, he's 25 points ahead, with something like 50 percent of the vote in most opinion polls. So assuming that AMLO does win and the election is more or less clean, what kind of leverage might the United States use against him?

MARK WEISBROT: Well, one thing that most people don't know about is something called the Flexible Credit Line, which is a pre-approved line of credit from the IMF. This is something actually, it was a positive thing that the IMF created in the wake of the world recession. But for some reason, which you can guess, possibly, only three countries in the world are eligible, have been eligible for it. And they all happen to be right-wing allies of the United States. And that's Poland, Colombia, and Mexico.

And that's a big chunk of Mexico's reserves. And so they could, the IMF, which for this hemisphere at least is controlled by the U.S. Treasury Department, could cut that. They could cut it back, or they could cut it off entirely. And I think that's one thing that they will have to threaten the new government with. But I don't think they're going to be able to get away with that much, because I think, you know, if AMLO wins, he'll have strong support. And he'll be able to mobilize that. And I don't think those kind of threats will necessarily do it.

GREG WILPERT: OK. Well, we'll certainly be following this very closely. The election's taking place this coming Sunday, July 1st. I was speaking to Mark Weisbrot, codirector of the Center for Economic and Policy Research. Thanks again, Mark, for having joined us today.

MARK WEISBROT: Thank you.

GREG WILPERT: And thank you for joining The Real News Network. Also, if you like stories such as this one, I want to remind you that we recently started our summer fundraiser and need your help to reach our goal of raising \$200000. Every dollar that you donate will be matched. And unlike all other news outlets, we do not accept support from governments or corporations. Please do what you can today.

Last Updated on Thursday, 28 June 2018 11:33

263 readings

[Leopoldo López Is Not Venezuela' s Savior](#)   

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 29 June 2018 15:20

Leopoldo López Is Not Venezuela' s Savior

Despite US support, the revolutionary has only succeeded in pushing like-minded opposition leaders far, far away.

By Greg Grandin the NATION

JULY 29, 2015

<https://www.thenation.com/article/leopoldo-lopez-is-not-venezuelas-savior/>JULY 29, 2015

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Opposition supporters protest against the Venezuelan government and in support of

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Opposition supporters protest against the Venezuelan government and in support of jailed opposition leaders Leopoldo Lopez and Antonio Ledezma on February 28, 2015. (Reuters / Carlos Garcia Rawlins)

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Roberto Lovato has just published a great investigative essay in Foreign Policy on Leopoldo López, the jailed darling of Venezuela's opposition. López is celebrated in the US press as a cross between Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. He is handsome, like King, and, like Gandhi, occasionally shirtless. Newsweek blushes over López's "twinkling chocolate-colored eyes and high cheekbones." He is, apparently, a "revolutionary who has it all": an "attractive and supportive wife, two children who get along with each other and impossibly adorable Labrador puppies." Everything except a revolution.

Drawing on WikiLeaks cables, Lovato reveals how López over the years has been handled by the US embassy in Caracas. (Roberto told me that 15 minutes after a colleague of his posted the FP article on social media, someone from the US embassy e-mailed and said, "You should really come to me when it comes to Venezuela.") Despite this support, though, López remains a divisive figure within Venezuela, and Lovato's piece helps explain why the opposition can't get its act together, despite opportunities offered by serious economic problems and rampant corruption.

A few years ago, not long after Hugo Chávez's March 2013 death and the razor-thin election of Chávez's successor, Nicolás Maduro, López was at the center of a middle-class putsch attempt, protests that resulted in numerous deaths. It was as if all the rich, white gentry from LA's Beverly Park started building barricades and stringing steel wire from lamppost to lamppost to decapitate motorcycle taxi drivers (as what happened to Venezuelan Elvis Durán), with the US media reporting on events as if it were Selma 1965.

ADVERTISING

Following these protests, López was arrested "on charges of arson, public incitement, and conspiracy." His arrest got international attention, but, Lovato writes, "López's trial has proceeded largely without fanfare.... López's court dates in Caracas have generally attracted only small groups of supporters outside the courthouse, led by Lilian Tintori, López's wife. Other key opposition leaders have stayed away, though they routinely voice support for López's release. A recent campaign by his party, Voluntad Popular, to convene an assembly to rewrite the constitution and reorganize the government attracted criticism, with the leader of a rival opposition party calling for

‘responsibility and maturity’ and one opposition governor calling for an end to ‘anarchy or guarimbas,’ the street barricades that were the preferred tactic of López’ s youthful followers.”

López’ s claim to lead the Venezuelan opposition rests on his insistence that he had nothing to do with the failed April 2002 coup against Chávez. But Lovato nicely shows this insistence to be a lie. Then mayor of a rich Caracas municipality, López was everywhere those April days, rallying crowds, appearing on TV. His “most controversial episode,” as Lovato describes it, was leading a crowd to surround the house where a Chávez minister was laying low, picking up a megaphone to charge the minister with murder: “Justice will be imposed,” López said. López’ s anti-Chavistas beat the minister in the street and then kidnapped him. López, in other words, is a thug. Ted Cruz with a mob.

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After the 2002 coup was reversed, López was arrested for carrying out an illegal detention. But he was released when Chávez’ s government issued a broad amnesty for those who tried to overthrow it. For years, Chavismo had been remarkably tolerant of its most extreme enemies, absorbing many opponents in what had been a flexible (albeit often corrupt and enriching) coalition. This had the effect of inculcating the idea among irreconcilables like López that they were absolutely immune, that there was no plot they could hatch, no attempt to lure sectors of the military to revolt, that wouldn’ t be forgiven.

Maduro has been less supple. Considering Chávez’ s singularity, this was predictable. Here’ s what I wrote in *The Nation* two years ago, after Maduro barely won the presidency in the wake of Chávez’ s death:

Coming so close to winning has had a dangerously regressive effect on the opposition. It took the Venezuelan oligarchy and old political elites about seven years to finally, grudgingly accept the legitimacy of Hugo Chávez, and only after they nearly destroyed the country with paralyzing strikes, coup plots and other actions meant to destabilize and disrupt.

But now the opposition, giddy by its unexpectedly strong

performance, sensing weakness on the part of Maduro, and believing the restoration of their class and race privilege is in sight, is once again hurtling toward the precipice... In other words, we might be starting from day one, witnessing the beginning of a whole new cycle of polarization, in which the opposition returns to its maximalist program of antagonism. It's too early to say how bad things will get, but already there are reports that on the Monday night after [opposition candidate] Capriles' speech, his rampaging supporters left four Chavistas dead (you would never know it from reading Human Rights Watch's coverage, but the primary victims of political violence in Venezuela over the last fourteen years have in fact been supporters of Chávez, including peasants trying to make good on land reform).

In turn, Maduro, denied the time and stability to work on pressing matters of public administration, will be forced to respond, to take measures to try to once again socialize the oligarchy, its political agents and representatives in the media, measures which (however mild compared to, say, that catastrophe unfolding in Colombia or Honduras) will be denounced by Washington and its adjuncts like Human Rights Watch and the mainstream media.

In the past, Chávez' s charisma, his light touch despite his often rhetorical bombast, his ability to bring some key opponents back into the fold, to make unexpected alliances, helped defuse social tension at key moments. It's one of the reasons why Venezuela, despite an often excess of extreme rhetoric, didn' t spiral into the kind of violence often associated with other revolutions. Let' s hope Maduro can develop similar skills to set the agenda and not be provoked by the opposition' s provocations.

Maduro didn' t, and López and his co-conspirators are in jail or in exile. The justice system is rigged against them (though no more so than the lack of due process faced by those accused of threatening the national security of the United States). But Lovato' s excellent reporting makes clear they are far from the democrats portrayed in the United States. Which explains why, despite supportive tweets from Kevin Spacey and Cher, some key opposition leaders in Venezuela are trying to distance themselves from López and move on.

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Opposition supporters protest against the Venezuelan government and in support of jailed opposition leaders Leopoldo Lopez and Antonio

Ledezma on February 28, 2015. (Reuters / Carlos Garcia Rawlins)

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JULY 2018

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[Mexico Votes Overwhelmingly for "Change" by Electing Lopez Obrador President, CEPR Experts Say](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 01 July 2018 19:27

BY Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR) beeton@cepr.net via [mail.salsalabs.net](mailto:salsalabs.net)

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CEPR

Mexico Votes Overwhelmingly for "Change" by Electing López Obrador President, CEPR Experts Say

Sluggish Economy, Corruption, Crime Fueled Voters' Discontent with the Status Quo

For Immediate Release: July 1, 2018

Contact: Dan Beeton, 202-239-1460

Washington, DC and Jilotepec, Mexico ? Voters in Mexico have "made history" and opted for change in electing Andrés Manuel López Obrador president today, experts from the Center for Economic and Policy Research, based in Washington, said. Candidates from López Obrador's National Regeneration Movement (Morena) party are also projected to have a plurality of seats in the Chamber of Deputies.

"This is a triumph against a great deal of fear-mongering and 'fake news' that attempted to link López Obrador to Russia and that warned that his policies would bring economic disaster to Mexico," CEPR Co-Director Mark Weisbrot said today. "But people in Mexico appear to be fed up with an economy that's failed them for 40 years now. Poverty is worse than a quarter century ago, real wages are lower than in 1980, inequality is worsening, and Mexico ranks 18th of 20 Latin American countries in terms of income growth per person in the 21st century.

"Mexicans bravely voted for change, and they made history today."

"Voters I talked to are tired of the corruption that has afflicted Mexican politics for so many decades," CEPR Director of International Policy Alexander Main, who observed the election in Jilotepec, Mexico State, said. "Discontent with crime, corruption and stagnant economic conditions drove voters to the polls in huge numbers, and they turned out for change."

Main noted that the current government of Enrique Peña Nieto of the PRI is widely criticized for the surge in violent crime, with a record homicide rate in 2017. The government has also been condemned for its handling of the case of the 2014 disappearance of 43 teaching students in Ayotzinapa, in which evidence of the involvement of state security forces has surfaced. Many people in Mexico believe the government attempted to cover up the incident by blaming it on gangs.

"We can only hope that Mexico's new president will stand up to the Trump administration's terrible policies on detaining asylum seekers, caging children, tearing children away from their parents, and supporting regime change in Latin America, among many others," Weisbrot said.

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CEPR was co-founded by economists Dean Baker and Mark Weisbrot in 1999. CEPR's Advisory Board includes Nobel Laureate economists Robert Solow and Joseph Stiglitz; Janet Gornick, Professor at the CUNY Graduate Center and Director of the Luxembourg Income Study; and Richard Freeman, Professor of Economics at Harvard University.

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[hile Has Medicine Against Desertification, But Does Not Take It](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 19 July 2018 06:33

By [Orlando Milesi](#)

[Rep](#)



Hundreds of children, many from rural schools in the Coquimbo region, have visited the fog catchers in Cerro Grande as part of an educational programme to raise awareness among future generations about the importance of rational use of water in Chile. Credit: Foundation un Alto en el Desierto

OVALLE, Chile, Jul 17 2018 (IPS) - The retention of rainwater which otherwise is lost at sea could be an excellent medicine against the advance of the desert from northern

to central Chile, but there is no political will to take the necessary actions, according to experts and representatives of affected communities.

“One of the priority actions, especially in the Coquimbo region, is the retention of rainwater. That is key because since we have eroded and degraded soil and we have occasional rains in winter, the soil is not able to retain more than 10 percent of the water that falls,” Daniel Rojas, the head of the Peña Blanca farmers’ association, told IPS.

“The rest ends up in the sea,” added Rojas, the head of the association of 85 small-scale farmers, located 385 km north of Santiago, which has 6,587 hectares, 98 percent of them rainfed, irrigated exclusively by rainfall.

Rojas considered that “if we had retention works we could use between 50 and 70 percent of that water and restore our groundwater.”

In the region of Coquimbo, where Peña Blanca is located, within the municipality of Ovalle, 90 percent of the land is eroded and degraded.

Between 2000 and 2016, the area planted with fruit trees in Chile grew 50 percent, but in Coquimbo it fell 22.9 percent, from 35,558 to 27,395 hectares.

Water is vital in Chile, an agrifood powerhouse that last year exported 15.751 billion dollars in food and is the world’s leading exporter of various kinds of fruit.

According to Rojas, there is academic, social and even political consensus on a solution that focuses on water retention, “but the necessary resources are not allocated and the necessary laws are not enacted.”

Pedro Castillo, mayor of the municipality of Combarbalá, agreed with Rojas.

“Because of the strong centralism that prevails in our country, desertification won’t be given importance until the desert is knocking on the doors of Santiago,” Castillo, the highest authority in this municipality of small-scale farmers and goat farmers told IPS.

Castillo believes that all the projects “will be only declarations of good intentions if there is no powerful and determined investment by the state of Chile to halt desertification.”

The mayor said that desertification can be combated by investing in water catchment systems, through “works that are not expensive,” such as the construction of infiltration ditches and dams in the gorges.

“With rainwater catchment systems with plastic sheeting, rainwater can be optimised, wells can be recharged and the need for additional water, which is now being delivered to the population with tanker trucks, can be reduced,” he said.

“The cost of these systems does not exceed five million pesos (7,936 dollars) because the works use materials that exist on-site and do not require much engineering. A tanker truck that delivers water costs the state about 40 million pesos (63,492 dollars) each year,” Castillo said.



A tank holds rainwater collected at the Elías Sánchez school in the municipality of Champa, 40 km south of Santiago, which the students decided to use to irrigate a nursery where they grow vegetables next to it. Saving rainwater helps restore the groundwater used to supply the local population. Credit: Orlando Milesi/IPS

He also proposed curbing desertification through afforestation with native species of lands handed by agricultural communities to the government's National Forestry Corporation (CONAF).

"Afforestation efforts involve the replanting of native trees tolerant of the scarce rainfall in semi-arid areas, and they generate fodder for local farmers," he said.

The region of Coquimbo comprises the southern border of the Atacama Desert, the driest desert on earth which has the most intense solar radiation on the planet. Covering 105,000 sq km, it encompasses six northern regions in this long and narrow country that stretches between the Andes Mountains and the Pacific Ocean.

This year Peña Blanca, at the southern tip of the desert, received 150 mm of rainfall, a high figure compared to the average of the last few years.

Rojas said "there are many things to be done, not to halt the advance of desertification completely, but to slow it down."

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The social leader said that in meetings with both academics and politicians there is agreement on what to do, "but that is not reflected when it comes to creating a law or allocating resources to do these works."

To illustrate, he mentioned a novel project for the retention of rainwater underground, saying the studies and development of the initiative were financed, "but not the works

itself.”

“And this way, it’s no use. Ideas must be put into practice through works. This is what is urgently needed: fewer studies and more works,” he said.

Rojas also criticised the fact that the state spends “billions of pesos” on the distribution of water to rural areas through tanker trucks.

“If the amount of resources that the state puts into the distribution of water by tanker trucks were to be used to solve the problem, it would be invested only once and not every year, which just boosts a business. Because the distribution of water is a business,” Rojas said.

Geographer Nicolás Schneider, the driving force behind the non-governmental [“Un Alto en el Desierto” \(A Stop in the Desert\) Foundation](#), told IPS that in Chile “there is no public policy in terms of tools, concrete policies and the provision of resources” to halt desertification in the country.

“Successful alternatives are isolated experiences that are the product of enthusiasm or group ventures, but not of a state policy to stop this scientifically accredited advance (of the desertification process),” he said.

He mentioned Chilean physicist Carlos Espinosa, who invented the fog catcher, a system whose patent he donated in the 1980s to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and which consists of harvesting water from the fog.

Fog catchers consist of fine mesh nets known as raschel set up on foggy slopes to catch suspended drops of water, which gather and merge, running from small gutters to collection tanks.

These systems, which are becoming more and more sophisticated, have been providing water for human consumption and for irrigation on land generally higher than 600 metres above sea level for decades.

In the [Cerro Grande Ecological Reserve](#), owned by Peña Blanca, the Un Alto en el Desierto Foundation installed 24 fog catchers and a fog study centre.

“The average daily water from fog there is six litres per cubic metre of raschel mesh and 35 percent shade. Since they are nine square metres in size, we have a catchment area of 216 metres, which gives us 1,296 litres of water per day,” Schneider said.

He explained that “this water is mainly used for reforestation and ecological restoration, beer making, water for animals and – when there is severe drought – for human consumption.”

“It is also an educational element because thousands of children have visited the fog catchers, so they have been turned into an open-air classroom against desertification,” he said.

He added that there is great potential for fog from Papudo, on the central Chilean coast, to Arica, in the far north of the country, which has not been exploited to the benefit of coastal communities that have problems of access and water quality.

Eduardo Rodríguez, regional director of Conaf in Coquimbo, told IPS that all of the corporation’s programmes are aimed at combating desertification, including one against forest fires, which now have better indicators.

“However, we have problems with afforestation because we do not yet have a policy for providing incentives to increase afforestation, reforestation and replanting in a region that has been degraded for practically a century and a half,” he acknowledged.

400 readings

[DESTABILIZING VENEZUELA- RAMIFICATIONS ON LATIN AMERICA, AND TIME LINE](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 23 July 2018 12:12

By joan Russow PhD

Global Compliance Research Project



Notes for a presentation August 17, 2018 NOTE ARTICLE UNDER CONSTRUCTION

A. Destabilization of Venezuela

B. Use of destabilization in Venezuela in elections in Latin America

C. Brief time line in Bolivia, Colombia, Chile Honduras, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala Mexico, Nicaragua Venezuela

A. DESTABILIZING VENEZUELA-

1. Spreading and imposing a concept of democracy based on the US requirement of a two-term limit and decrying Chavez as a dictator because he ran in 1998, had a referendum in 1999, re-elected in 2006, and 2012. of course if he participating a war there is a US precedent, during the second world war, for more than two terms.

2 Searching for foreign-educated opponents of the government, such as Leopoldo Lopez. (By Greg Grandin The nation <http://www.thenation.com/article/leopoldo-lopez-is-not-venezuelas-savior>)

3. Working with opposition to organize rallies and instigate conflict resulting in the

international condemnation of the government.

Venezuela's highly unusual presidential election Gregory Wilpert

<https://newint.org/features/web-exclusive/2018/05/15/venezuela-presidential-election>

4. Funding NGOs like Freedom House to intrude into Venezuela state to declare that the state is denying freedom of speech and of the press and citing article 9 of the 1994 Declaration of Chapultepec,

5. Funding US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI). which includes "over 300 Venezuelan civil society organizations", for the "penetrating of Chavez's political base ... dividing Chavismo ... protecting vital US business ... [and] isolating Chavez internationally".

6. Funding Development Alternatives Inc. (DAI). In 2002, DAI worked with the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) to fund a right-wing propaganda campaign during the 2002 oil industry lockout that sought to bring down Chavez's government.

7. Since 2009 establishing military bases, in Colombia, along the border with Venezuela. Using pretext for military intrusion into adjacent state, Ecuador; this action posed a threat to Venezuela's sovereignty.

8. Founding credible sounding international organizations such as UN Watch which exudes legitimacy, but targets socialist countries especially Venezuela and those that act against Israeli interests; Venezuela was also attacked for recognizing Palestine and for expelling the Israeli ambassador in 2009. (russow, 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. http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8981: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&catid=74:ijustice-news&Itemid=216

9. Circulating a biased report by Human Rights Watch (HRW); HRW has been criticized for its close ties to the US government (a revolving door policy), In May, 2018, a letter signed by two Nobel Peace Prize Laureates and over 100 academics, journalists, and human rights activists was circulated against HRW.

<https://www.theodysseyonline.com/human-rights-watch-imperialist-propaganda>

The letter called on the organization to end its exchange of personnel with the U.S. government, arguing that the relationship has affected HRW's research and advocacy against human rights abuses, particularly those committed by the U.S. government. A revolving-door policy of Human Rights Watch is one in which high-level U.S. foreign policy staff—those who have crafted and executed U.S. foreign policy—are allowed into Human Rights Watch as staffers, advisory committee members, and as board members. Human Rights Watch has lobbied for long time for Israel to be part of the influential negotiating group JUSCANS, and has finally been successful. Israel now member of the UN regional group JUSCANS (Japan US Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and now Israel) which has a disproportionate influence in the negotiation process at the United Nations.

Critique of Human Rights Watch Report

<https://truthout.org/articles/latest-human-rights-watch-report-30-lies-about-venezuela/>

10. Amnesty International has been criticized for being silent on economic impacts by US in Venezuela (Amnesty International Winks at Trump's Economic Attack on Venezuelans <https://www.counterpunch.org/2018/03/02/amnesty-international-winks->

at-trumps-economic-attack-on-venezuelans/

11. Dismantling infrastructure, particularly energy systems in Venezuela so that the citizens will blame the government for negligence and inefficiency;

12 Imposing sanctions to further cripple the Venezuelan economy that has already been affected by the oil industry collapse

13. Hoarding food products, by supermarkets affiliated with the Venezuelan opposition so they can resell them at higher prices. Redirecting produce from the public to the private sector, and re-selling the produce to Venezuelans living close to or in Colombia.

Blaming socialism: US distorts food crisis

<https://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/blaming-socialism-us-media-distorts-venezuelas-food-crisis->

. But the biggest impact from Venezuela's currency woes came from Procter & Gamble. The world's largest consumer products maker on Thursday announced a \$2.1 billion charge against earnings, reflecting the company's inability to convert Venezuela's currency or pay dividends.

Beginning in the third quarter, P&G; will exclude the operating results of its Venezuelan subsidiaries from its consolidated financial statements.

Hits to U.S. corporate profits in Venezuela accelerated in February when the President Nicolas Maduro devalued the bolivar by 70 percent via a new currency system known as Simadi. Previously, many U.S. companies valued their monetary and non-monetary assets at the most preferred rate of 6.3 bolivars to the dollar. But under Simadi, the exchange rate has been around 200 bolivars.

14. Undermining, Venezuelan election in May 2018

Henri Falcón, was told by US officials that the Trump administration would consider financial sanctions against him if he entered the presidential race. The US has backed the main opposition coalition decision to boycott the election. Rubio is a hard-liner who does not seem interested in an electoral or solution to Venezuela's political crisis. On February 9, he appeared to support a military coup when he tweeted: "The world would support the Armed Forces in Venezuela if they decide to protect the people & restore democracy by removing a dictator." Rubio/Trump strategy to be to try to worsen the economic situation and increase suffering to the point where either the military, or the insurrectionary elements of the opposition, rise up and overthrow the government. That appears to be the purpose of the financial sanctions that Trump ordered on August 24, 2017. This was not done previously because it would hurt US oil refining interests that import Venezuelan oil. But the administration has floated the idea of tapping the US strategic petroleum reserves to soften the blow. All this to overthrow a government that nobody can claim poses any threat to the United States. The main opposition coalition, the Democratic Unity Roundtable (MUD, by its acronym in Spanish), has as of now decided to boycott the elections.. Working (Excerpts from Mark Weisbrots Trump Administration tries to Torpedo the Election Regime

Trump administration tries to torpedo the election regime

<http://cepr.net/publications/op-eds-columns/trump-administration-tries-to-torpedo-venezuelan-elections-as-it-intensifies-regime-change-effort>

15. In 2018, Irwin Cotler a director UN Watch, was a member of the three- person committee that wrote a report leading to a complaint to Ocampo , the former head of the International Criminal Court against Venezuela for crimes against humanity. When he was the head of ICC, Ocampo had refused to take on a case against Israel.

16. Instituting debilitating sanctions.” Rubio/Trump strategy to be to try to worsen the economic situation and increase suffering to the point where either the military, or the insurrectionary elements of the opposition, rise up and overthrow the government. That appears to be the purpose of the financial sanctions that Trump ordered on August 24, 2017. This was not done previously because it would hurt

17. US oil refining interests that import Venezuelan oil. But the administration has floated the idea of tapping the US strategic petroleum reserves to soften the blow.

18. Threatening an invasion and regime change. Pompeo recently admitted that the US would like to see regime change in Venezuela, the country with the largest oil reserves on earth.

<https://www.zerohedge.com/news/2017-07-26/cia-and-sen-marco-rubio-accused-plotting-regime-change-venezuela>

19. In May 2018, the Lima Group—comprising Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Guyana, ...— supporting U.S. neo-liberal objectives – announced they wouldn’t recognize the results of Venezuela’s presidential elections set for April 22. Polling data gives President Maduro a 55 percent advantage 2018 President Maduro elected for another six years and Lima group refused to recognize the election

B. USE OF THE DESTABILIZATION IN VENEZUELA IN ELECTIONS IN LATIN AMERICA

BOLIVIA

Oscar Ortiz Santa Cruz de la Sierra Bolivia responds to the situation in Venezuela Óscar Ortiz, was elected president of the Union of Latin American Parties (UPLA), to work internationally in the defense of democracy in the Latin American region, with special emphasis on solidarity with the suffering of the Venezuelan and Nicaraguan peoples, in which “the authoritarian regimes are running over to the most fundamental right, as is the right to life”. 2018 The US state department expressed “deep concern” over the ruling, and some Bolivian opposition leaders, warning of an imminent “Venezuelan-Cuban-style” dictatorship, have called for street demonstrations, although few expect serious unrest. In Venezuela, President Nicolás Maduro’s leftist government recently banned the three biggest opposition parties from running in a presidential election this year, following a deadly crackdown against protesters (New York Times). 2018 Bolivia scrambles to maintain unity amid US support for right wing. Given the clearly right wing nature of the parties in the countries that withdrew from Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), the move can be seen as the latest blow against a fading trend of left wing governments and a result of the increasing bitter inter-state swirling around Venezuela’s future. (Elliot Gabriel).

CHILE

1. Fear of “Chilezuela”

The electoral campaign covered most of 2017, resembling the US model of extended political competition with its own dynamics and logics.

Chilean experts employed much of their capacity to explain the impact generated by the vague fear of middle-class, centrist voters

and conservative segments that a triumph of Guillier would lead Chile down Venezuela's path towards unprecedented political and economic chaos.

Fears of Venezuela-style political and economic chaos helped Piñera's campaign (Andrés E. Azpúrua, CC BY-ND 2.0)

In retrospect, it was a politically astute move for Piñera's team to brand any leftist constellation as "Chilezuela". On social networks there was a viral spread of content that compared Guillier with Venezuela's president Nicolás Maduro and claimed that a Guillier government would ultimately generate similar results - though this was of course highly unlikely. Numerous media contributions also suggested links between a Piñera defeat, the risk of communism, the end of social order, and general democratic degeneration.

The upshot is that Piñera's second term will face a public sphere characterised by heated political rhetoric, conspiracy theories, and outlandish historical analogies. One of the president's main challenges in the first half of his mandate will be mitigating, pacifying, and rationalising Chile's political debate. This will require Piñera to adopt postures beyond party politics in an attempt to become a kind of meta-partisan president for all Chileans, but this could damage his links to his own political alliance

COLOMBIA

The situation in Venezuela was used by the right wing in the Colombian election. Time magazine reports on what is described as "the specter of Venezuela". Petro's anti-corruption platform has turned him into a real contender in this election. But he has the misfortune of running at a time when neighboring Venezuela is imploding. More than 200,000 Venezuelans streamed into (and through) Colombia last year to escape crushing poverty and lack of basic goods and medicines, a six-fold increase from the year before. The perpetually looming collapse of Venezuela is a constant reminder to. Hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans have sought refuge in Colombia as their own country has descended into economic chaos. And while Venezuelans cannot vote here, their advocacy, activism — and calls for divine intervention — may help push Duque over the finish line on Election Day. (Miami herald). Ivan Duque has compared Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's

management of his country to a man who beats his wife and children, saying that Colombia has a moral responsibility to speak out against his government. At the same time, right-wing candidates have used the crisis against the leftist Gustavo Petro, a vocal supporter of Venezuela's former leader Hugo Chavez, warning that his leftist policies could turn Colombia into a "second Venezuela".

ECUADOR

Ecuador pro-business candidate Guillermo Lasso has doubled down on accusations that government-backed candidate Lenin Moreno would turn the Andean country into Venezuela, alluding to a recent Supreme Court move there to neuter the national assembly that foes denounced as a lurch into dictatorship.

"A coup annulling the national assembly! Is that what you want?" right-wing challenger Lasso told a crowd of supporters at a rally in the Guayaquil this week. "then let's go for change! Change is avoiding Venezuela's suffering."

EL SALVADOR

2004, the Salvadoran media and certain US government and non-government officials stoked fears amongst the voters regarding the consequences of an FMLN victory by again linking the FMLN to the Venezuelan socialist. In 2009 civic associations not registered as political parties carried out media campaigns associating the FMLN with Chávez in order to stir up support for ARENA. In 2014 even before the election there were articles criticizing Venezuela and especially ALBA. Sanchez Cerén's may need to enter into a coalition with Tony Saca to assuage fears that the FMLN will pursue communist or 'Chavista' policies and Sánchez Cerén need to demonstrate that Venezuela's influence and money can be kept at arm's length. (Diana Negrofonte). The ARENA candidate used the reported situation in Venezuela to support his campaign, "we do not want our country to fail as Venezuela has". There were constant references in the right wing paper the Prensa Graphic and TV reports profiling suffering Venezuelans and warning Salvadorians not to vote for the FMLN candidate. A full page about US and Venezuela. Head line Venezuela falls short in human rights; the United States put Cuba Venezuela and Ecuador in a list of countries that do not respect human rights, citing corruption, impunity, the lack of judicial independence, restrictions on freedom of speech as problems in all of Latin America. Head line senators urge sanctioning repression. Head line they warn that the Venezuelan crisis could affect ALBA. Negative publicity about ALBA and especially about Venezuela to support ARENA. ARENA candidate warned that the FMLN Sanchez Cerén would follow the path of Venezuela's socialist government, which has taken over private businesses, and promised he would not allow others to send El Salvador down the road of Venezuela. In the Prensa Grafica. February 28, 2014 front page the Venezuelan crisis worsens information about Venezuela in 5 other pages.

GUATEMALA

US congratulates Jimmy Morales from Guatemala for supporting Jerusalem as capital of Israel and for opposing Venezuela and the crisis in Venezuela and its abusive dictator (translated from Spanish CNN, meeting with Trump and US UN representative).

HONDURAS

President, Barack Obama, showed a desire to end the "gringo bully" image by condemning the June coup which ousted the leftist leader, Manuel Zelaya. But the White House backtracked when congressional Republicans supported the de facto government as a bulwark against Venezuela's Hugo Chávez... It was said he had ignored court rulings that made his referendum unconstitutional and was seeking to perpetuate his presidential term like his ally, Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, had already done in Venezuela on numerous occasions. Behind "the 2009 coup" in Honduras was the specter of Venezuela. Zelaya had turned to leftist coalitions and unions for support of his agenda and to the horror of the political elites, he joined petrocaribe and the Bolivarian alternative for the Americas (Alternativa Bolivariana Para las Americas – ALBA), Chavez's regional economic and political alliance, which acted as a counterweight to the US-led trade agreements in the region.

MEXICO

Obrador has recently said that, if elected, he will return to Mexico's old-guard foreign policy of "non-intervention" in other countries' affairs. "Non-intervention" is the excuse used by totalitarian states such as Cuba and Venezuela — as well as by Mexico's authoritarian governments in the 20th century — to justify their support for other dictatorships and to defend themselves against outside criticism of their human-rights abuses. There's bad news for supporters of democracy in Latin America: Andrés Manuel López Obrador, the front-runner in Mexico's July 1 presidential election, plans to appoint foreign-policy dinosaurs to his cabinet. And his would-be appointees say they will not criticize Venezuela's dictatorship. López Obrador announced recently that, if elected, he would appoint as his foreign minister Hector Vasconcelos. Vasconcelos subsequently said that he would put an end to Mexico's current activism in diplomatic efforts to restore democracy in Venezuela. What's more, Vasconcelos said he wouldn't even criticize Venezuela's regime. . (Miami herald)

NICARAGUA

Nicaraguans are encouraged by the supportive language of U.S. administration officials and congressional lawmakers in both house — and of both parties. But they want the United States to not only "talk the talk," but to "walk the walk," too. They fear that if the United States doesn't raise the ante in Nicaragua, the country will slide into the chaos in which Venezuela finds itself (Miami, herald)

Despite the US and international organisations having voiced concern about Mr. Ortega's stranglehold on power, the World Bank acknowledges that poverty has fallen almost 13 percentage points under his rule. A substantial part of those gains have been funded by Venezuelan petrodollars that have underpinned social programmes, helped private business and slashed energy costs. 2017 the US ambassador Laura Dog said `the US government has noted which countries support Venezuela 'stating that Nicaragua does not have many friends in Washington for the support it gives to Venezuela

VENEZUELA

Chavez had been criticized as being a dictator because he was in for more than two terms

C. BRIEF TIME LINE

BOLIVIA

1952. Undermining the 1952 Revolution

In 1952, a popular uprising against a rightist military regime led to the left-leaning nationalists of the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR) coming to power promising political freedom and radical economic reform. As with Morales and MAS, his political party, that revolutionary government had support from militant worker and peasant political movements. Also, like today, the new government's policies were nationalistic, particularly about country's natural resources, in which U.S. investors had substantial interests.

1964. René Barrientos, who seized power in a military coup was backed by foreigners. The CIA and U.S. Special Forces played a key role in suppressing a leftist peasant uprising that followed.

1967. Murder of Che Guevara

1970. When leftist army officer Juan José Torres came to power in October of 1970, Nixon called for his ousting. When an attempted coup by rightist general Hugo Bánzer Suárez

1971. By August of the following year in a bloody uprising, also with apparent U.S. support. Thousands of suspected leftists were executed in subsequent years.

1982. The United States largely supported Bánzer and subsequent dictators in the face of a series of protests, general strikes and other largely nonviolent pro-democracy uprisings, which eventually led to the end of military rule by 1982.

1982. The coming to office of the left-leaning president Hernán Siles Zuazo. Despite the restoration of democracy, the strict austerity programs pushed by the United States and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) resulted in the Bolivian people, more than two-thirds of whom live in poverty, even though the majority of the population is indigenous, the country's leaders continued to be white or mestizo (of mixed-race heritage).

2005. The election of Evo Morales, a left-wing activist and the first indigenous leader in the nearly 500 years since the Spanish conquest, marked a major shift in Bolivia's politics.

Under Morales, Bolivia has attempted to strengthen the Andean Community of Nations and the signing last year of a "People's Trade Treaty" with Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Cuba is indicative of the desire to strengthen working economic and political alliances outside of direct U.S. influence in order to be better able to stand up to Washington.

2011. The Current Uprising

It's this very ability to better withstand the kind of economic pressures the United States had until recently been able to exert, either directly or through international financial institutions, which has led to recent violence in Santa Cruz and elsewhere in the wealthier white and mestizo-dominated eastern sectors of the country. As a result of the reduced leverage of their friends in Washington, which had previously enabled them to rule the country, certain elite elements now appear willing to violently separate themselves and the four eastern provinces in which they are concentrated. With much of Bolivia's natural gas wealth located in the east, and taking advantage of the endemic racism of its largely white, and mestizo population against the country's indigenous majority, now in positions of political power

2018. Yet Bolivia, along with Nicaragua, is now the only presidential democracy in the Americas to place no limits on re-election. Last month, a senior minister shared an image of a placard which invited Morales to stay in power until 2050.

Óscar Ortiz da su postura ante situación de Venezuela Santa Cruz de la Sierra Bolivia
Óscar Ortiz, was elected president of the Union of Latin American Parties (UPLA), to work internationally in the defense of democracy in the Latin American region, with special emphasis on solidarity with the suffering of the Venezuelan and Nicaraguan peoples, in which "the authoritarian regimes are running over to the most fundamental right, as is the right to life". When he first entered office, Mr. Morales, part of a group of leftist leaders in Latin America who rose to power at a time of high commodity prices, sought to tackle a history of inequality in Bolivia. He strong-armed foreign energy

companies to share more profits with the state, investing the proceeds in education and health care while rewriting the country's Constitution to speed his reforms.

2018. Support for Morales

The above momentum has top officials in La Paz arguing that now is not the time to cut short a productive presidency on what they argue are the mere technical grounds of term limits. "From being a republic of classes, castes, skin colours, Bolivia today has become a country that by law has to be inclusive," said Valeria Silva Guzmán, 27, a Mas congress woman.

Through slashing school truancy, infant and maternal mortality, and old-age poverty, she argued, Morales has "definitively changed the everyday reality of Bolivians".

CHILE

COLOMBIA

1959. Under Eisenhower, US sent a Survey Team comprised of experts with "irregular warfare" experience to Colombia to assess the condition of the nation after a civil war, known as La Violencia that had ravaged the countryside. In Colombia, counterinsurgency, or low-intensity conflict (LIC) operations, have been in practice since long before the infamous Plan Colombia, and US recommendations have shaped the landscape of battle.

1962. A follow-up US Army Special Warfare team, led by the head of the Army Special Warfare Center, Yarborough, emphasized the need for more developed intelligence systems (critical for counter-insurgency operations), and for increased security measures. Yarborough established grounds for the formation of paramilitaries, which would come to be one of the deadliest forces throughout the conflict. Civilians and military members should be covertly selected to develop an underground civil and military structure.

1962. Kenney launched the Alliance for Progress in 1962. This plan was advertised as an "economic development strategy for Latin America" that combined a "bullets and beans" strategy, heavy on the bullets. Colombia created a similar plan entitled Plan Lazo that drew from the US' previous recommendations. Under Plan Lazo, Colombia attempted to eliminate independent republics communist guerrillas had established, improve intelligence structures, increase unconventional warfare capabilities, and enact military civic action programs to regain the trust of the populace. Focused heavily on military intervention with few resources or administrative structures directed towards social reforms, it was largely unsuccessful. The majority of funding and focus of Plan Lazo and the Alliance for Progress was on military control of citizens and situations. Under the Kennedy administration, US Special Forces troops were expanded and counter-insurgent strategies prevailed. As it became clear that nuclear weapons were not enough to deter alternative opinions about the veracity of the status quo, the US began a significant shift in its use of counter-insurgent strategy. Though counter-insurgent strategy continued fail throughout the 60's, military tacticians began again to tout its effectiveness at the dawn of the 21st century, welcoming a new era of COIN warfare in Colombia. Yet, for many Colombian citizens there is no liberation from the fear. The pause in action, is sustained and impacts livelihoods, health, and psychological well-being. The US trains and funds these Colombian troops.

1965. Following this recommendation, decree 3398 was passed in 1965 to allow Colombian authorities to organize citizens into militia groups. It stated that "all

Colombians, men and women...will be used by the government in activities and work that contribute to the reestablishment of order”.

1976 HABITAT I Mr. Enrique Penalosa, Secretary-General of the Conference, stated that the crisis now confronting the world was not merely of the 'built environment of mankind', but of adequate transport systems, urban pollution and congestion. It was a crisis of social organization and of civilization itself. He stressed three major issues before the Conference. (1) Spiralling population growth and the resulting rural/urban imbalances caused by migration to the cities; (2) the growing disparities in income and opportunity within societies and regions; and (3) the lack of adequate controls over land use and urban growth

2000. The US has provided about \$9.4 billion in aid to Colombia, of which about 6.8 billion has been in the form of military and police assistance. The US government throws words like security, democracy, and development and assumes that their definition is universal, correct, and infallible. Despite significant evidence to the contrary, the State Department certified that the Colombian government was in compliance with the human rights standards required by the US in order to receive full annual funding. This certification allows Colombian Armed Forces to receive all of its allotted aid from the US. For many in Colombia, security does not come in the form of a weapon, democracy is not delivered on the backs of military forces, and development is not something that comes by way of a military uniform. Counterinsurgency is neither enlightened warfare nor humanitarian.

2008. The intrusive bombing set off a serious diplomatic crisis. Chávez called Colombia “a terrorist state” and moved troops to the border, as did Ecuador. Nicaragua broke off relations. Uribe, under pressure, apologized to Ecuador. U.S. national security lawyers viewed the operation as an act of self-defense. In the wake of 9/11, they had come up with a new interpretation of the permissible use of force

2013. Colombia initiated the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which were adopted universally by the United Nations

2018

The situation in Venezuela was used by the right wing in the Colombian election. Time magazine reports on what is described as “the specter of Venezuela’ Petro’s anti-corruption platform has turned him into a real contender in this election. But he has the misfortune of running at a time when neighboring Venezuela is imploding. More than 200,000 Venezuelans streamed into (and through) Colombia last year to escape crushing poverty and lack of basic goods and medicines, a six-fold increase from the year before. The perpetually looming collapse of Venezuela is a constant reminder to. Hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans have sought refuge in Colombia as their own country has descended into economic chaos. And while Venezuelans cannot vote here, their advocacy, activism — and calls for divine intervention — may help push Duque over the finish line on Election Day. (Miami herald). Ivan Duque has compared Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro’s management of his country to a man who beats his wife and children, saying that Colombia has a moral responsibility to speak out against his government. At the same time, right-wing candidates have used the crisis against the leftist Gustavo Petro, a vocal supporter of Venezuela’s former leader Hugo Chavez, warning that his leftist policies could turn Colombia into a “second Venezuela”.

2018. Duque won the election Duque is in the same party as Alvaro Uribe, who is under investigation for ties to paramilitaries and whose terms in office triggered the heightened militarization of Colombia and a spike in the killings of social leaders.

ECUADOR

BACKGROUND

For More Than 50 Years. CIA Went Deep into Ecuadorean Society. {telesur)

Among the agency's less known activities include the infiltration of hundreds of its agents into diplomatic offices, political parties and military forces in Ecuador. Agents at airports would report on passengers traveling to socialist countries such as Cuba and Russia, and mail sent to these countries was opened and recorded for the CIA to analyze. Any "special interest" guest in a hotel would be surveyed constantly. The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), according to declassified documents and testimonies of previous agency officials, had a permanent operation to intervene in political and social decisions of Ecuador.

1960 Starting from the 60s, the CIA infiltrated governments, police, civilian groups, and NGOs to advance U.S. interests in the country, and continues to fight for its power and influence in the region. It had for South and Central America, as well as the impact on the new world order. In the early 1960's, nationalist Ecuadorean President Jose Maria Velasco Ibarra and his later successor, Vice President Carlos Julio Arosemena Monroy, were pressured by the agency to break diplomatic relations with the new socialist government of Fidel Castro in Cuba. When both refused to isolate Castro's government, both were successively ousted by the country's military forces, backed by CIA operations. The agency's main targets at the time were the young socialist or communist political groups in universities. The Revolutionary Union of Ecuadorean Youth (URJE) was considered the most dangerous organization and the main target for destabilization, along with its parent party, the Communist Party of Ecuador.

1970 Ecuador, like other South American countries, was part of the U.S.-backed Operation Condor in the 1970s. This plan endorsed state-sponsored terror to control what was perceived to be the threat of communism and eliminate subversive sectors of society. Operation Condor's targets were activists, organizers, and opponents of the dictatorships the U.S. helped set up in the region. Ecuador's president Jaime Roldos, opposed U.S. measures. He was killed in a plane crash. Investigators continue to believe that his death is tied to a CIA operation in the country. Agents would infiltrate social groups and systematically work to discredit their popularity while fabricating or planting evidence to ensure that leaders were falsely prosecuted for crimes such as the bombing of right-wing political headquarters or even churches. The CIA counted on the support of right-wing media outlets that published false information and didn't question the sources or veracity of facts. Agents would infiltrate social groups and systematically work to discredit their popularity while fabricating or planting evidence to ensure that leaders were falsely prosecuted for crimes such as the bombing of right-wing political headquarters or even churches. The CIA counted on the support of right-wing media outlets that published false information and didn't question the sources or veracity of facts. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) are seen by many as tools used by the U.S. government to advance their political, economic and social interests. Many opposition groups and media networks in Latin America are funded by USAID, the NED or other U.S. based private and public institutions. In addition to Ecuadorean President Rafael Correa, other leftist presidents have denounced that these institutions are operating to destabilize their governments as was the case with the late Hugo Chavez in Venezuela and NED funding to opposition groups,

2007-Correa elected as president

2009. An early general election was held on 26 April 2009 in Ecuador following the approval of a new constitution in a referendum held on 28 September 2008.

2013 Correa was re-elected as well as the National Assembly, Provincial Assemblies and members of the Andean Parliament.[Some reports indicated that Correa could be targeted by the CIA, given his strong opposition to U.S. intervention in the country and region., He closed a U.S. military base in Manta and said, "US could have a base if he could have one in Miami", and expelled two U.S. diplomats who worked for the CIA.

2017 report

Education: The Key to Developing and Diversifying the Economy

Correa has said "quality, free public education is the basis of a real democracy, and" the path away from a Third World raw material export dependent economy lies in raising the educational and skill level of the population. Education free, including university, and to reduce barriers for low-income students the government provides free school supplies, books, uniforms, and meals. Ecuador is completing a program of building 14 schools focused on teaching and preserving the country's various ancestral ethnic languages. Free education is a human right, guaranteed through university.

Social Programs to Fight Poverty

Minimum wage has more than doubled. A living wage policy, enforced and income inequality, slashed. The labour of homemakers is now legally recognized, and so their families, now receive social security benefits, including disability compensation and a pension. Major investments in infrastructure and economic development, have reduced the poverty rate from 37.6% in 2007 to 22% today. Rural poverty has been reduced from 61% to 35%. Extreme poverty has been cut in half,

Health Care

Health care is free. Thirteen new hospitals have been constructed, with 18 more underway around the country. 34,000 medical professionals and visits to the doctor have tripled

Environmental Protection

The UN recognizes only eight countries in the world as meeting the two minimum criteria for sustainable development including reducing the ecological footprint. Ecuador is one of them.

Ecuador made major advances in converting to renewable energy Ecuador now counts on 95% renewable energy, By 2015 Ecuador had cut the rate of deforestation in half, and pays communities, mostly in the Amazon, to protect forests.

2017 after two terms Correa stepped down and Lenin Moreno was elected president

EL SALVADOR

2004, the Salvadoran media and certain US government and non-government officials stoked fears amongst the voters regarding the consequences of an FMLN victory by again linking the FMLN to the Venezuelan socialist. In 2009 civic associations not registered as political parties carried out media campaigns associating the FMLN with Chávez in order to stir up support for ARENA. In 2014 even before the election there were articles criticizing Venezuela and especially ALBA. Sanchez Cerén's may need to enter into a coalition with Tony Saca to assuage fears that the FMLN will pursue communist or 'Chavista' policies and Sánchez Cerén need to demonstrate that Venezuela's influence and money can be kept at arm's length. (Brooking Institute Diana NegroPonte). The ARENA candidate used the reported situation in Venezuela to support his campaign, "we do not want our country to fail as Venezuela has". There were constant references in the right wing paper the Prensa Graphic and TV reports profiling suffering Venezuelans and warning Salvadorians not to vote for the FMLN candidate. A full page about US and Venezuela. Head line Venezuela falls short in human rights; the United States put Cuba Venezuela and Ecuador in a list of countries that do not respect human rights, citing corruption, impunity, the lack of judicial independence, restrictions on freedom of speech as problems in all of Latin America.

Head line senators urge sanctioning repression. Head line they warn that the Venezuelan crisis could affect ALBA. Negative publicity about alba and especially about Venezuela to support ARENA .ARENA candidate warned that the FMLN Sanchez Ceren would follow the path of Venezuela's socialist government, which has taken over private businesses, and promised he would not allow others to send el Salvador down the road of Venezuela. In the Prensa Grafica. February 28, 2014 front page the Venezuelan crisis worsens information about Venezuela in 5 other pages.

BACKGROUND;

1893-1932. Farabundo Marti was a revolutionary leader who was dedicated to the cause of the peasants, indigenous peoples and workers In El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala

1932. In January 1932, the Salvadoran people along with the Communist Party under Marti's leadership rose up against the dictatorship of Maximiliano Hernandez Martinez . The regime responded with brutal repression , killing 10,000 and 40,000 people. Marti was sentenced to death on January. 31, 1932 and was executed by firing squad the following day. It is reported that his cry of, "Long live socialism!" was interrupted by the impact of the bullets.

1980. October 10, the FMLN (Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front)`In March, Archbishop Oscar Romero and four nuns were murdered. Roberto D'Aubuisson, right-wing death-squad leader was suspected.

1981. Roberto D'Aubuisson co-founded and became the first leader of the Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) 1982-83 D'Aubuisson became president; 1981 El Salvador's military leaders began "scorched earth" tactics against left-wing guerrillas, and US-trained Atlacatl Battalion carried out an operation in the mountainous region of northeastern part and the military massacred over 700 civilians at El Mozote—and Reagan's officials dismissed it as "propaganda."In El Salvador, more than 75,000 lost their lives during the civil war. the FMLN committed atrocities, but the UN Truth Commission, found that more than 85 percent of the killings, kidnappings, and torture had been the work of government forces, including paramilitaries, death squads, and army units trained by the US

1992 Peace Agreement of civil war

2004 2004, the Salvadoran media and certain US government and non-government officials stoked fears amongst the voters regarding the consequences of an FMLN victory by again linking the FMLN to the Venezuelan socialist

2006. During the Salvadorian election Bush arranged for El Salvador to become an associate of NATO which would give them access to NATO, weapons; and ARENA won

2009, The right-wing media in El Salvador played up links between the FARC and the FMLN, alleging that the FMLN had not left its terrorist past behind and that its members were involved in arms trafficking and organized crime. The EU delegation, similar to the Transparency International monitors, found that "election news coverage was generally biased not meeting international democratic standards, exacerbating the uneven playing field in favour of ARENA and an observer report estimated that ARENA spent over twice as much as the FMLN in advertising) and that media ownership concentration was held by the influential families, associated with ARENA, had distorted the level playing field of electoral politics.

In 2009 civic associations not registered as political parties carried out media campaigns associating the FMLN with Chávez in order to stir up support for ARENA.

2012. FMLN observer commented that the FMLN has suffered from the well-funded campaigns (by outside sources, mainly the USA government,) of its opponents

2014. those residing outside could now A representative from the Bush era hinted in a panel discussion that if a certain party were elected the US would have to think twice about assisting el Salvador with funds.

2014. Second round election March 5

2014. Prensa Graphica was violating Article 9 of the 1994 Declaration of Chalpultepec Article 9. The credibility of the press is linked to its commitment to truth, to the pursuit of accuracy, fairness and objectivity and to the clear distinction between news and advertising. The attainment of these goals and the respect for ethical and professional values may not be imposed. These are the exclusive responsibility of journalists and the media. In a free society, it is public opinion that rewards or punishes

2014. March second round

Front page of the Prensa Grafica was Norman (ARENA) signing the 1994 declaration of Chalpultepec inside a full page about his signing as well as the full Declaration. The impression was given that Sánchez Cerén would not sign the declaration; hidden away in a subsequently article was mention that both parties had signed on.

Ln 2014 even before the election there were articles criticizing Venezuela and especially ALBA. Sanchez Ceren's may need to enter into a coalition with Tony Saca to assuage fears that the FMLN will pursue communist or 'Chavista' policies and Sánchez Cerén need to demonstrate that Venezuela's influence and money can be kept at arm's length. (Brocking Institute Diana Negro ponte). The ARENA candidate used the reported situation in Venezuela to support his campaign, "we do not want our country to fail as Venezuela has". There were constant references in the right wing paper the Prensa Graphic and TV reports profiling suffering Venezuelans and warning .Salvadorians not to vote for the FMLN candidate. A full page about US and Venezuela. Head line Venezuela falls short in human rights; the United States put Cuba Venezuela and Ecuador in a list of countries that do not respect human rights, citing corruption, impunity, the lack of judicial independence, restrictions on freedom of speech as problems in all of Latin America. Head line senators urge sanctioning repression. Head line they warn that the Venezuelan crisis could affect ALBA. Negative publicity about alba and especially about Venezuela to support ARENA .ARENA candidate warned that the FMLN Sanchez Ceren would follow the path of Venezuela's socialist government, which has taken over private businesses, and promised he would not allow others to send el Salvador down the road of Venezuela. In the Prensa Grafica. February 28, 2014 front page the Venezuelan crisis worsens information about Venezuela in 5 other pages.

2014. Right wing media claimed outside influence and the electoral tribunal failed to restrain ALBA Petróleos actions despite the fact that Section 67 of the electoral law prohibits contributions to political parties from government institutions or businesses The US government and its Embassy claim that they have remained neutral observers.

2014. March Salvador Sanchez Ceren of the FMLN was declared winner but ARENA contested the results, alleging fraud. 2014 press conference in San Salvador where ex pats were discussing the fact that, on a technicality, ARENA nullified 400 votes from the exterior.

2015. March 5 The (ARENA) party took control of El Salvador's legislature ARENA won 32 out of 84 seats in congress. The FMLN) won 31 seats. In the new congress, both ARENA and FMLN will have to negotiate in order to pass bills since neither party will have a simple majority.

GUATEMALA

Background

1944THE RED SCARE**

Following its 1944 revolution, which brought democratically elected leftist governments to power; Bolivia faced an increasingly hostile neighbour to the north, the United States. Guatemala's treatment of US-based corporations, especially the United Fruit Company, in expropriating land and other assets, did nothing to improve relations. Elites in Guatemala helped persuade US journalists and members of Congress, and the executive branch, that their government was veering further and further leftward

toward Communism 1950s. Late in the Truman presidency, the US government aborted an attempt to support Guatemalans who aimed to overthrow President Jacobo Arbenz. President Eisenhower, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, and DCI Allen Dulles persuaded themselves that the Guatemalan government was "red." The CIA leader said, "The Communists now effectively control the political life of Guatemala." 1 A deal made by Arbenz's government to purchase Soviet-made armaments from Czechoslovakia sealed the matter in the US leaders' minds.

1954 Washington used the CIA and US Ambassador John Peurifoy to support and direct certain Guatemalan military leaders in overthrowing Arbenz's government. It was also psychological warfare--cleverly deceptive efforts to persuade Guatemala's citizens and political/military leaders that a major invasion force was moving toward the nation's capital so unnerved Arbenz and others that the government fell without much of a battle.

PLAUSIBLE DENIABILITY

While the overthrow of Arbenz was unfolding, the US government pretended to have nothing to do with it.

ILL-FATED PRECEDENT

1961 Besides morality, there were other unfortunate legacies of the Guatemalan "success:" It was used as a model in advising President Kennedy seven years later to pursue the ill-fated Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. It was reasoned, "the Guatemalans had a right to revolt against the Communists, [so]...the United States had a right to assist the revolt."

In consultation with the State Department, Johnson offered his colleagues and those in the House an opportunity to give support to Eisenhower with "an unmistakable warning that we are determined to keep Communism out of the Western Hemisphere. "William Langer of North Dakota voted "no." He was dismissed as an old-fashioned isolationist. His statement when Joseph McCarthy's anti-Communist crusade was still on-going, in retrospect, not easily dismissed.

1960s The US was involved in equipping and training Guatemalan security forces that murdered thousands of civilians in the nation's civil war.

1966. Security forces arrested 32 people suspected of aiding Marxist guerrillas; those arrested disappeared. While the Guatemalan government denied any involvement in the case, a CIA cable sent later that year identifies three of those missing, saying, "The following Guatemalan Communists and terrorists were executed secretly by Guatemalan authorities."

1960s and 1970s. The US gave the Guatemalan military \$33 million in aid even though US officials of knew the army's disregard for human rights.

1992 A CIA cable confirmed that indigenous villages were targeted for destruction because of the army's belief that the Indians supported the guerrillas. It reported that "several villages have been burned to the ground". "This well-documented belief by the army that the entire Ixil Indian population is [pro-guerrilla] created a situation in which the army can treat combatants and non-combatants alike".

1994 Defense Intelligence Agency report outlined how, in the 1980s, Guatemalan military intelligence agents dumped suspected guerrillas – dead or alive – out of planes into the ocean to remove the evidence showing that the prisoners were tortured and killed.

1996 The UN brokered a peace agreement that ended the conflict.

1998 Todos Santos is a predominantly indigenous village in the highest mountain range in Central America. A Dutch anthropologist thereat and she reported that a women knowledgeable about local medicinal plants was deemed by the fundamentalist church, to be a sorcerer. A documentary claimed Todos Santos was discovered by the rest of the world in the 60's when a road was put in so as to make Indian labour more available for the coffee and cotton fincas. It also claimed that about 45% of the land is owned by 2 -3 % of the population (ex-military ladinos) while the less desirable land was divided among the indigenous people.

1999 Document listing names of the disappeared was found in the military

headquarters

1999, President Clinton visited Guatemala and said, "Support for military forces and intelligence units which engaged in violence and widespread repression was wrong, and the United States must not repeat that mistake."

2015, the U.S. Congress approved \$750-million (U.S.) in aid to the Guatemala El Salvador and Honduras on their efforts to reduce migration to the United States and the factors driving it.

2015 A fundamentalist Christian, Jimmy Morales, comedian and was elected as president. He favoured low taxes limited government and promised to fight against graft.

2016 Prosecution of his allied lawmaker was suspected of human rights violations dating to Guatemala's civil war.

2017 documentary film sin miedo was made about the disappeared in Guatemala. In the film was reported an attempt to get the investigator of police to act on the 1999 document failed because inspector claimed it was a leftist propaganda

The film stressed the importance of memory; memory needs something to keep it alive if no, it burns out like a candle; it needs images and words to leave no trace of the struggle as if they never existed as if they were never among us. In the film memory is beautifully revived through an artist recapturing visually memories of the disappeared The case of the disappeared was brought before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights where the decision was favourable and compensation was recommended. Yet the struggle goes on!

2018 US congratulates Jimmy Morales from Guatemala for supporting Jerusalem as capital of Israel and for opposing Venezuela and the crisis in Venezuela and its abusive dictator (translate from Spanish CNN, meeting with Trump and US UN representative.

HONDURAS

BACKGROUND

1018 BP Copan a Mayan site with an extraordinary hieroglyphic staircase. The ruined citadel and imposing squares reveal three main stages of development before the city was abandoned over a 1000 years ago.

1890 foreign control enclave, US military presence in Honduras and the roots of Honduran migration to the United States are closely linked. It began in the late 1890s, when US-based banana companies first became active. The US and its companies "built railroads, established their own banking systems, and bribed government officials. As a result, the Caribbean coast "became a foreign-controlled enclave that swung the whole of Honduras into a one-crop economy whose wealth was carried off to New Orleans, New York, and later Boston. 1914 US banana interests owned almost 1 million acres of Honduras' best land. These holdings grew through the 1920s to such an extent that, as Honduran peasants had no hope of access to their nation's good soil." Over a few decades, US capital also came to dominate the country's banking and mining sectors, this was coupled with direct US political and military interventions to protect US interests in 1907 and 1911. The superpower was behind the rise of the original banana republic – and the fall of its latest president. The fruit corporations from the US turned Honduras, an impoverished tropical backwater, into a huge banana plantation at the start of the 20th century. They dominated its economy and politics, making it the original "banana republic". US intervened in numerous military coups to protect its commercial interests, embedding conservative, Americanized elite.

1980s Contra guerrillas backed by President Ronald Reagan used Honduras as a base to attack Nicaragua's Sandinista government in the 1980s. The US has used the Soto Cano base for several decades, saddling it with a somewhat infamous record. During

the 1980s, Palmerola was part of a sizeable tract of land, became known as the Nicaraguan contras' "unsinkable aircraft carrier." From there, the US-backed irregulars launched raids into Nicaragua. Overarching role would be to support Honduras' war against drug traffickers. It is unclear what other US security operations will take place at the air base under the rubric of safeguarding this country's national interests. 1989 Nicaraguan contra insurgents training in Honduras. The rightwing rebels were backed by US. At that time, US political and military policy was so influential that many referred to the Central country as the "U.S.S. Honduras" and the Pentagon Republic. The US has had a lasting presence in modern Honduras, primarily at the Soto Cano airbase, which has witnessed scores of human rights abuses during the 1980s.

1983. At that time, US bribed Honduran officials who closed their eyes to the fact that US backed insurgents were staging sorties into Nicaragua from Honduran territory.

1999 Honduran troops were members of the sinister battalion 3-16, accused of scores of kidnappings and human rights abuses against Honduran anti-contra dissidents. The nacla report on the Americas announced that three mass graves and prison cells had been discovered at the former contra military base of El Aguacate, near the Nicaraguan border. This facility had been built by US troops in 1983. The contras used the gravesites to dispose of the prisoners they had executed on political grounds. Destabilizing Nicaragua had the perverse effect of destabilizing Honduras, where civilian authorities have been reduced to rubber-stamping the militarization of their country to counter the alleged "communist threat" posed by the Sandinistas. Eventually 30,000 lives were lost and economic ruin in both Nicaragua and Honduras, occurred, in what soon became a US.-induced civil war.

2006 Election of Manuel Zelaya, a liberal reformist, as president; in 2006. He led on progressive measures such as raising the minimum wage. He also tried to organize a plebiscite to allow for a constituent assembly to replace the country's constitution, which had been written during a military government; these efforts incurred the ire of the country's oligarchy, leading to his overthrow by the military in June 2009. It was said he had ignored court rulings that made his referendum unconstitutional and was seeking to perpetuate his presidential term like his ally, Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez, had already done in Venezuela on numerous occasions. President Manuel Zelaya was taken to an air force base where he was escorted onto an airplane that immediately left the country for Costa Rica. Obama, showed a desire to end the "gringo bully" image by condemning the June coup which ousted the leftist leader, Manuel Zelaya. But the white house backtracked when congressional republicans supported the de facto government as a bulwark against Chávez. Zelaya snuck back into the country via a mountain pass and tried to negotiate a deal that would allow him to retake the presidency until the end of his term. Lobo was elected and the country's political and economic elites had turned the clock back to the 1980s with the help of the military. The US government only reinforced this belief when it recognized the Lobo administration and in 2010 Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, worked to ensure that Zelaya did not return to power, and was criticized by hemispheric political forum.

2009 President, Barack Obama, showed a desire to end the "gringo bully" image by condemning the June coup which ousted the leftist leader, Manuel Zelaya. But the White House backtracked when congressional Republicans supported the de facto government as a bulwark against Venezuela's Hugo Chávez... It was said he had ignored court rulings that made his referendum unconstitutional and was seeking to perpetuate his presidential term like his ally, Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, had already done in Venezuela on numerous occasions. Behind "the 2009 coup" in Honduras was the specter of Venezuela. Zelaya had turned to leftist coalitions and unions for support of his agenda and to the horror of the political elites, he joined petrocaribe and the Bolivarian alternative for the Americas (Alternativa Bolivariana Para las Americas – ALBA), Chavez's regional economic and political alliance, which acted as a counterweight to the US-led trade agreements in the region.

FOR YEARS

Any opposition, including the church has been targeted and threatened

2018 Zelaya has not returned to power

MEXICO

1519-21 Spanish–Aztec War (1519–21), and cultural misappropriation such as destroying pyramids and building churches with the stones or building churches above the ruins of pyramids, and also inappropriately renaming codices as ``Codex Borgia`` or ``codex Vaticanus``.

1910 Under the regime of Porfirio Diaz (1876-1910). Often, lands traditionally held communally by indigenous peoples were seized. In many cases, these seizures took place without due process and the land turned up in the hands of President Diaz' supporters.

1930. Ejidos were protected. They could be farmed only by members of the community.

1929-2000 PRI, the Institutional Revolutionary Party.

1846-48 The Mexican–American War, also known as the Mexican War in the US and as the American War in Mexico.

1968 Tourism began in the Yucatan and polluted many of the cenotes.

In 1990s, PEMEX disrupted the Olmec culture in Mexico. And surrounded the oldest pyramid in Mexico at La Venta, and relocated Olmec heads.

1988-1994 Carlos Salinas de Gortari –Institutional Revolutionary Party PRI

1992 Ejidos and NAFTA. Before NAFTA half of Mexico's total land mass was held in 28,000 ejidos, occupied by more than 2.5 million farmers. President Salinas proposed to open land ownership for greater market discipline by better defining property rights. Under the new rules, members of an ejido collective can rent land to non-ejido members, and can obtain full rights to the land-including the right to sell to others.

1990s, PEMEX disrupted the Olmec Culture In Mexico by surrounding the oldest pyramid in Mexico at La Venta, and displacing Olmec giant heads from original site.

1994 NAFTA was in force. In protest, 100 farmers formed a human wall along the border.

2000 An Alliance was formed to defeat the PRI; the PT and PRD joined PAN's Vicente Fox.

2000 During the election UNICEF promoted the Convention on the Rights of the child.

2005 Washington's proposed "Free Trade Area of the Americas" was rejected by the region.

2006 Calderon appealed to security and attacked Obrador as a danger to security. Election law prevented Vicente Fox from making public statements of a partisan or political nature. But he often did in the 2006 campaign, in speeches reinforcing candidate Calderón's basic message that Obrador was a "danger to México." PAN used attack ads against Obrador, comparing him to Venezuela's Chávez and calling him a "danger to México" `At stake in the election was whether Mexico would continue its free-trade policies and close alliance with the US or join a growing number of Latin American nations who have elected leftist leaders who favour more government intervention in the economy.

2008 Mega march against NAFTA demanding the renegotiation of sections in NAFTA, opposing the dumping of US produce on Mexico, and the increased privatization of electricity, highly mechanized U.S. corn and grain producers will force small ejidos to consolidate or change crops. Concern about waves of migrants leaving rural Mexico as agriculture is modernized.

2010 COP16 climate change held in Cancun- the symbol of overconsumption, an interesting contrast to the BALUMKU, near Mahual, which is completely off the grid.

2012, the PRI won back the presidency with the election of Enrique Peña Nieto.

2014 NAFTA: 20 years of regret for Mexico excerpts from Mark Weisbrot: The promised trade surpluses with Mexico turned out to be deficits. The idea was to push US wages downward, and to create new rights for corporations to sue governments directly before a corporate-friendly international tribunal, unaccountable judicial systems, for regulations (e.g. environmental) that infringed upon their profit-making potential. Millions were forced into competition with subsidized US agribusiness.

2015 In Guanajuato, a Canadian mining company spilled about 1,200 gallons of toxic waste into a river which is 7 kilometres from the world heritage site. At one time eight out of the ten mines close to the World Heritage site were Canadian and often they were polluting the river.

2018 Obrador from the Morena party won the election in spite of all the fear mongering.

López Obrador is often painted by political opponents as his country's version of Hugo Chávez. So for Mexico's unpopular leader, Peña Nieto, keeping blood-soaked images from Venezuela in the news cycle and condemning human rights violations have become props in his attempt to stop the country from swinging left. Obrador has recently said that, if elected, he will return to Mexico's "non-intervention" in other countries' affairs. "Non-intervention" is the excuse used by totalitarian states such as Cuba and Venezuela — as well as by Mexico's authoritarian governments in the 20th century — to justify their support for other dictatorships and to defend themselves against outside criticism of their human-rights abuses. Bad news for supporters of democracy in Latin America: Andrés Manuel López Obrador, the front-runner in Mexico's July 1 presidential election, plans to appoint foreign-policy dinosaurs to his cabinet. And his would-be appointees say they will not criticize Venezuela's dictatorship. Obrador announced recently that, if elected, he would appoint as his foreign minister Hector Vasconcelos who said that he would put an end to Mexico's current activism in diplomatic efforts to restore democracy in Venezuela. What's more, Vasconcelos said he wouldn't even criticize Venezuela's regime. . (Miami herald) Obrador's critics warn that as president, he would resemble Venezuela's Hugo Chávez, whose radical "Bolivarian" revolution is credited with turning that country into a desperately impoverished nation. After the election of Socialist Obrador, will Mexico Morph into Venezuela-Style Failed State. (LA Times)

The case of Venezuela is instructive, and ongoing. Its citizens are desperately heading for the border as that nation's socialist economy collapses, beset by food shortages, soaring unemployment, rampant disease, crime and inflation now at a stratospheric 43,000% a year. Since 1999, the year the socialists took over, Venezuela's economy has gone from being one of the wealthiest in Latin America, with the world's largest oil reserves, to one of the most-impoverished nations in Latin America, one that now imports oil and exports people. (Investors Daily).

NICARAGUA

Background

US Marines had occupied Nicaragua since 1909 and finally left in 1933. When the marines left in the 1930s, they handed things over to the Somoza family, which ruled Nicaragua with U.S. support from the 1930s to the 1970s.

1921- 1933 SANDINO

Augusto Sandino was born in 1895. When president Coolidge said ``all America belongs to Americans``, Sandino responded ``and all Latin America belongs to Latin Americans``. He also

gave rise to the revolutionary colours: rojo el sangre; negro por la muerte (Sandino). He was murdered in 1934 by the National Guard acting on orders of the dictator Somoza who subsequently admitted to carrying out the crime with the backing of the US ambassador. Sandino was not only a fighter but a prolific writer and a gifted orator. Sandinism had become the rallying cry for freedom, self-determination and non-intervention not only for Nicaragua but for liberation movements across tin America. (Michael J. Schroeder)

SOMOZA 1967-72 and 1974-1979

1961 Frente Sandinista Liberation Nacional (FSLN) formed

1980 Daniel Ortega elected president and national literacy begun.

1980 new constitution

1980s war US backing the contras

Iran Contra affair covert sale of arms to Iran support contras in Honduras out of the loop plausible deniability out of the loop

1986; Nicaragua took the US to the International Court of Justice

US dismisses World Court ruling on contras

1986 The International Court of Justice yesterday ruled that US support to the contras in Nicaragua is illegal, and demanded that the US pay reparations to the Sandinistas. Nicaragua intends to sue the US for more than dollars 1 billion in damages in US domestic courts as a result of yesterday's World Court ruling, a legal counsel for the Managua Government said yesterday in Washington. In a 16-point ruling on a complaint lodged by Nicaragua, the judges rejected American claims of collective self-defence and found the US guilty of breaches of international law and the 1956 treaty of friendship between the two countries. The US rejected the judgment, claiming that the Managua regime is a Soviet puppet.

(Martin Cleaver and Mark Tran)

Note the US said that they recognized the jurisdiction of the court but would not abide by the decision. Soon after that the US withdrew from the ICJ.

1990 fear of continued onslaught of contras – opposition Chamorro wins

2002 The US has the best democracy money can buy (Greg Palast)

2006-2018 . US right wing groups were raising money in the US to support opposition in Nicaragua.

2006 US funded break-off FSLN group Nicaraguan Liberal Alliance, and supported Montealegre for president

2006 Media claimed Ortega would win because of right wing split!

2006 "US intervention; threats, intimidation and bribes"

http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5916&catid=74:justice-news&Itemid=216

2007 food, low-interest credit and other types of direct support Venezuela has pumped into to alleviate poverty, and funds that helped improve education, sanitation and gender equality.

2014 right-wing activists ambushed a caravan of Sandinista supporters returning from the annual celebration of the revolution, killing five people and wounding 24.

2015 four local Sandinista leaders were killed in what are considered to be political.

The general association of these attacks with the country's hard right has helped contribute to the current irrelevance of the political opposition in Nicaragua

2016 Former Contra Mercenary to Run for President in Nicaragua and U.S. official Marcela Escobari told a congressional committee that USAID. was working with more than 2,000 "young people"

2016 Ortega most popular politician – US ambassador- warning to investors a risk A report by the Congressional Research Service described Ortega as "the most popular political figure in Nicaragua". That same month, State Department official Juan Gonzalez acknowledged that Ortega was supported by the majority of the population, attributing his support to "a lot of the social investments that he has made in the country. "Regardless, U.S. officials have not abandoned their efforts to remove Ortega from power.

2017 the “Nicaraguan Investment Conditionality Act (NICA) of 2017”.

Nicaraguans are encouraged by the supportive language of U.S. administration officials and congressional lawmakers in both house — and of both parties. But they want the United States to not only “talk the talk,” but to “walk the walk,” too. They fear that if the United States doesn’t raise the ante in Nicaragua, the country will slide into the chaos in which Venezuela finds itself (Miami, herald)

Despite the US and international organisations having voiced concern about Mr. Ortega’s stranglehold on power, the World Bank acknowledges that poverty has fallen almost 13 percentage points under his rule. A substantial part of those gains have been funded by Venezuelan petrodollars that have underpinned social programmes, helped private business and slashed energy costs. 2017 the US ambassador Laura Dog said ‘the US government has note which countries support Venezuela ‘stating that Nicaragua does not have many friends in Washington for the support it gives to Venezuela

2017 The government of Nicaragua has rejected the decision of the US to sanction Nicaragua through the so-called Nica Act and demanded respect for its sovereignty. Nicaragua also demanded that the US pay a compensation it was ordered to disburse in 1986 by the ICJ for “the fatal damage caused to the people and government of Nicaragua for the destructive and illegal interference of that power in our national affairs” in funding Contras during the country’s civil war.

2018 US continues funding the opposition and supporting opposition protest The assistance programs appear to be having some effect, especially now that opposition groups are leading major protests against the Nicaraguan government (Edward Hunt).

U.S. officials hope the country’s opposition groups will create a new political movement that can defeat Ortega at the polls or pressure him into stepping down from power. They fear that without their support, Ortega’s opposition will remain weak and divided, making it impossible for anyone to mount a successful political campaign against the Nicaraguan president.

“Our assistance programs are primarily directed at civil society, in order to limit engagement with the central government,” State Department official Juan Gonzalez told Congress in September 2016.

. After the Nicaraguan government passed a number of mild reforms to the country’s social security program in April, Ortega’s opponents organized a series of protests that quickly turned violent.

Observers estimate that as many as 45 people died in the protests.

Since the protests began, U.S. officials have declared their support for the opposition, blaming the Nicaraguan government for the violence. They have not said if any of the protesters have benefited from their assistance.

While questions remain about the extent of U.S. involvement, it is no secret that the United States has historically played a heavy-handed role in Nicaragua. During the early 20th century, U.S. marines occupied the country for two decades. When the marines left in the 1930s, they handed things over to the Somoza family, which ruled Nicaragua with U.S. support from the 1930s to the 1970s.

During the late 1970s, the Sandinistas ousted the U.S.-backed Somoza dictatorship in a popular revolution. Following the revolution, Ortega led a new government that began putting more resources into education and health care, helping to increase literacy and reduce child mortality.

To prevent the revolution from succeeding, U.S. officials directed two major campaigns against the Sandinistas. During the mid-1980s, the Reagan administration organized a

terrorist war against Nicaragua, backing counterrevolutionary forces (“contras”) that tried to overthrow the new Nicaraguan government. As the contras waged their campaign of terror, U.S. officials began supporting Ortega’s political opponents, helping them gain political power through the country’s presidential election in 1990.

In the following years, U.S. officials remained closely involved with their political allies. U.S. diplomatic cables published by WikiLeaks reveal that U.S. officials continued working to keep their political allies in power while preventing the Sandinistas from regaining political power. Before the presidential election in 2006, U.S. diplomats spearheaded a multi-faceted campaign to steer campaign funds to their political allies while discouraging voters from voting for Ortega.

In spite of these efforts, U.S. meddling was not enough to tilt the presidential election in favor of U.S.-backed candidates. Ortega won, bringing him back into office and providing the Sandinistas with an opportunity to revive their revolution.

U.S. diplomats in Nicaragua were stunned by the result. They called for an intensification of programs to confront Ortega. “We need to take decisive action and well-funded measures to bolster the elements of Nicaraguan society that can best stop him before he lulls the majority of the Nicaraguan people into complacency, or threatens them into silence,” they reported.

In September 2016, U.S. official Marcela Escobari told a congressional committee that U.S.A.I.D. was working with more than 2,000 “young people” and over 60 civil society organizations to help them play a more active role in Nicaraguan politics and society. “These efforts are allowing them to exercise their political muscle and see results,” she said.

It has not always been easy for U.S. officials to mobilize opposition, however. Since returning to power, Ortega has created a number of popular social welfare programs, providing Nicaraguans with free education, free health care, and various home-improvement programs. The programs have been quite effective, raising incomes and significantly reducing poverty.

The programs have also bolstered Ortega’s popularity, especially among the poor. Earlier this year, U.S. Ambassador to Nicaragua Laura Dogu complained that international investors face too much risk in the country. She said the country’s cheap labor, which she called its “main competitive advantage,” was losing its appeal. “As more activities are done by robots, the cost of labor becomes irrelevant,” she said. Dogu insisted that the Nicaraguan people must accept sweeping economic reforms if they want their country to remain relevant in the global economy. She called for more vocational training for young people and the introduction of genetically engineered crops into the country. “Nicaragua can choose to capture emerging markets and growth industries... or can chose to be left behind as other countries seize those opportunities,” she said.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The House Committee on Foreign Affairs convened a congressional hearing on December 1, 2011, entitled “Democracy Held Hostage in Nicaragua: Part 1” where former United States Ambassador to Nicaragua Robert Callahan testified, “First, that Daniel Ortega’s candidacy was illegal, illegitimate, and unconstitutional; second, that the period leading to the elections and the elections themselves were marred by serious fraud; third, that Daniel Ortega and his Sandinista party have systematically undermined the country’s fragile governmental institutions.”.

(2) According to the Organization of American States (OAS) report on the Nicaraguan 2011 Presidential elections, the OAS recommended that the Government of Nicaragua take a number of steps to improve its electoral systems, including accrediting poll watchers to ensure political parties and civil society are represented to observe elections, and redesigning the structure of the Nicaraguan electoral council to allow proper registration of the electorate

VENEZUELA

Chavez had been criticized as being a dictator because he was in for more than two terms

BACKGROUND

1930. As late as the 1930s, agriculture still provided 22 percent of GDP and occupied 60 percent of the labor force

1945 -1948 Democratic government Action redistribute land

1948 land reform

1948 land returned to original owners under dictator Marcos

1950 moved away from agriculture to fossil fuel with petroleum exports 50% of GP 95% of exports

1960 land reform

1998 Chavez elected

1999 new constitution

2003 Bolivarian missions, to address the social problems these missions set out to improve healthcare, education, housing, food and nutrition, and agriculture. Mission Barrio adentro sought to provide free and high quality health care by increasing the number of primary care physicians twelvefold while constructing several thousand additional health centers across the country. As a result, over 300,000 lives have been saved and infant mortality has been reduced by twenty percent. Mission Robinson was a literacy campaign which used the help of community and military volunteers to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic to the underprivileged adult population. Mission Vivenda to provide housing. mission agro to support small farms

2004 ALBA Cuba- Venezuela agreement, [signed on December 14, 2004, aimed at the exchange of medical and educational resources and petroleum between both nations. Venezuela began to deliver about 96,000 barrels of oil per day from its state-owned oil company, PDVSA, to Cuba; in exchange, Cuba sent 20,000 state-employed medical staff and thousands of teachers to Venezuela's poorest states the agreement also made it possible for Venezuelans to travel to Cuba for specialized medical care, free of charge. Subsequently, a number of other Latin American and Caribbean nations entered into this 'peoples' trade agreement' which aims to implement the principles of ALBA.

2005 mission Vuelta al campo to encourage willing urbanists to return to countryside

2006 Chavez re-elected

2006 Chavez addresses the UNGA. Recommended Chomsky's , Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance, as an excellent work to help us understand what happened in the world and Chavez proposed that the UN leave New York

2007 Rwdistributed 2.7 hectares to 180.000 landless peasant families

2008 Government expropriated El Frio , 63000 estates purported to be owned by Nelson Rockefeller because he could not produce land title

2009 Expelled Israeli ambassador, and recognized Palestine.

2009 U.S. troops in Colombia: a threat to peace. US military will be granted the use of five military bases in Colombia, in addition to the two it already uses, to fight drug trafficking and guerrillas on the Venezuelan border.

2009 Criticized wealthy north at COP 15 climate change conference.

2010 Participated in Cochabamba climate change Peoples Conference in Bolivia.

2010 Parliamentary subcommittee Cotler links Venezuela with Iran

2011? January Venezuela state of the nation address; CSPAN says lame duck

2012 Is a charter without social rights, a gift to the world?

http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8448:is-a-charter-without-social-rights-a-gift-to-the-world&catid=74:justice-news&Itemid=216

UN watch targets– socialist states and ones that criticized Israel.

2012 Obama not intervening

2013 Venezuela's social missions progressing.
2013 march 3 death of Chavez
Canada's shameful response to the death of Chavez.
2013 Snap election .
2014 June 20 destabilization schemes designed to demonstrate that governments considered hostile to US` interests are ruthless and undemocratic span many decades and continents. There is one highly effective type of manipulation that is frequently employed: peaceful protests are combined with violent ones as the media and opposition conflate the tactics used by security forces against the former and the justified use of force against the latter.
2014 hands off Venezuela rally in Victoria and critique of human rights watch report: <https://truthout.org/articles/latest-human-rights-watch-report-30-lies-about-venezuela/>
2015 letter re Colombia border conflict.
2015 the making of Leopoldo Lopez 2015 Leopoldo not Venezuela Saviour.
<https://www.thenation.com/article/leopoldo-lopez-is-not-venezuelas-savior/> July 29, 2015
2015 election venezuela's opposition has won a key two-thirds majority in legislative elections
2015 As of 2016 Venezuela produced 3.5% of the world's oil exports
2016 Venezuela bans GMOS by popular demand.

2017 Blaming socialism for us distorts food crisis
<https://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/blaming-socialism-us-media-distorts-venezuelas-food-crisis->
2017 trump doubles down on sanctions – regime change.
2017 trump sanctions will cause more harm.
2017 Venezuela – regime change invasion?
2018 human rights council condemns Venezuelan sanctions.
2018 Trump administration tries to torpedo the election regime
<http://cepr.net/publications/op-eds-columns/trump-administration-tries-to-torpedo-venezuelan-elections-as-it-intensifies-regime-change-efforts>
2018 Nicolas Maduro wins May 20 election; Lima group does not recognize election (Peru, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Santa Lucia, Canada, Colombia, Honduras, Costa Rica and Guatemala).
2018 visit of us southern command a threat of invasion?
2018 Venezuela's highly unusual presidential election Gregory Wilpert:
<https://newint.org/features/web-exclusive/2018/05/15/venezuela-presidential-election>
Venezuela will hold its 24th electoral event in 20 years this Sunday, 20 May. The path to this election was perhaps one of the most convoluted and difficult of Venezuela's now nearly 20-year Bolivarian revolution. First, there was a snap election in 2013; the opposition believed this was their best chance since 1998 to oust 'Chavismo' from power and so, when its candidate, Henrique Capriles Radonski, lost to Nicolas Maduro by a mere 1.5 per cent, they cried fraud and launched a wave of violent protests and riots that left at least nine dead. The following year the opposition launched another wave of violent protests (known as 'guarimbas') that lasted about three months and left 43 people dead. This opposition tactic, which the opposition tried again in 2017, was immensely effective on an international level because every time it was applied, and people were killed (usually by the protesters themselves), the international perception of Venezuela – as mediated by international news outlets – was significantly worsened. It was thus only a small step to routinely begin to refer to Venezuela as a dictatorship, despite its more than annual electoral contests. Following Chávez's death, Venezuela's economic situation began to deteriorate. The inflation rate rose from 21 per cent in 2012 to over 100 per cent in 2015 (hyper-inflation in 2018), basic consumer items and of food staples became difficult to purchase because of shortages, oil revenues dropped by two-thirds, from \$77 billion in 2012 to \$25 billion in 2016 – This gave the opposition additional reasons to launch ever-more attacks on the government. The reasons for the economic

crisis are manifold, a confluence of a fixed exchange rate, a concerted business sector effort to undermine the economy, declining oil prices, and – beginning in 2017 – US financial sanctions, all of which combined to create one of the worst economic crises in Venezuelan history.

2018 Undermining election

2018 march ` undermining Venezuelan election in May

Henri Falcón, was told by US officials that the Trump administration would consider financial sanctions against him if he entered the presidential race. The US has backed the main opposition coalition decision to boycott the election. Rubio is a hard-liner who does not seem interested in an electoral or

negotiated solution to Venezuela's political crisis. On February 9, he appeared to support a military coup when he tweeted: "The world would support the Armed Forces in Venezuela if they decide to protect the people & restore democracy by removing a dictator." Rubio/Trump strategy seems to be to try to worsen the economic situation and increase suffering to the point where either the military, or the insurrectionary elements of the opposition, rise up and overthrow the government. That appears to be the purpose of the financial sanctions that Trump ordered on August 24, 2017. This was not done previously because it would hurt US oil refining interests that import Venezuelan oil. But the administration has floated the idea of tapping the US strategic petroleum reserves to soften the blow. All this to overthrow a government that nobody can claim poses any threat to the United States. The main opposition coalition, the Democratic Unity Roundtable (MUD, by its acronym in Spanish), has as of now decided to boycott the elections.

2018 Maduro won election not recognized by Lima group

193 readings

[Palestine to Lead UN' s Largest Group of Developing Nations](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 24 July 2018 11:20

By [Thalif Deen](#) Reprint | Print | Send by email



Credit: Institute for Palestine Studies

UNITED NATIONS, Jul 24 2018 (IPS) - The Group of 77 (G77) — the largest single coalition of developing countries at the United Nations— is to be chaired by Palestine, come January.

“It’s a historical first, both for Palestine and the G77,” an Asian diplomat told IPS, pointing out that Palestine will be politically empowered to collectively represent 134 UN member states, including China.

Created in June 1964, the 54-year-old Group comprises over 80 per cent of the world’s population and approximately two-thirds of the United Nations membership

Traditionally, the G77 speaks with a single voice before the 193-member General Assembly, the highest policy making body at the UN, and also at all UN committee meetings and at international conferences.

Under a system of geographical rotation, it was Asia’s turn to name a chairman for 2019. The Asian Group has unanimously endorsed Palestine, which will be formally elected chair at the annual G77 ministerial meeting, scheduled to take place in mid-September.

Palestine will take over from the current chair, Egypt, which is representing the African Group of countries.

The chairmanship is a tremendous political boost for Palestine at a time when it is being increasingly blacklisted by the Trump administration which is kowtowing to the

Israelis.

Although it is not a full-fledged UN member state, Palestine is [recognized by 136 UN members](#), and since 2012, has the status of a “[non-member observer state](#)” –as is the Holy See (the Vatican).

Nadia Hijab, President, Al-Shabaka Board of Directors, told IPS: “At a time when Israel is moving on all fronts to wipe Palestine definitively off the map through relentless colonization – and to muscle in on UN committees despite its flagrant violations of international law — it is a source of solace to see Palestine slated for a very visible role at the UN.”

However, comforting as this may be, she pointed out, it will take a lot more than this to make “Palestine” a reality on the ground.

Sadly, the Ramallah-based Palestinian leadership has been unwilling or unable to end security coordination with Israel and to heal internal divisions. Instead, she said, it is cracking down on peaceful Palestinian protests.

“It is also reshaping the Palestine Liberation Organization, which has always been recognized as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, in a way that excludes alternative and opposing views,” Hijab declared.

Martin Khor, Advisor to the Malaysia-based Third World Network, told IPS: “I think it will be a historic and a significant development—first for the G77 countries to elect Palestine as its chair, and thereby affirm their confidence in its leadership.”

The election will also prove that the State of Palestine itself has decided it can mobilise its human and material resources to take on the complex task of coordinating the largest grouping in the UN system— even though it has to fight its own very challenging battles of survival and independence, said Khor, the former executive director of the Geneva-based South Centre.

“Both Palestine and the G77 deserve the support of people around the world to wish them success in voicing and defending the interests of developing countries in these very difficult times when international cooperation and multilateralism are coming under attack,” he said.

Last week, the Trump administration refused to grant visas to a six-member Palestinian delegation that was expected to participate at the UN’s High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development which took place July 16-18.

This was clearly in violation of the 1947 US-UN Headquarters Agreement which calls on the US, among other obligations, to facilitate delegates participating at UN meetings.

Asked about the visa refusal, UN deputy spokesperson Farhan Haq told reporters last week: “Well, certainly, we’re aware of this latest incident, but as far as I’m aware, there is a Host Country Committee that deals with disputes involving access to the United Nations and any problems dealing with the host country on that.”

“As of now, the Host Country Committee has not been approached or formally informed of this, so they haven’t acted on this. But it’s normally their role to deal with this situation. Of course, we would hope that all of those who are here to attend UN meetings would have the ability to do so,” he added.

Samir Sanbar, a former UN Assistant Secretary-General who headed the Department of Public Information (DPI), told IPS chairing the G-77 will be an unprecedented role for Palestine. He said leading that large, varied yet collaborative group will require tactful handling by all sides at a time when the rightful Palestinian cause needs every support as the region—and a fragmented conflicted, almost leaderless world—is facing serious

challenges.

“It is hoped that Ambassador Riyadh Mansour, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine and an experienced diplomat with proven U.N. record, will be given the opportunity and required leeway to operate in an inclusive, patient and fruitful manner to enhance the role of the G 77 while advancing the status of the Palestine, said Sanbar, who served under five different UN secretaries-general.

At the UN, the Trump administration has been increasingly undermining the Palestinian cause – a cause long supported by an overwhelming majority of member states in the world body.

In May, the US relocated its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem even though the UN has deemed it “occupied” declaring that the status of East Jerusalem should be subject to negotiations and that East Jerusalem will be the future capital of the State of Palestine.

Last month, the Trump administration also reduced its funding—from an estimated \$360 million in 2017 to \$60 million this year — to the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), created in 1949 to provide assistance to over 5.5 million refugees resulting from the creation of Israel in 1948.

Last year when Secretary-General Antonio Guterres proposed the appointment of former Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Salam Fayyad as UN’s Special Representative in Libya, the proposal was shot down by US Ambassador Nikki Haley, purely because he was a Palestinian.

And speaking before the US House Appropriations State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee, Haley went even further down the road when she indicated she would block any appointment of a Palestinian official to a senior role at the UN because Washington “does not recognize Palestine” as an independent state.

Suddenly, the Palestinians, for the first time, seem blacklisted– and declared political outcasts– in a world body where some of them held key posts in a bygone era.

Guterres, who apparently relented to US pressure by stepping back on Fayyad’s appointment plucked up courage to tell reporters: “I think it was a serious mistake. I think that Mr. Fayyad was the right person in the right place at the right time, and I think that those who will lose will be the Libyan people and the Libyan peace process.”

And, he rightly added: “I believe that it is essential for everybody to understand that people serving the UN are serving in their personal capacities. They don’t represent a country or a government – they are citizens of the world representing the UN Charter and abiding by the UN Charter,” he said, pointedly directing his answer at Haley

A former chair of the G77 chapter in Vienna told IPS although the Palestinian issue is fundamentally a political one, centred as well on the legitimacy and legality of Israeli occupation, it no longer remains in the political-legal realms exclusively.

He said there are a large number of issues of economic, social and cultural and environmental nature, including health, education, food, water, etc, which arises both directly from conditions of occupation, as well as laterally from other conditions such as denial of humanitarian access, and, very recently, the declaration of “Israel as a Jewish state”.

It is logical that advancing a struggle on these issues call for a broad forum of solidarity, and the G 77 fits the bill, he noted.

In an oped piece marking the 50th anniversary of the G77, Mourad Ahmia, the G77 Executive Secretary said: “When it was established on Jun. 15, 1964, the signing nations of the well-known “Joint Declaration of Seventy-Seven Countries” formed the

largest intergovernmental organisation of developing countries in the United Nations to articulate and promote their collective interests and common development agenda.

Since the First Ministerial meeting of the G-77 held in Algeria in October 1967, and the adoption of the “Charter of Algiers”, the Group of 77 laid down the institutional mechanisms and structures that have contributed to shaping the international development agenda and changing the landscape of the global South for the past five decades, he pointed out.

“Over the years, the Group has gained an increasing role in the determination and conduct of international relations through global negotiations on major North-South and development issues.”

The Group has a presence worldwide at U.N. centres in New York, Geneva, Nairobi, Paris, Rome, Vienna, and Washington D.C., and is actively involved in ongoing negotiations on a wide range of global issues including climate change, poverty eradication, migration, trade, and the law of the sea.

“Today, the G-77 remains the only viable and operational mechanism in multilateral economic diplomacy within the U.N system. The growing membership is proof of its enduring strength,” he declared.

168 readings

[Oilsands could eventually acidify an area the size of Germany, study says](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 26 July 2018 12:05

By BOB WEBERThe Canadian Press

Wed., July 25, 2018

The largest and most precise study yet done on acid emissions from Alberta’s oilsands suggests they could eventually damage an area almost the size of Germany.

The study finds that in 2013 more than 330,000 square kilometres in northern Alberta and Saskatchewan absorbed acid deposits high enough to eventually damage life in rivers and lakes.



A tailings pond reflects the Syncrude oilsands mine facility near Fort McMurray, Alta. A new study finds that in 2013, more than 330,000 square kilometres received acid deposits high enough to eventually damage life in rivers and lakes.

lakes. (JEFF MCINTOSH / THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE PHOTO)

“This work is a warning,” said Paul Makar, an Environment Canada scientist and lead author on the paper published in the *Journal of Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics*.

“If emissions continue at 2013 levels, there will be ecosystem damage over a very large area.”

Some industry players have invested heavily in recent years to reduce sulphur and nitrogen emissions, which lead to the acidification of water and soil. But it’s not clear whether overall oilsands emissions have fallen.

Read more:

[Report shows oilsands emissions over cap by 2030 with current technology](#)

[How the oilsands changed Alberta and Canada forever](#)

[Study finds oilsands have ‘consistent large effects’ on forest animals](#)

The research involved scientists at Environment Canada as well as their counterparts in Alberta and Saskatchewan and from Trent University in Peterborough, Ont.

Their work began with a study of 90,000 lakes to determine how different water bodies responded to acids and at what point they would no longer be able to buffer them. That data was used to create a map of carrying capacities across a large swath of the northern prairie provinces.

Previous studies used grids of 45 square kilometres. This one resolves to 2.5 square kilometres.

The team used the latest datasets and techniques — including satellite imagery — to model how 2013 emissions were likely to affect forests, rivers and lakes. Predictions were checked against measurements in the field and the model was then refined.

“If those emissions levels continue, there will be ecosystem damage for aquatic ecosystems over an area that’s about the size of Germany,” Makar said.

The study says tree growth would be stunted. Water plants would suffer from increased toxins. Fish and the bugs they prey on would get sick and reproduce less easily.

Although previous studies have suggested dust from plant operations would provide a buffer, Makar said that effect falls off well before the acidification does.

The study also shows some ecosystems are much more sensitive than others. A nearby lake could remain relatively healthy if it could buffer lots of acid, but the research suggests sensitive lakes could be affected as far east as Manitoba.

“There’s quite a far-reaching effect hundreds of kilometres downwind for ecosystems that are sensitive,” Makar said.

The paper’s conclusions rest on 2013 measurements. Both Syncrude and Suncor say they’ve substantially reduced their sulphur dioxide emissions since then.

Makar said scientists are working to confirm the numbers against other measurements from planes and satellites.

The paper can’t estimate the rate of acidification, he said.

“This ecosystem is being pushed past its buffering capacity and it will eventually go. I don’t have the when.”

The study builds on years of research on acid-causing emissions from the oilsands.

In 2009, Saskatchewan found rainfall in the La Loche area just across from Fort McMurray showed an average pH level of 4.93 — about three times as acidic as unpolluted rainfall and about the same acidity as a cup of black coffee.

A 2008 review found that up to 12 per cent of Alberta’s forest soils had probably reached the limit of how much acid they could hold, probably because of the oilsands. In 2006, the same researchers concluded that about two per cent of forest soils in Saskatchewan downwind from Alberta were over their limit.

[Kinder Morgan expansion, contravenes the precautionary principle, risking irreversible harm, misconstrues the equitable remedy of the injunction and discounts indigenous rights.](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 30 July 2018 21:34

By JoanRussow Global Compliance Research Project

Joan Russow founded the Global Compliance Research Project that calls upon countries to comply with their international obligations and commitments. She has attended many international climate change, and environmental conferences. She walked 76 km from Victoria to Burnaby against Kinder Morgan. Injunctions should be against those who cause irreversible harm not those who strive to prevent irreversible harm. Since Clayoquot Sound, she has been concerned about the misconstruing of injunctions and she is still saying, as she did then, “**who are the real criminals?**”



[/www.orcanetwork.org/nathist/salishorcas1.html](http://www.orcanetwork.org/nathist/salishorcas1.html)

Is it a crime to strive to prevent crime or is it a crime to cause and condone it?

A. NOT HEEDING AN INJUNCTION AS BEING AN EQUITABLE

REMEDY THAT MOVES WITH TIME AND CIRCUMSTANCES AND TREATIES MUST BE COMPLIED WITH IS UNIVERSALLY RECOGNIZED (PACTA SUNT SERVANDA)

B. DISREGARDING “BEING HARMFUL” TO ECOSYSTEMS AS BEING A CRIME TO STATE AND SOCIETY –

C. OVERLOOKING THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE AND CONSERVATION COMMITMENTS

D DISCOUNTING A GLOBAL VISION FROM COP21 CONFERENCE IN PARIS

E. DISRESPECTING RIGHTS OF FUTURE GENERATION

F. DISPENSING WITH UN DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (UNDRIP)

G. JEOPARDIZING FUTURE CONSERVATION PROJECTS IN THE SALISH SEA,

H. FAILING TO APPLY THE DOCTRINE OF LEGITIMATE EXPECTATION

I. IGNORING A MEANS TO CANCEL KINDER MORGAN WITHOUT A REPRISAL FROM NAFTA UNDER CHAPTER 11

J. CLOSING THE EYES TO A POTENTIAL BOONDOGGLE OF AN INVESTMENT

K. CONCLUSION AND POEM BY NNIMMO BASSEY

******A. NOT HEEDING AN INJUNCTION AS BEING AN EQUITABLE REMEDY THAT MOVES WITH TIME AND CIRCUMSTANCES, AND TREATIES MUST BE COMPLIED WITH IS UNIVERSALLY RECOGNIZED (PACTA SUNT SERVANDA).**

1

1. An injunction is an equitable remedy

An injunction is an equitable remedy. The exercise of the equitable jurisdiction is not to be restricted by the straitjacket of rigid rules but is to be based on broad principles of justice and convenience, equity regarding the substance and not merely the facade or the shadow. It

moves with time and circumstances. (1991 Justice J.A. Norris)

The law of equity is as important in Canadian law as statute law and common law. It operates to provide equitable relief with the maxim “where there is a recognizable right, but no remedy under the common law”.

The law of equity has developed over centuries to provide equitable doctrines and equitable maxims. May 1, 2008

2. treaties must be complied with is universally recognized (pacta sunt servanda).

Under the Vienna Convention on the Law of treaties

Recalling the determination of the peoples of the United Nations to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties can be maintained (Preamble)

Noting that the principles of free consent and of good faith and the pacta sunt servanda (treaties shall be complied with rule are universally recognized), (Preamble)

Article 2 reads

'ratification', 'acceptance', 'approval' and 'accession' mean in each case the international act so named whereby a State establishes on the international plane its consent to be bound by a treaty (Vienna convention on the law of treaties).

B. DISREGARDING HARMFUL OR “WRONGFUL” TO ECOSYSTEMS AS BEING A CRIME TO STATE AND SOCIETY –

1. crime has been defined as an “act harmful not only to some individual but also to a community, society or the state a crime is against the law (a public wrong).”

- a crime involves a public wrong
- <https://www.blackburnandgreen.com/wrongful-act-may-crime-tort>
- In international law the term “a wrongful act in violation of international law” (Nicargua vs the US 1986)

2. Time and circumstances have changed since 1991 after UN

Conference on Environment and the Development (UNCED)

After UNCED a crime could be extended ``to a wrongful act against the global community` under international law``]

HARM CAN BE CAUSED BY OMISSION OR COMMISSION TO ACT

At UNCED, the word ``harmful`` became extended to include “harm to environment” and became conflated with “damage” and “deterioration” to environment caused by human activity..

Humanity stands at a defining moment in history. We are confronted with a perpetuation of disparities between and within nations, a worsening of poverty, hunger, ill health and illiteracy, and the continuing deterioration of the ecosystems on which we depend for our well-being. ... (1.1 Preamble, Agenda 21, UNCED)

At UNCED. Canada was involved with drafting the Un Framework convention on Climate Change and the convention on Biological diversity. Canada also signed the the convention on Biological Diversity and in December, 1993 Canada ratified both conventions.

Could a violation of a legally binding convention be deemed to be a wrongful act?

******C. OVERLOOKING THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE AND CONSERVATION COMMITMENTS UNDER LEGALLY BINDING INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS**

Time and circumstances have changed since 1991

Since 1992, the precautionary principle has become a principle of international law; with the precautionary principle the expansion of “harm or damage has the qualifiers of `irreversible” threat

In the 1992, Rio Declaration, the precautionary principle 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, UNCED 1992).

The principle is also in the 1992 legally binding Convention on Biological Diversity, where the precautionary principle reads:

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 1992, legally binding UN Framework Convention on Climate Change:

The parties should take precautionary measures to anticipate, prevent or minimize the causes of climate change and its adverse effects, and where there are threats of irreversible damage, the lack of scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing such measures.

In the 1995 Agreement "Relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish stocks and Highly Migratory fish stocks, linked to the legally binding UN Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS) ... is it also the obligation to invoke the precautionary principle.

Also time and circumstances have changed with the mandate to conserve biodiversity, and conserve straddling stocks

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.

Article 6. General Measures for Conservation and Sustainable Use

Each Contracting Party shall, in accordance with its particular conditions

and capabilities:

(a) Develop national strategies, plans or programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity or adapt for this purpose existing strategies, plans or programmes which shall reflect, inter alia, the measures set out in this Convention relevant to the Contracting Party concerned; and

(b) Integrate, as far as possible and as appropriate, the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity into relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies.

In 1995 Agreement "Relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish stocks and Highly Migratory fish stock is also the obligation to invoke the precautionary principle to protect salmon and whales

Article 2 objective

The objective of this agreement is to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks through effective implementation of the relevant provisions of the convention

In addition, the Kinder Morgan expansion could cause Canada to violate the Law of the Seas;

"The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982 (UNCLOS) is popularly considered "a constitution for the oceans", establishing a global framework for the exploitation and conservation of marine resources. It is one of the most important Treaties in setting out the importance and special nature of whales and dolphins" (<http://uk.whales.org/issues/in-depth/united-nations-convention-on-law-of-sea-1982> UNCLOS)

Kinder Morgan expansion could be a wrongful act causing Canada to be in violation of the legally binding UNFCCC, CBD and UNCLOS;

UNCLOS is popularly considered "a constitution for the oceans", establishing a global framework for the exploitation and conservation of marine resources. It is one of the most important treaties in setting out the importance and special nature of whales and dolphins" (<http://uk.whales.org/issues/in-depth/united-nations-convention-on-law-of-sea-1982>)

Canada could be taken, by other signatories of UNCCC, CBD, UNCLOS WHC to the international Court of Justice for wrongfully violating the above legally binding conventions.

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, including to salmon and whales, to justify invoking the precautionary principle and to cancel the Kinder Morgan expansion. Sufficient evidence exists that the Kinder Morgan expansion would affect on conservation diversity on land and in the sea.to justify cancelling the Kinder Morgan expansion.

******D .DISCOUNTING A GLOBAL VISION FROM COP21 IN PARIS**

Time and circumstances have changed since 1991 with the call by Ban KI Moon

At COP 21, Ban Ki Moon urged states to negotiate with a global vision not with national vested interests (COP, 21 press conference)

Canada is the highest per capita contributor to greenhouse gas emissions and Canada`s carbon budget has been ignored by Canada. In 2018, Canada is in danger of being in non-compliance with Article 2, the purpose of the legally binding United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Article 2)

...to achieve, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the convention, stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.

At cop21, the conference called for immediate action by governments,

at Cop21, Canada`s “contribution” was to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30% below 2005 levels by 2030; not quite an immediate call to action! This is a far cry from the commitment made in 1988 at the Toronto changing Atmosphere conference to “Reduce CO2 emissions by approximately 20% of 1988 levels by the year 2005 as an initial global goal.” Or from commitment in UNFCCC the return by the end of the present decade 2000 to earlier levels of anthropogenic emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases (ARTICLE 4).

At COP21, the “contributions”, not commitments, by states, including Canada could result in a temperature rise of 3 or more degrees Celsius.

An immediate call to action would be for each state make a commitment to reduce Greenhouse gas emissions so as to abide with Article 2 of UNFCCC, .

Canada, at a minimum, must calculate its carbon budget and make a firm commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 25% below 1990 levels by 2020 and to achieve decarbonisation and 100 % below 1990 levels by 2050

A real global vision, however, would be time lines and targets in line with existing and emerging science such as 20% below 1990 by 2018, 30% below 1990 levels by 2019, 40% below 1990 levels by 2020, 60 % below 1990 levels by 2025, 75% below 1990 below 1990 levels by 2035 and 100% below 1990 emissions by 2040, and reaching decarbonization with 100% socially equitable ecologically sound renewable energy,

The Expansion of Kinder Morgan makes a mockery of Canada`s so-called concern about climate change.

******E. DISRESPECTING RIGHTS OF FUTURE GENERATIONS**

Time and circumstances have also changed with the extension of the 1972 principle of guaranteeing rights of future generations to cultural and natural heritage

Under the article 4 of 1972 legally binding UN Convention on the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage or World Heritage Convention (WHC) signatories have “ the duty to ensure the identification, protection, conservation, preservation and transmission to future generations of cultural and natural heritage.”

Under Article 12, of the Convention on biological Diversity is an obligation “to conserve and sustainably use biological diversity for the benefit of present and future generations,

In the framework Convention on Climate change, there is expressed “determination to protect the climate system for present and future generations,”

******6. DISPENSING WITH UN DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (UNDRIP)**

Time and circumstances has also changed with the almost global adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, particularly with the requirement to obtain free prior and informed consent.

Under UNDRIP, Article 19 affirms:

States shall 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.’’

IN the truth and reconciliation recommendations is the call to action 92 which affirms:

We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to commit to obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects

In July 2015, the UN Human Rights Committee urged Canada “... to seek their free, prior and informed consent whenever legislation and actions impact on their lands and rights”

.Following his visit to Canada, former Special Rapporteur James Anaya concluded: "as a general rule resource extraction should not occur on lands subject to aboriginal claims without adequate consultations with and the free, prior and informed consent of the indigenous peoples concerned. “Anaya added: "The general rule identified here derives from the character of free, prior and informed consent as a safeguard for the internationally recognized rights of indigenous peoples that are typically affected by extractive activities that occur within their territories."

The former Harper government refused to adopt the UNDRIP; Harper also proclaimed, “consent` does not really mean consent”

Article 31, however, in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties outlines General rules of interpretation:

1. A treaty shall be interpreted in good faith in accordance with the ordinary

meaning to be given to the terms of the treaty in their context and in the light of its object and purpose.

In ordinary meaning “consent” means consent, not just consultation.

Canada’s interpretation of free prior informed consent is out of sync with the international interpretation:

http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10807:kind-er-morgan-canadas-interpretation-of-free-prior-informed-is-out-of-sync-with-the-international-interpretation&catid=77:bc-justice-news&Itemid=219

While under Trudeau, the UNDRIP was finally passed into law in Parliament, yet the commitment to obtaining free prior informed consent has been dispensed with.

******F. JEOPARDIZING FUTURE CONSERVATION PROJECTS IN THE SALISH SEA,**

Time and circumstances have changed since 1991 with the 2005 revision of the guidelines for designating areas as Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs)

In 2005, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) adopted revised Guidelines for the Identification and Designation of Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs) ([resolution A.982\(24\)](#)). These new criteria apply to the Salish Sea.

In the Federal response to the CRD, about the PSSA for the Salish Sea was the following statement;

“**** a PSSA designation for the Salish Sea is not the appropriate approach as it would imply that A PSSA designation for the Salish Sea would be decided by IMO’S 170 Member States to waters that fall under the jurisdiction of Canada and the US”

Given that in the Salish Sea, US' military operations are encroaching further

Kinder Morgan, expanding multifold,, and LNG Projects proliferating, , senior levels of government have been remiss in not fulfilling their responsibilities, under their jurisdictions, towards the sensitivity of the Salish Sea.

The Salish sea appears to fulfill many of the the new IMO criteria for the designation of PSSAs. Including the following:

1.3. areas important for the conservation of biological diversity as well as other areas with high ecological, cultural, historical/archaeological, socio-economic or scientific significance.

4.1 An area that could be at risk from international shipping activities. Type and quantity of substances on board, whether cargo, ... that would be harmful if released into the sea

4.4 An area that is an outstanding and illustrative example of specific biodiversity, , ecological or community or habitat types or other natural characteristics.

4.4.5 An area that may have an exceptional variety of species or genetic diversity or includes highly varied ecosystems, habitats, and communities.

4.4.7 An area that may be a critical spawning or breeding ground or nursery area for marine species which may spend the rest of their life-cycle elsewhere, or is recognized as migratory routes for fish, birds, mammals, or invertebrates.

4.4.13 An area that is of particular importance for the support of traditional subsistence or food production activities or for the protection of the cultural resources of the local human populations

6.2 Considerations should also be given to the potential for the area to be listed on the World Heritage List, declared a Biosphere Reserve, or included on a list of areas of international, regional, or national importance

There have also been proposals, in the Salish Sea, for a Marine Protected Area, and for a Salish Sea Biosphere Reserves which could be in jeopardy

In the past few years many proposals have been made for conservation, comprising terrestrial, marine and coastal ecosystems in the Salish sea; for promoting and demonstrating a balanced relationship between humans and the biosphere, while integrating especially the role of traditional knowledge in ecosystem management and fostering economic and human development

which is socio-culturally and ecologically sustainable.

Kinder Morgan expansion would jeopardize the possibility of both the Salish sea being designated as a PSSA, a **Biosphere Reserve** and coastal and marine conservation of the Salish sea are areas of terrestrial and coastal/marine ecosystems;

sound ecological practices could reinforce scientific research, monitoring, training and education

With the approval of Kinder Morgan expansion, the government could violate legally binding international instruments; such as the UN Convention Concerning the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage

Under this Convention) Canada has affirmed the following:

•.... in view of the magnitude and gravity of the new dangers threatening them, it is incumbent on the international community as a whole to participate in the protection of the cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value (preamble, convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage, 1972)

Under article 4 of the. Convention, Canada recognized

the duty of ensuring the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage situated on its territory, belongs primarily to that state. it will do all it can to this end, to the utmost of its own resources and, where appropriate, with any international assistance and co-operation, in particular, financial, artistic, scientific and technical.

******G. FAILING TO APPLY THE DOCTRINE OF LEGITIMATE EXPECTATION**

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 (BC Ombudsman office, personal communication).

In 1982, Canada received from the United Nations a Questionnaire on

Parliaments and the Treaty-making Power".

The External Affairs Department Communique to the UN explained the division of powers and constitutional conventions in Canada about International obligations, and indicated:

Many international agreements require legislation to make them effective in Canadian domestic law. The legislation may be either federal or provincial or a combination of both in fields of shared jurisdiction. Canada will not normally become a party to an international agreement which requires implementing legislation until the necessary legislation has been enacted

Citizens have a legitimate expectation that either the convention will be put to parliament, legislation passed to enable compliance with the convention or that ratification of these treaties means the necessary legislation has been in place

Thus, in the case of the UN Framework convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity which have both been ratified are the law of the land.

Citizens have a legitimate expectation that Canada will fairly abide by the legally binding UNFCCC, CBD and UNCLOS, and by the commitments under UNDRIP and under IMO and prevent irreversible harm and not target with injunctions those who strive to prevent irreversible harm

,KINDER MORGAN PROTESTORS HAVE A LEGITIMATE EXPECTATION THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD DISCHARGE ITS INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS AND ACT ON ITS COMMITMENTS TO PREVENT HARM TO CITIZENS, THE STATE AND SOCIETY

The protesters are also calling for the invoking of the precautionary principle, abiding by the legally binding objectives in the UN Framework Convention on Climate change, Convention on Biological Diversity, and Agreement on Straddling salmon and whales under the UN Convention of the Law of the Seas. The designating of the Salish Sea as a PSSA, the requirement for free prior informed consent by indigenous peoples,

And are acting with a global vision;

And calling for the fulfilling of address article 2 of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and at a minimum to immediately to end all subsidies for fossil fuel, to calculate the carbon budget for Canada, to divest in

fossil fuels and to reinvest in renewable energy, to conserve sinks - such as old growth forests and bogs (not just as a means to offset emissions), to strengthen conservation of biodiversity, to avoid all false solutions such as nuclear, geo-engineering and biofuels which would all violate principles within the UNFCCC, promote nature-based solutions along with solar energy, wind energy, wave and geothermal and to compensate for historical emissions, and to institute a fair and just transition for workers affected negatively by the new vision. And perhaps call for the closing of the tar sands which has made Canada a b international pariah

**THEN WE MAY ASK AGAIN, WHO ARE THE REAL CRIMINALS?
THOSE WHO CAUSE OR CONDONE IRREVERSIBLE HARM OR
THOSE THAT STRIVE TO PREVENT IRREVERSIBLE HARM**

******H. IGNORING A MEANS TO CANCEL KINDER MORGAN
WITHOUT A REPRISAL FROM NAFTA UNDER CHAPTER 11**

The Federal government justifies spending five billion on acquiring Kinder Morgan by stating that if Canada does not permit the expansion and buy out Kinder Morgan, Kinder Morgan will sue Canada under Chapter 11 of Nafta for far more than 5 billion

However, on close examination of chapter 11, there is a possibility that Nafta could not apply if the tar sands were dismantled;

Article 1114: environmental measures could apply and if Canada closed the tar sands for domestic health, safety or environmental measures all pipe lines emanating from the tar sands would no longer be necessary; Kinder Morgan would not be able to sue Canada

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.

2. 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.

****** I. CLOSING THE EYES TO A POTENTIAL BOONDOGGLE OF AN INVESTMENT**

(i). 'Carbon bubble' could spark global financial crisis, study warns Advances in clean energy expected to cause a sudden drop in demand for fossil fuels, leaving companies with trillions in stranded assets

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/jun/04/carbon-bubble-could-spark-global-financial-crisis-study-warns>

ii. Estimated cleanup costs for Alberta's mines jumps to \$23.2-billion

KELLY CRYDERMAN

CALGARY

PUBLISHED MAY 5, 2017

UPDATED MAY 5, 2017

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/industry-news/energy-and-resources/estimated-cleanup-costs-for-albertas-mines-jumps-to-232-billion/article34912511/>

iii Potential impossibility of being able to dispose of pet coke by product of tar sands

Oil refining is a lifeline in America's industrial heartland. In northwest Indiana, a refinery and steel mills dominate the Lake Michigan shoreline, and smokestacks

still symbolize opportunity. Workers cheered when the BP Whiting refinery invested \$4.2 billion to process crude extracted from Canada's tar sands. Dozens of U.S. refineries built units called cookers to process heavy crude into petroleum but huge amounts of petcoke remained. The American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers told the AP that cookers "allow the United States to export petroleum coke to more than 30 countries to

meet growing market demand." But now these countries do not want to be a dumping ground for pet coke

Iv The International Maritime Organization (IMO) new regulation for tankers carrying fuel

They are also concerned about the recent new evidence that would have economic impact on the citizens of Canada, including on the Canadian pension plans the investment in Trudeau, Inc would have. They may be aware that that the International maritime organization has changed the rules for tanker traffic,

The tighter pollution rules by the International Maritime Organization, dubbed IMO 2020, are set to take effect January. 1, 2020, resulting in the sulphur content limit of "bunker" fuel on ships dropping from 3.5 per cent to just 0.5 per cent. The sulfur content of the tar sand is high

The switch is expected to wallop prices for heavy oil containing high levels of sulphur — exactly the kind of the raw bitumen that makes up about half of Canada's 4.4 million barrels per day of crude oil production.

http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10935:oilsands-crude-headed-for-price-shock-in-2020-due-to-new-fuel-standards&catid=87:c-earth-news&Itemid=212

v. Oilsands could eventually acidify an area the size of Germany, study says

<https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2018/07/25/oilsands-could-eventually->

[acidify-an-area-the-size-of-germany-study-says.html](#)




The largest and most precise study yet done on acid emissions from Alberta's oilsands suggests they could eventually damage an area almost the size of Germany.

The study finds that in 2013 more than 330,000 square kilometres in northern Alberta and Saskatchewan absorbed acid deposits high enough to eventually damage life in rivers and lakes.

J. CONCLUSION

Given that in 1991 an injunction was recognized, by a judge to be an equitable remedy that moves with time and circumstances; that time and circumstances have changed since 1991, that Canada has ratified conventions for which they claim to have enacted the necessary legislation to ensure compliance; that the conventions have become the law in Canada. Under this statutory law is the precautionary principle which undertakes to prevent irreversible harm to the environment;.. It is the protesters who are calling for harm not to be done to the state, society and community. even the global community by opposing the Kinder Morgan expansion that is defying laws related to invoking the precautionary principle, reducing greenhouse gas , conserving biodiversity, protecting preservation of cultural and natural heritage, protecting salmon and whales and guaranteeing the rights of future generations and the right of indigenous peoples?. Is it not Kinder Morgan that is causing harm to the state and society and the federal government that is enabling Kinder Morgan to harm state and society, against the law? Who then are the real criminals?. Against whom should there be an injunction; those who cause or condone harm or those who strive to prevent harm to society, state and global community within the obligations under the law

poem by nnimmo assey

[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 -

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20 April 2010

Read at the opening ceremony of the World Peoples Climate Conference Summit

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Last Updated on Thursday, 09 August 2018 02:46

889 readings

[Indigenous Peoples Least Responsible for the Climate Crisis](#)   

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 09 August 2018 02:50

By Jamison Ervin *is Manager, UNDP's Global Programme on Nature for Development*

This article is part of a series of stories and op-eds initiated by IPS on the occasion of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, on August 9.



Photo - UNDP/ PNG-Bougainville People celebration

UNITED NATIONS, Aug 9 2018 (IPS) - Indigenous peoples, who comprise less than five percent of the world's population, have the world's smallest carbon footprint, and are the least responsible for our climate crisis. Yet because their livelihoods and wellbeing are intimately bound with intact ecosystems, indigenous peoples [disproportionately face the brunt of climate change](#), which is fast becoming a leading driver of human displacement.

In Papua New Guinea, for example, residents of the Carteret Islands – one of the most densely populated islands in the country – have felt the effects of climate change intensify over recent years. With a high point on their islands of just 1.2 meters above sea level, every community member is now at risk from sea level rise and storm surges.

Moreover, the community depends almost entirely on fishing for their food and livelihoods, but the health of sea grass beds and coral reefs [has](#) gradually deteriorated from warming waters and coral bleaching.

The residents of these islands faced a stark choice – to be passive victims of an uncertain government resettlement program, or to take matters into their own hands. They chose the latter. In 2005, elders formed a community-led non-profit, called [Tulele Peisa](#), to chart their own climate course. In the Halia language, the name means “Sailing the Waves on our Own,” an apt metaphor for how the community is navigating rising sea levels.

In 2014, the initiative won the prestigious, UNDP-led [Equator Prize](#), in recognition for their ingenuity, foresight and proactive approach in facing the challenges of climate change, while keeping their cultural traditions intact.

Earlier this month, Jeffrey Sachs published an article entitled “We Are All Climate Refugees Now,” in which he attributed the main cause of climate inaction to the willful ignorance of political institutions and corporations toward the grave dangers of climate change, imperiling future life on Earth. 2018 will likely be recorded as among [the hottest year humanity has ever](#)

[recorded](#).

Yet a slew of recent articles highlight that [we are not on track to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement](#). We have not shown the collective leadership required to tackle this existential crisis.

Carteret Islanders have been [broadly recognized as the world's first climate refugees](#), but they are not alone. [Arctic indigenous communities](#) are already facing the same plight, as are their regional neighbors from the [island nation of Kiribati](#).

According to the World Bank, their plight will likely be replicated around the world, with as many as [140 million people worldwide being](#) displaced by climate change within the next 30 years or so.

But the Carteret Island leaders are more than just climate refugees. They have done something precious few political leaders have done to date – they recognized the warning signs of climate change as real and inevitable, they took stock of their options, and they charted a proactive, realistic course for their own future that promised the most good for the most people. Therefore, they could also be called the world's first true climate leaders.

Let's hope that our world's politicians and CEOs have the wisdom, foresight and fortitude of the elders of Carteret Islanders. Because like it or not, we will all be sailing the climate waves on our own, with or without a rudder and a plan.

Indigenous Peoples Least Responsible for the Climate Crisis

By [Jamison Ervin](#) Reprint |  Print | Send by email

Jamison Ervin is Manager, UNDP's Global Programme on Nature for Development

This article is part of a series of stories and op-eds initia

Last Updated on Thursday, 09 August 2018 02:54

892 readings

[Arguments in Site C dam court case represent 'cynical denial' of Indigenous rights: B.C. Indian Chiefs](#)

[Justice News](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 09 August 2018 09:38

BC Hydro lawyers argue Treaty 8 never guaranteed any “practical, traditional, cultural, or spiritual connection to any land” for First Nations

By Sarah Cox Aug 7, 2018

<https://thenarwhal.ca/arguments-in-site-c-dam-court-case-represent-cynical-denial-of-indigenous-rights-b-c-indian-chiefs/>



Grand Chief Stewart Phillip with his wife Joan Phillip at the 2017 Paddle for the Peace.

The Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs has taken the unusual step of writing an open letter to Premier John Horgan denouncing legal arguments made last week by BC Hydro as a form of “neo-colonization” and demanding a formal apology from the provincial government.

BC Hydro’s lawyers made the arguments during ongoing B.C. Supreme Court hearings for an injunction application by West Moberly First Nations to halt work on the Site C dam on B.C.’s Peace River, pending a full civil trial to determine if the \$10.7 billion project violates treaty rights.

“We call on you to publicly denounce these statements that diminish Indigenous rights in an open letter to the B.C. Supreme Court, and to apologize formally for the disrespect shown to the Treaty 8 First Nations,” said the letter, signed by Grand Chief

Stewart Phillip, president of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs (UBCIC), as well as vice-president Chief Robert Chamberlin and secretary treasurer Judy Wilson.

The UBCIC executive told Horgan and Eby there can be no lasting reconciliation while the rights of Indigenous peoples “are being trampled upon, diminished, and frozen in the past.”

“There can be no trust in your government while the words you say to the public ring false in the courtrooms where Crown corporation lawyers perpetuate neo-colonization.”

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip with his wife Joan Phillip at the 2017 Paddle for the Peace.

As an example of BC Hydro legal arguments the UBCIC said were “consistently diminishing the rights of First Nations,” the letter pointed to BC Hydro’s claim in court that Treaty 8 was never intended to protect First Nations “practical, traditional, cultural, or spiritual connection to any land.”

“This is an arbitrary, one-sided interpretation of the Treaty that runs contrary to the principles of Treaty interpretation already recognized by the courts, and contrary to the spirit of reconciliation,” wrote the executive.

Amnesty International spokesperson Craig Benjamin called the letter “a bit of a bombshell” and said as far as he knows it is unprecedented.

“I have never seen anything like it, to be honest,” he told The Narwhal.

“What really strikes me is they’re not just denouncing the negative and inappropriate arguments used by [BC] Hydro. They’re actually saying, ‘Look Premier Horgan and Attorney General Eby, you have a responsibility now. You have to correct the record. You have to apologize for the insult to Indigenous culture and history and you have to set the record right on how the province understands the rights of Indigenous Peoples.’ ”

Amnesty International Canada has called the rights of Indigenous peoples “our biggest challenge and our most serious responsibility

when it comes to improving Canada' s human rights record.”

The letter highlighted what the UBCIC called an “unacceptable and disconcerting gap” between the NDP government' s political commitments to reconciliation and Indigenous rights, and the stance taken by BC Hydro in the courtroom.

Horgan' s government has committed to fully implement the minimum human rights standards affirmed in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as the calls to action of Canada' s Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The UBCIC executive also took aim at BC Hydro' s assertion that the “meaningful right” protected by Treaty 8 “can be reduced to the simple act of hunting, fishing or trapping devoid of the traditional knowledge, protocols and oral histories that make these acts so meaningful and essential to First Nations.”

“This cynical denial of Indigenous peoples' own understanding of their rights is the basis for BC Hydro' s unscrupulous denial of the crucial importance of the Peace River Valley to Treaty 8 Nations,” said the letter.

It pointed out that B.C.' s Hydro' s oral arguments “also demonstrated disrespect for the wisdom of First Nations elders and tradition keepers, treating their oral evidence as little more than hearsay.”

Benjamin said commitments made by the federal and provincial governments to uphold the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and work towards reconciliation signaled an important shift for legal cases such as the West Moberly First Nations' injunction application.

West Moberly First Nations and Prophet River First Nation filed a civil suit in January claiming that the Site C dam and two previous dams on the Peace River are an unjustified infringement on their constitutionally protected rights under Treaty 8.

Until now, it has been generally accepted that government lawyers can go into court and use every argument at their disposal “to fight against recognition and respect for Indigenous rights,” no matter what the same governments say in the public sphere, Benjamin said.

But now government lawyers are expected to be “accountable to the promises made by government in the kinds of arguments they make in court,” he said.

Amnesty International — which has singled out the Site C project for violating human rights — is “intensely following” the B.C. Supreme Court case, according to Benjamin, Amnesty Canada’s campaigner for the human rights of Indigenous peoples.

Site C would flood 128 kilometres of the Peace River and its tributaries, destroying dozens of recorded sites of cultural and spiritual significance for First Nations, including Indigenous burial grounds, and contaminating bull trout and other fish with highly toxic methylmercury.

Benjamin said the UBCIC letter makes “perfect sense.”

“If a government is genuinely committed to upholding the rights of Indigenous peoples it has to do that in a consistent way. It can’t say, ‘we’re going to uphold the rights when it’s convenient for us but if there’s an argument we want to win in court we will throw all that out the window.’ ”

Benjamin said a recess in the B.C. Supreme Court proceedings this week is an ideal opportunity for government lawyers to review their arguments.

If BC Hydro were to persuade the court to accept their interpretation of Indigenous rights, it would “turn the clock back,” Benjamin said.

“You really have to ask, does the Horgan government — having been elected in B.C. with all of these promises for Indigenous peoples — does it want to be the government that’s responsible for turning the clock back?”

Horgan’s office, when contacted for comment, referred questions to Eby’s office because the premier is out of town. Eby’s office said it could not respond by the time of publication.

1029 readings

[’’Guilty on All Counts!’: In Historic Victory, Monsanto](#)



[Ordered to Pay \\$289 Million in Roundup Cancer Lawsuit](#)
[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 11 August 2018 03:01

"This is a company that has always put profits ahead of public safety, and today, Monsanto has finally been held accountable."by [Common Dreams staff](#)

<https://www.commondreams.org/news/2018/08/10/guilty-all-counts-historic-victory-monsanto-ordered-pay-289-million-roundup-cancer>



A California jury on Friday found Monsanto liable in a lawsuit filed by a man who alleged the company's glyphosate-based weedkillers, including Roundup, caused him cancer and ordered the company to pay \$289 million in damages. (Photo: London Permaculture/cc/flickr)

In an historic victory for those who have long sought to see agrochemical giant Monsanto held to account for the powerful company's toxic and deadly legacy, a court in California on Friday found the corporation liable for damages suffered by a cancer patient who [alleged](#) his sickness was directly caused by exposure to the glyphosate-based herbicides, including the widely used weedkiller Roundup.

As [Reuters reports](#):

The case of school groundskeeper Dewayne Johnson was the first lawsuit alleging glyphosate causes cancer to go to trial.

Monsanto, a unit of Bayer AG following a \$62.5 billion acquisition by the German conglomerate, faces more than 5,000 similar lawsuits across

the United States.

The jury at San Francisco's Superior Court of California deliberated for three days before finding that Monsanto had failed to warn Johnson and other consumers of the cancer risks posed by its weed killers. It awarded \$39 million in compensatory and \$250 million in punitive damages.

As Robert F. Kennedy Jr., a lawyer representing Johnson in the case, declared on Twitter, the court "awarded 200 million in punitive damages against Monsanto for 'acting with malice and oppression.'

Last Updated on Saturday, 11 August 2018 03:16

944 readings

["Poison Papers" and Major Monsanto Document Release Exposes Toxicity and Collusion](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 14 August 2018 19:00

Historic Disclosures Prove That Safety of FDA and EPA-Approved Chemicals Were Based on Tobacco Industry-like Collusion Promoting Demonstrably Faked Science
Jon Woodhouse Posted on August 2, 2017

by Jon Woodhouse and Jonathan Greenberg 9090 57

<https://mauiindependent.org/poison-papers-major-monsanto-document-release-exposes-toxicity-collusion/>



More than 100,000 pages of documents exposing how the chemical industry and

government regulators knew about the extraordinary toxicity of many chemical products, yet worked together to conceal this information from the public and the press, were made publicly available last week through a remarkable project called the Poison Papers.

This morning, a second group of important documents reached the public for the first time after a judge allowed, for the first time ever, the public release of hundreds of pages of incriminating documents regarding Monsanto and its collusion with federal regulators to keep secret scientific evidence of the toxicity of Roundup, the world's best selling - and most controversial—herbicide.

Today, critical documents released by the law firm of Baum Hedlund, which is suing Monsanto in a California federal court are available at the firm's website here under the headline, "Monsanto's Secret Documents."

Robert F. Kennedy Jr. noted that with this disclosure, "We can now prove that all Monsanto's claims about glyphosate's safety were myths concocted by amoral propaganda and lobbying teams." Kennedy noted that federal agencies that were supposed to protect public health instead protected Monsanto's toxic products from public oversight.

Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. explained, "Monsanto has been spinning its lethal yarn to everybody for years and suborning various perjuries from regulators and scientists who have all been lying in concert to American farmers, landscapers and consumers. These new revelations are commiserate with the documents that brought down big tobacco."

Today's important disclosure, said, Baum Hedlund attorneys Brent Wisner, "is a look behind the curtain" demonstrating that "Monsanto has deliberately been stopping studies that look bad for them, ghostwriting literature and engaging in a whole host of corporate malfeasance. They have been telling everybody that these products are safe because regulators have said they are safe, but it turns out that Monsanto has been in bed with U.S. regulators while misleading European regulators."

The incriminating documents from the class action lawsuit against Monsanto follow less than one week after the Poison Papers released some 200,000 pages over a public interest website facilitated by the Center for Media and Democracy and the Bioscience Resource Project. As further described in The Intercept here, these documents stem from 40 years of courageous Freedom of Information requests regarding lawsuits against Monsanto, Dow, DuPont, the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Forest Service, the Department of Defense, and pulp and paper companies.

According to Poison Paper's lead journalist Peter von Stackelberg, this treasure trove of evidence, "lays out a 40-year history of deceit and collusion involving the chemical industry and the regulatory agencies that were supposed to be protecting human health and the environment."

Among the alarming revelations, a document from 1985 showed that Monsanto had

sold a chemical (santophen) that was tainted with TCDD (dioxin) to the makers of Lysol, who, apparently unaware of its toxicity, used it as an ingredient in their disinfectant spray for 23 years. Dioxin was a contaminant in Agent Orange that caused major health issues.

Monsanto's analytical chemist, Fred Hileman, testified that Monsanto knew that Lysol is recommended for cleaning babies' toys and for various other cleaning activities involving direct contact with the human body. Hileman testified that he knew people who used Lysol were contacting three parts per billion of 2,3,7,8 and that 2,3,7,8 is extremely toxic. There was no dioxin warning on the Lysol package.

The Papers reveal Monsanto chief medical officer George Roush admitted under oath to knowing that Monsanto studies into the health effects of dioxins on workers were written up untruthfully for the scientific literature in order to obscure health effects.

In 2012, Monsanto agreed to pay up to \$93 million in a class-action lawsuit brought by the residents of Nitro, West Virginia, for dioxin exposure from accidents and pollution at an herbicide plant that operated in their town from 1929 to 2004. While details of the case were kept secret, plaintiffs presented evidence that Monsanto had willfully withheld information from U.S. and Canadian government agencies, and its customers, regarding high TCDD contamination of many of its products, including santophen (which was declared safe by Industrial Bio-Test Laboratories - see below).

The Papers also disclose EPA meeting minutes of a secret high level dioxins working group that admitted dioxins are extraordinarily poisonous chemicals. The internal minutes contradict the Agency's longstanding refusal to regulate dioxins or set legal limits.

The U.S. Forest Service sprayed both toxic, dioxin containing 2,4,5-T and the other herbicide in Agent Orange, 2,4-D, to kill weeds, even after children developed nosebleeds, bloody diarrhea, and headaches, women had miscarriages, and animals died or had bizarre deformities. Researchers later discovered the EPA's registration of 2,4-D and other pesticides was based on fraudulent data.

In what was described by investigators from the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as, "the most massive scientific fraud ever committed in the United States, and perhaps the world," the leading safety testing company, Industrial Bio-Test Laboratories (IBT), was revealed to have falsified 99% of long-term studies (for cancer, birth defects, reproductive damage etc.) supporting some 483 pesticide registrations.

The wholesale fraud resulted in the indictment of the company's president and several top executives in 1981 and prison convictions in 1983.

One Justice Department investigator noted: "IBT became the largest testing

lab in the country, because companies knew this was the place to get the results they wanted.”

New animals were routinely substituted for test animals that died, without noting deaths or substitutions in lab reports; entire test data and lab reports for one test product were copied into reports for other products; and signatures of lab techs who had refused to sign false reports were forged by managers.

To help secure approval for Monsanto’s TCC, an anti-bacterial agent widely used in popular deodorant sprays, Monsanto toxicologist Dr. Paul Wright left in 1971, to briefly work at IBT. Prosecutors said Wright went to IBT to manage Monsanto’s contract to test the safety of TCC, which was under suspicion by the FDA for causing testicular atrophy in laboratory rats fed the compound.

Monsanto needed a “clean” IBT study to convince the FDA that TCC was safe so the agency would grant them a registration to increase the levels of TCC in deodorant soaps.

Back at Monsanto, according to prosecutors and witnesses, Wright wrote several critical sections of the final TCC summary report and pressured a key IBT scientist into changing his finding that TCC caused testicular atrophy in laboratory rats. The FDA eventually approved new higher levels in some deodorant soaps.

“It was my opinion at that time, and is today, that postmortem data were removed from the report, because they incriminated the TCC compound,” Dr. Donovan E. Gordon, IBT’s pathologist Gordon told a grand jury.

Millions of pounds more of TCC were manufactured each year by Monsanto as a result. About 80% of all antimicrobial bar soap sold in the United States contained TCC. On September 2, 2016, the FDA announced that TCC must be removed from all antibacterial soap products by late 2017.

How did the EPA respond to the fallout from the IBT fraud trial?

A transcript of a 1978 meeting with the EPA’s Fred Arnold, Acting Branch Chief of Regulatory Analysis & Lab Audits and chemical company representatives, reveals the companies were assured that no chemicals would be removed from the market, even though the studies supposedly showing their safety had been proven fraudulent.

“We determined that (it) was neither in EPA’s interest or the public interest or the registrants’ interest (to replace all IBT data) because a large number of studies, which were performed at IBT, were performed satisfactorily,” Arnold said, even though not one IBT study was free of errors.

Author/activist Carol Van Strum, who compiled most of the Poison Papers,

notes: "This document was the linchpin of my book, A Bitter Fog: Herbicides and Human Rights, documenting the government's acceptance of phony industry studies while dismissing reports of human illness, death, involuntary abortions, birth defects, and other effects of pesticide exposure."

Almost all of the products tested by IBT, including 2,4-D, glyphosate, and atrazine are still on the market today.

"Most chemicals enter the market without testing," says former EPA scientist Evaggelos Vallianatos. "EPA's perverse definition of inerts conveniently covers-up science and enables (uses) of chemicals that, together, are many times more deleterious than the 'tested' 'active' ingredient..."

IBT wasn't the only lab conducting fraud. Craven Laboratories in Texas, was also investigated. In 1994 that the owner and 14 employees were found guilty of falsification of research data. Craven performed studies for 262 pesticide companies including Monsanto, conducting 9 of the 15 residue studies needed to register Roundup.

Monsanto's flagship product Roundup has also come under suspicion by those who question the EPA's blanket approval. Carol Van Strum discovered that IBT found giant multi-nucleated cells in the testes of rabbits exposed to Roundup, suggesting a hazard of birth defects, mutations, and cancer.

She found that significant portions of the Roundup data submitted to support registration were invalid. "Virtually all of Roundup's toxicological registration data resulted from studies performed by Industrial Bio-Test Laboratories," Strum writes. The registration had been a closed process without scientific peer review or public participation, and the publicly available information on toxicity is extremely limited. "At least a dozen IBT studies on Roundup were found to be invalid."

For many years no one knew exactly what other chemicals were in Roundup besides glyphosate or how they affected our health. Last year The Intercept reported on the work of molecular toxicologist Robin Mesnage, who isolated Roundup's ingredients and discovered that the supposedly inert ingredients in the pesticide formula were more toxic than glyphosate alone.

Not only did these chemicals, which aren't named on herbicide labels, affect biological functions, they did so at levels far below the concentrations used in commercially available products. In fact, POEA - officially an "inert" ingredient - was between 1,200 and 2,000 times more toxic to cells than glyphosate, officially the "active" ingredient. POEA, is one of a class of chemicals developed as spermicidal agents. According to an FDA press officer, the agency has no plans to test food for POEA or other additives.

In other Poison Papers revelations, two documents detail experiments that Dow contracted a University of Pennsylvania dermatologist to conduct on prisoners

in the 1960s to show the effects of TCDD, a particularly toxic contaminant found in 2,4,5-T. Another, from 1990, detailed the EPA policy of allowing the use of hazardous waste as inert ingredients in pesticides and other products under certain circumstances.

According to Dr. Jonathan Latham, Director of the Bioscience Resource Project, which helped bring the Poison Papers to light, the result of the “enduring collusion” between the EPA and the chemical industry “is a systemic failure to protect the American public from chemical hazards.” Under the current Trump administration the EPA’s pesticide-approval process has become little more than a rubber stamp for the chemical industry.

At a meeting in May at the EPA’s Office of Pesticides Program, Lori Ann Burd, environmental health director at the Center for Biological Diversity blasted efforts to weaken safeguards - “For the sake of inflating profits for pesticide giants, EPA chief Scott Pruitt is willing to ignore that these poisons harm brain development in children, increase cancer risks, contaminate our water and kill endangered wildlife.”



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893 readings

[A PROPOSAL FOR A UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON COMMON SECURITY](#)



[Peace News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 20 August 2018 09:43

By Joan Russow PhD
Global compliance Research Project

Concurring with the statement in resolution 2282 (2016)

Emphasizing the importance of a comprehensive approach to sustaining peace, particularly through the prevention of conflict and addressing its root causes, strengthening the rule of law at the international and national levels, and promoting sustained and sustainable economic growth, poverty eradication, social development, sustainable development, national reconciliation and unity including through inclusive dialogue and mediation, access to justice and transitional justice, accountability, good governance, democracy, accountable institutions, gender equality and respect for, and protection of, human rights and fundamental freedoms, of a comprehensive approach to sustaining peace, particularly through the prevention of conflict and addressing its root causes, strengthening the rule of law at the international and national levels, and promoting sustained and sustainable economic growth, poverty eradication, social development, sustainable development, national reconciliation and unity including through inclusive dialogue and mediation, access to justice and transitional justice, accountability, good governance, democracy, accountable institutions, gender equality and respect for, and protection of, human rights and fundamental freedoms,

“

Recognising that this resolution builds on the legacy of Olof Palme concept of Common Security .in his 1982 UN report: Common Security a Programme for Disarmament

“True security exists when all are secure, through “common security” (Olof Palme, 1982) whose objectives could be extended to include but not limited to the following:

- (a) to achieve a state of peace, and disarmament; through reallocation of military expenses and delegitimization of war;
- (b) to ensure the preservation, conservation and protection of the environment, the respect for the inherent worth of nature beyond human purpose, to reduce the ecological footprint and to move away from the current model of unsustainable and excessive overconsumption
- (c) To enable socially equitable and environmentally sound employment, energy and transportation and the right to development,
- (d) to promote and fully guarantee respect for human rights including labour rights, civil and political rights, indigenous rights, social and cultural rights - right to food, to housing, to

safe drinking water and sanitation , right to education and right to universally accessible not for profit health care system; right to water and sanitation

(e) to fulfill the Sustainable Development Goals.

(f) to respect the international rule of law, its instruments and the jurisdiction and decisions of the international Court of Justice

Recalling the expressed wish of Nitun Desai, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations from 1992 to 2003, who stated in 1995, on the anniversary of the UN in San Francisco that he hoped that the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development would be the culmination of the preceding summits and conferences. From the UN Conference on Environment, Development, (UNCED, the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, 1994 United Nations conference on population and development- in Cairo, World Summit for Social Development 1995 in Copenhagen, and the Fourth World Conference on Women. Action for Equality, Development and Peace in 1995 in Beijing Recalling also Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Boutros-Ghali's confirming that "the spirit of the Global Compliance Resolution reaffirms the commitment of people the world over to the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. This resolution was calling for compliance with international instruments on the 50th anniversary of the United Nations.

Acknowledging Former Secretary General Kofi Annan's initiative, in 2000, when he urged states to sign and ratify international treaties, conventions, and covenants and to discharge the obligations under these international instruments.

Concurring with the "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", which adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets, which contributes to the advancing of common Security

Recognizing that the UN General Assembly which reflects the fundamental principle of the sovereign equality of States, Organs and Agencies of the UN, along with the International Court of Justice are the principle organs of the United Nations for achieving Common Security

Reaffirming Former Secretary General Ban Ki Moon's appeal at COP 15 for states to negotiate with a global vision not with vested national interests

Reaffirming also the UNESCO Declaration on the Use of Scientific and Technological Progress in the Interests of Peace and for the

Benefit of humanity, 1975

Convinced that the following international instruments reflect provisions, at a minimum, for achieving common security and for countering threats to common security:

Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT); Anti-Personnel-Mine-(APM); Cluster Munitions (CCM); Arms Trade (ATT); Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC); The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC); The Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) And the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons; International; UN Conventions on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), Convention on Torture (UNTC); Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its protocols; Convention on Endangered Species (CITES); UN Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC); Convention on Preservation of Cultural and Natural Heritage (WHC); Convention on Disaster reduction, (UNISDR); Convention on Desertification (UNCCD), Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and its Montreal Protocol (MP); Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (UNTC)

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and its protocols, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR); The Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties; Convention on Rights of the Child (CRC); Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and its protocols, International Convention on The Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD); on Genocide (CPPCG); Convention on Rights of Migrant Workers and Their Families, Conventions on Labour (ILO), Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols Thereto (CTOC); ; Convention on Persons with Disabilities (CRPD); Declaration on the Rights of indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) ; Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (VCLT) International Court of Justice (ICJ); and the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the Rome Statute.

Declares the following;

Article 1. The need to redefine “true security” as “common security” and strive

- (a) To achieve a state of peace, and disarmament; through reallocation of military expenses and delegitimization of war;
- (b) To ensure the preservation, conservation and protection of the environment, the respect for the inherent worth of nature beyond human purpose, to reduce the ecological footprint and to move away from the current model of unsustainable and excessive overconsumption
- (c) To enable socially equitable and environmentally sound

employment, energy and transportation and the right to development,
(d) To promote and fully guarantee respect for human rights including labour rights, civil and political rights, indigenous rights, social and cultural rights - right to food, to housing, to safe drinking water and sanitation , right to education and right to universally accessible not for profit health care system; right to water and sanitation
(e) To fulfill the Sustainable Development Goals.
(f) To respect the international rule of law, its instruments and the jurisdiction and decisions of the international Court of Justice

Article 3

States undertake in 2018 to further common security by signing, and ratifying and enacting the necessary legislation to ensure compliance with the international instruments that prevent the threats to common security and that promote the fulfilment of common security

Article 4 the United Nations and specialized agencies should take appropriate sustainable measures to implement the present Declaration, in particular the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. International, regional, national and local organizations and civil society are encouraged to support and assist in the implementation of the present Declaration.

Article 5

International and national institutions of education for common security shall be promoted

1. that on the 73 anniversary to sign and ratify conventions , covenants and treaties and enact the necessary legislation to ensure compliance

NEGOTIATE WITH A GLOBAL VISION TO STRIVE TO ACHIEVE TRUE SECURITY:COMMON SECURITY

Last Updated on Monday, 20 August 2018 09:48

847 readings

[Weedkiller found in wide range of breakfast foods aimed at children](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 20 August 2018 12:32

Cancer-linked herbicide, sold as Roundup by Monsanto, present in 45 products including granola, snack bars and Cheerios

Oliver Milman in New York

@olliemilman

Thu 16 Aug 2018 06.00 BST Last modified on Fri 17 Aug 2018 18.20 BST

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/aug/16/weedkiller-cereal-monsanto-roundup-childrens-food>



Farmers spray 200m pounds of weedkiller on crops, including corn, soybeans, wheat and oats, every year. Photograph: Benoit Tessier/Reuters

Significant levels of the weedkilling chemical glyphosate have been found in an array of popular breakfast cereals, oats and snack bars marketed to US children, a new study has found.

Tests revealed glyphosate, the active ingredient in the popular weedkiller brand Roundup, present in all but two of the 45 oat-derived products that were sampled by the Environmental Working Group, a public health organization.

Nearly three in four of the products exceeded what the EWG classes safe for children to consume. Products with some of the highest levels of glyphosate include granola, oats and snack bars made by leading industry names Quaker, Kellogg's and General Mills, which makes Cheerios.

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One sample of Quaker Old Fashioned Oats measured at more than one

part per million of glyphosate. This is still within safe levels deemed by the Environmental Protection Agency, although it is currently working on an updated assessment.

The EWG said the federal limits are outdated and that most of the products it tested exceed a more stringent definition of safe glyphosate levels.

“I grew up eating Cheerios and Quaker Oats long before they were tainted with glyphosate,” said EWG’s president, Ken Cook. “No one wants to eat a weedkiller for breakfast, and no one should have to do so.” Cook said the EWG will urge the EPA to limit the use of glyphosate on food crops but said companies should “step up” because of the “lawless” nature of the regulator under the Trump administration.

“It is very troubling that cereals children like to eat contain glyphosate,” said Alexis Temkin, an EWG toxicologist and author of the report. “Parents shouldn’t worry about whether feeding their children healthy oat foods will also expose them to a chemical linked to cancer. The government must take steps to protect our most vulnerable populations.”

The findings follow a landmark decision in a San Francisco court last week to order that Monsanto pay \$289m in damages to Dwayne Johnson, a 46-year-old former groundskeeper. A jury deemed that Monsanto’s Roundup weedkiller caused Johnson’s cancer and that it had failed to warn him about the health risks of exposure.

Monsanto, which said it will appeal against the verdict, has said glyphosate has been used safely for decades. In 2015, the EPA said that glyphosate has a low toxicity for people but could cause problems for some pets if they consume the chemical.

However, the World Health Organization has called glyphosate a “probable carcinogen” and authorities in California list it as a chemical “known to the state to cause cancer”.

In April, internal emails obtained from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) showed that scientists have found glyphosate on a wide range of commonly consumed food, to the point that they were finding it difficult to identify a food without the chemical on it. The FDA has yet to release any official results from this process.

There was no indication that the claims related to products sold outside the US.

US farmers spray about 200m pounds of Roundup each year on their crops, including corn, soybeans, wheat and oats. It can also be used on produce such as spinach and almonds.

A General Mills spokeswoman said: “Our products are safe and without question they meet regulatory safety levels. The EPA has researched this issue and has set rules that we follow, as do farmers who grow crops including wheat and oats.”

A Kellogg’ s spokesman said: “Our food is safe. Providing safe, high-quality foods is one of the ways we earn the trust of millions of people around the world. The EPA sets strict standards for safe levels of these agricultural residues and the ingredients we purchase from suppliers for our foods fall under these limits.”

Quaker Oats continues to “proudly stand by the safety and quality of our Quaker products” , a spokesman said.

But Cook said that General Mills and Quaker Oats are “relying on outdated safety standards” .

“Our view is that the government standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency pose real health risks to Americans - particularly children, who are more sensitive to the effects of toxic chemicals than adults,” he said.

- This article was amended on 16-17 August because an earlier version said: “One sample of Quaker Old Fashioned Oats measured at more than 1,000 parts per billion of glyphosate. The Environmental Protection Agency has a range of safe levels for glyphosate on crops such as corn, soybeans, grains and some fruits, spanning 0.1 to 310 parts per million.” This has been corrected to make clear the 1,000 parts per billion is within the EPA range.

938 readings

[A Vision of Educational Material Related to Furthering Common Security Submission to UN office on Disarmament UNODA](#)
[Peace News](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 22 August 2018 11:24

. Global Compliance Research Project

Joan Russow Phd

The reason given in December 2016 by most non-nuclear North Atlantic Treaty Organization member countries for not adopting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was that the nuclear weapons of the United States of America were essential for all of their security. Ursula Franklin, a physicist, pacifist and educator, has stated, “We must reappropriate the word ‘security’ and not allow it to be distorted by the military”, and recalled the 1982 report of the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues, written by Olof Palme, entitled “Common security: a programme for disarmament” .

The Global Compliance Research Project has been working on an educational programme which includes: (a) redefining “security” as common security; (b) identifying threats to common security; (c) placing the Sustainable Development Goals within the context of international precedents; (d) delineating some United Nations systemic constraints, which could be overcome; and (e) making a modest proposal for a universal declaration of common security.

The full submission by the Global Compliance Research Project is also available at the following:

<https://www.un.org/disarmament/education/report/2018report.html>

Last Updated on Wednesday, 22 August 2018 11:28

827 readings

[Protest accuses Trudeau of fiddling on pipeline while climate change Burn](#)

[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow



Thursday, 23 August 2018 14:07

By Joan Bryden in News, Energy, Politics | August 23rd 2018

<https://www.nationalobserver.com/2018/08/23/news/protest-accuses-trudeau-fiddling-pipeline-while-climate-change-burns-bc>



Tawahum Bige from the Lutsel k'e Dene and Plains Cree nation with protesters outside the Vancouver

Island Conference Centre during day two of the Liberal cabinet retreat in Nanaimo, B.C., on Aug. 22, 2018. Photo by The Canadian Press/Chad Hipolito

Several hundred pot-banging, whistle-blowing pipeline protesters gathered outside the Vancouver Island Conference Centre where Trudeau and his ministers were holed up for a cabinet retreat amid the acrid smell of smoke from the hundreds of wildfires burning across British Columbia.

They questioned how Trudeau can claim to be concerned about climate change when his government is paying \$4.5 billion to Kinder Morgan to purchase the Trans Mountain pipeline and ensure it's expanded to carry Alberta oil

to B.C.'s coast.

Multiple protesters carried signs accusing the prime minister of fiddling "while B.C. burns."

Inside the conference centre, Trudeau and his ministers met with B.C.'s NDP premier, John Horgan,

who has vowed to use every possible avenue to block the pipeline project.

At the same time, however, Horgan reiterated his government's staunch opposition to the pipeline expansion project, which he said would result in a seven-fold increase in tanker traffic off B.C.'s coast and, thus, increase the chances of a "catastrophic spill."

B.C. New Democrat MP Alistair MacGregor, who joined the protest outside the retreat, said later that Horgan supports the "overall objectives" of the Trudeau government to combat climate change but those objectives don't "mesh with buying a pipeline that's going to be exporting diluted bitumen."

Environment Minister Catherine McKenna tried to square the circle of the federal approach to pipelines and climate change.

"This summer is a wake-up call. We've seen extreme weather, we've seen extreme heat that is literally costing lives, we've seen here forest fires, we've seen extreme flooding," she said.

That said, McKenna said the country is in a transition from its reliance on fossil fuels that contribute to global warming.

Natural Resources Minister Armajeet Sohi said the Trudeau government has always maintained that economic growth and environmental protection must go hand in hand.

"We need to get those resources to non-U.S. international markets to reduce our dependency on one single customer, at the same time losing \$15 billion of potential revenue that we can use to transition to a low-carbon economy and ... actually make more investments in clean technologies and protecting of our

environment."

"We have a message for the prime minister and his cabinet," Public Service Alliance of Canada president Chris Aylward told the crowd.

For all the noise outside the cabinet retreat, Liberal insiders say their party's internal polling suggests British Columbians are divided over the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion.

Moreover, they say their polling suggests that all seven ridings on Vancouver Island – six currently held by the NDP, one by Green party Leader Elizabeth May – could be up for grabs in next year's federal election.

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Last Updated on Thursday, 23 August 2018 14:21

979 readings

[UN human rights chief says Security Council members risk UN's survival](#)

[Justice News](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 24 August 2018 08:31

The outgoing UN human rights chief has said the five permanent members wield too much power as they can veto resolutions even in cases of alleged injustices. Zeid Ra'ad al-Husseini has been outspoken during his term.

<https://www.dw.com/en/un-human-rights-chief-says-security-council-members-risk-uns-survival/a-45150493>



United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein (L) speaks during a press conference.

Zeid Ra'ad al-Husseini, the outgoing UN human rights chief, warned on Monday that the world body could "collapse" if the imbalance caused by the excessive powers wielded by the Security Council's five permanent members is not corrected.

"There's a feeling within the UN that there is a sort of pentarchy — the P5 (permanent members) running too much of the business at the expense of the organization itself," Zeid said in reference to the US, Russia, China, France and the UK.

Zeid was alluding to the countries' ability to veto resolutions in cases such as alleged injustices in Syria's war, or actions by Israeli forces against Palestinians.

"When they cooperate things can move, when they don't, everything

becomes stuck and the organization in general becomes so marginal to the resolution of these sorts of horrific conflicts that we've seen," he said. "And I think that has to change. In the end the organization can collapse at great cost to the international community."

Outspoken critic

Zeid has been an outspoken critic of leaders across the world, including US President Donald Trump.

Washington, on the other hand, has been critical of Zeid for unfairly targeting the Israeli government.

"There is a sense that the permanent five have created a logjam by dint of their proclivity to use the veto, and the paralysis — less so the UK and France — but of course, the US, Russia and China quite frequently," Zeid said on Monday in a discussion with journalists in his office.

Zeid told reporters earlier this month that he did not seek a new four-year term as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights because he did not believe the US, China, and Russia would support him.

Zeid, whose term ends on August 31, will be succeeded by former Chilean President Michelle Bachelet.

COMMENT:; joan Russow

Finally a UN official said what needed to be said. I have participated in the UN as a member of various NGOs since 1992, and have always thought that the UN Security Council should be dismantled for violating a fundamental principle of the UN Charter—the sovereign equality of states. The power should be transferred to the UN General Assembly that does represent the sovereign equality of states. In addition, so that a veto-like voting system does not paralyze the UNGA, the UNGA could strive for consensus with a fall-back of 75%

Last Updated on Friday, 24 August 2018 09:33

1179 readings

[Paddle for ?EL,TOS and the Salish Sea!
September 2](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 24 August 2018 10:02

Tsawout Chief and Council invite all relations in WSÁNEC and neighbouring communities to participate in the PADDLE FOR ?EL,TOS and the Salish Sea, in support of Tsawout's claim to the island, also known as James Island.

The event is taking place on Sunday, September 2, 2018, beginning at 9:00 am at ?IX_E? (Cordova Spit) with a community breakfast, followed by a paddle around ?EL,TOS (James Island) and then a feast in the Tsawout Gymnasium.

The history of use and occupation is significant combined with significant archaeological history. The island was part of the homelands and provided a rich, productive way of life as it was well supplied with plantlife and surrounded by a rich variety of saltwater food supply (fish/shellfish). When it was taken over as part the war efforts it was still occupied and people felt that the island would be fully returned once it was no longer required. However, the history shows that the Tsawout/WSÁNEC People were forced off the island and it then became privatized and was eventually sold.

In the past Tsawout has made overtures to have the island rightfully returned and it is hoped that this time justice will prevail and the island will be restored as part of the homelands.

The Paddle Please sign up TODAY for the Paddle for ?EL,TOS and the Salish Sea, which Turning the Tide is organizing in partnership with Tsawout First Nation and other organizations, happening on Sunday September 2 beginning at 9:00 am at TIXEN (Cordova Spit) (view map here), followed by a Community Meal in the Tsawout Gym. People are encouraged to join the events on the water and on shore -- with plenty of activities on land if you are unable to paddle.

The Community Action Bus is organizing shuttles to and from Victoria and Tsawout on September 2, so please email community.action.bus@gmail.com or call 250-893-7848 if you would like to reserve a spot on the bus!

Also, some paddlers are camping before the Paddle at the CRD Island View Beach Campground, from Friday to Monday (August 31-Sept 3). A block of campsites has been reserved, so please let us know if you would like to camp, so we will have an idea of numbers (suggested donation of \$20 toward campsite costs).

We've posted a new promotional film about the significance of ?EL,TOS to the WSANEC People (thank you Daphne for putting the film together!):
<http://www.turningthetide.ca>. The purpose of the Paddle for ?EL,TOS and the Salish Sea is to demonstrate support for the Tsawout First Nation's claim to ?EL,TOS (James Island), which despite never being surrendered fell into private hands contrary to the Treaty and Crown policy. The island is current listed for sale by the American owner. The Paddle is intended to ramp up pressure on the Crown to reach a fair settlement and return the island to Tsawout. We are therefore asking if you can help us ramp up publicity for the event, by sharing this message with your contacts and encouraging them to sign up for the Paddle. You can also join, share and invite friends to the event on Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/events/465166783945217/> .

Finally, if you are able to volunteer on Sept. 2, with meal prep, set up or other tasks, please let us know.

Thank you / HISKWE! We hope you are able to participate in this important event on September 2!

The Turning the Tide Organizing Committee

Tsawout would like the Paddle event to be a fundraiser to assist with the research and legal work required for the claim and will be accepting donations prior to the event and at the event made out to TSAWOUT FIRST NATION with notation for “ ?EL,TOS” (which can be mailed to Tsawout First Nation, 7728 Tetayut Road, Saanichton, BC V8M 2E4).

To join the Paddle for ?EL,TOS and the Salish Sea, sign up today at: www.TurningtheTide.ca/leltos.

HÍSW_?E,

Chief Harvey Underwood

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HÍSW_?E,

Chief Harvey Underwood

Last Updated on Monday, 10 September 2018 20:28

875 readings

[French environment minister quits: World ‘not doing enough’](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 28 August 2018 15:29

FILE - In this Wednesday, Oct. 11, 2017 file picture Environment Minister Nicolas Hulot, looks on, as French President Emmanuel Macron delivers his speech during a meeting at Rungis international food market, near Paris, France. France’s high-profile environment minister, former TV personality Nicolas Hulot, has unexpectedly announced his resignation live on national radio, dealing a blow to the lofty green ambitions of President Emmanuel Macron. (AP Photo/Francois Mori, File)

PARIS (AP) — France’s high-profile environment minister unexpectedly announced his resignation live on national radio Tuesday, lamenting the government’s lack of decisive action on green issues. The move deals a stinging

blow to the environmental credibility of President Emmanuel Macron.

Clearly emotional, Nicolas Hulot said he'd not even told his wife, let alone Macron or the prime minister, of his decision to stand down. The long-time environmental advocate lamented France's slow pace of progress on green issues and his own lack of power to force change.

His on-air resignation on France Inter radio was so out of the blue that the first reaction from an interviewer was: "Are you serious?"

"I no longer want to lie to myself," Hulot said. "I don't want to create the illusion that my presence in government means that we're up to standard on these issues, and so I am deciding to quit the government."

Recruiting Hulot as a minister had been a coup for Macron, who has sought to position France as a champion in the fight against environmental degradation and as a counterweight to the climate change attitudes of President Donald Trump.

Losing Hulot so suddenly will force a ministerial reshuffle and casts doubt on the strength of Macron's commitment to "make our planet great again." Macron's office confirmed there will be a reshuffle, but said it won't happen while the French leader is visiting Denmark and Finland this week.

Speaking in Denmark, Macron defended his government as having "done more than any other on this subject." He urged patience, saying: "It's a fight that isn't won from one day to the next."

Hulot expressed hope that his resignation would stir French politicians and the public into action, calling it "an act of mobilization."

"I no longer believe," Hulot said. "The planet is becoming an oven, our natural resources are being exhausted, biodiversity is melting like snow in the sun and it's not always dealt with like a priority issue."

He damned Macron's government with faint praise as he sprang his resignation

surprise.

“France is doing more than a lot of other countries. Do not make me say that it is doing enough. It is not doing enough. Europe is not doing enough. The world is not doing enough,” he said.

Never a career politician, Hulot accepted a role in government in the hope that, from an inside position, he could make real progress on the environmental concerns that he has long sounded the alarm about. He was one of just two ministers given the special title of “minister of state.” The other is the interior minister, who leads the police and France’s domestic fight against terrorism.

On France Inter, Hulot said short-term pressures were taking priority in the French government over the longer-term need to reverse environmental destruction. He described himself as “all alone” and said: “I have a bit of influence, but I have no power and no means.”

“Where are my troops? Who do I have behind me?” he asked.

Hulot said he’d been mulling his resignation for several months, but one of the last straws was a meeting Monday with Macron about hunting. Hulot was dismayed to see that a hunting lobbyist was allowed to take part despite not being invited, seeing this as a symbol of lobbyists’ influence in French corridors of power.

Macron’s critics seized on Hulot’s departure to take swipes at the president, whose popularity ratings have slid in recent months.

Leftist leader Jean-Luc Melenchon tweeted that “Macronism is starting to decompose.”

AP writer Sylvie Corbet in Paris contributed to this report.

Last Updated on Monday, 08 October 2018 19:34

1042 readings

[Union calls for Canada to buy back Canadian Wheat Board from Saudis over spat](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 29 August 2018 12:03

The union says Saudi Arabia's decision to stop buying Canadian wheat and barley shows it won't put the interests of grain farmers first



OTTAWA — A union representing transportation workers in Churchill, Man., is calling on Ottawa to buy back the Canadian Wheat Board from a Saudi consortium in light of the diplomatic spat between the two countries.

The Union of Canadian Transportation Employees which represents Churchill port workers says Saudi Arabia's decision to stop buying Canadian wheat and barley shows it won't put the interests of grain farmers first.

Earlier this month, the kingdom suspended diplomatic relations with Canada, expelled the Canadian ambassador and ordered students studying in Canada to leave the country in response to a series of tweets by Ottawa criticizing the arrest of some

social activists there.

Union president Dave Clark says having a foreign country managing an important Canadian asset is wrong and should be reversed.

G3 Canada Ltd., a joint venture between Bunge Canada and a subsidiary of the Saudi Agricultural and Livestock Investment Co., bought a majority stake in the wheat board after it was privatized in 2012.

The union says a reduction of grain passing through the port since the sale has hurt the community and port workers.

SEPTEMBER 2018

1085 readings

[World Audibly Laughs After Trump Claims His Administration Among Most Accomplished in US History During UN Address](#)
[Justice News](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 25 September 2018 13:56

Published on

Tuesday, September 25, 2018

by

[Common Dreams](#)

https://www.commondreams.org/news/2018/09/25/world-audibly-laughs-after-trump-claims-his-administration-among-most-accomplished?cd-origin=rss&utm_term=

"In less than two years, my administration has accomplished more than almost any

administration in the history of our country," Trump declared before laughter broke out in the hall.

by

[Common Dreams staff](#)



President Donald Trump addressing the United Nations General Assembly in New York City on Tuesday, September 25, 2018. (Photo: UN News Center)

Just seconds into his address to the United Nation General Assembly on Tuesday morning, laughter broke out among the venerated crowd of global leaders and diplomats when President Donald Trump tried to claim that his administration has been among the most successful in the nearly 250 years since the U.S. was founded.

"In less than two years, my administration has accomplished more than almost any administration in the history of our country," Trump declared before audible laughter broke out in the hall.

Watch:

at Common Dreams

https://www.commondreams.org/news/2018/09/25/world-audibly-laughs-after-trump-claims-his-administration-among-most-accomplished?cd-origin=rss&utm_term=

Last Updated on Tuesday, 25 September 2018 14:02

848 readings

[U.N. General Assembly Kicks Off With Strong Words and Ambitious Goals](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 25 September 2018 09:18

Posts By Tharanga Yakupitiyage - Reprint



Grača Machel, member of The Elders and widow of Nelson Mandela, makes remarks during the Nelson Mandela Peace Summit. Credit: United Nations Photo/Cia Pak

UNITED NATIONS, Sep 25 2018 (IPS) - In honour of Nobel Peace Laureate

Nelson Mandela's legacy, nations from around the world convened to adopt a declaration recommitting to goals of building a just, peaceful, and fair world.

At the Nelson Mandela Peace Summit, aptly held in the year of the former South African leader's 100th birthday, world leaders reflected on global peace and acknowledged that the international community is off-track as human rights continues to be under attack globally.

Guterres highlighted the need to "face the forces that threaten us with the wisdom, courage and fortitude that Nelson Mandela embodied" so that people everywhere can enjoy peace and prosperity.

"The United Nations finds itself at a time where it would be well-served to revisit and reconnect to the vision of its founders, as well as to take direction from Madiba's "servant leadership" and courage," said Mandela's widow, and co-founder of [the Elders](#), Graça Machel. The Elders, a grouping of independent global leaders workers for world peace and human rights, was founded by Machel and Mandela in 2007.

Secretary-general Antonio Guterres echoed similar sentiments in his opening remarks, stating: "Nelson Mandela was one of humanity's great leaders...today, with human rights under growing pressure around the world, we would be well served by reflecting on the example of this outstanding man."

Imprisoned in South Africa for almost 30 years for his anti-apartheid activism, Mandela, also known by his clan name Madiba, has been revered as a symbol of peace, democracy, and human rights worldwide.

In his inaugural address to the U.N. General Assembly in 1994 after becoming the country's first black president, Mandela noted that the great challenge to the U.N. is to answer the question of "what it is that we can and must do to ensure that democracy, peace, and prosperity prevail everywhere."

It is these goals along with his qualities of "humility, forgiveness, and compassion" that the political declaration adopted during the Summit aims to uphold.

However, talk along of such principles is not enough, said Amnesty International's Secretary-General Kumi Naidoo.

"These are words that get repeated time and time again without the political will, urgency, determination, and courage to make them a reality, to make them really count. But we must make them count. Not tomorrow, but right now," he said to world leaders.

"Without action, without strong and principled leadership, I fear for them. I fear for all of us," Naidoo continued.

Both Machel and Naidoo urged the international community to not turn away from violence and suffering around the world including in Myanmar.

“Our collective consciousness must reject the lethargy that has made us accustomed to death and violence as if wars are legitimate and somehow impossible to terminate,” Machel said.

Recently, a [U.N.-fact finding mission](#), which [reported](#) on [gross human rights violations committed against the Rohingya people](#) including mass killings, sexual slavery, and torture, has called for the country’s military leaders to be investigated and protected for genocide and crimes against humanity by the [International Criminal Court \(ICC\)](#).

While the ICC has launched a preliminary investigation and the U.N. was granted access to a select number of Rohingya refugees, Myanmar’s army chief General Min Aung Hlaing warned against foreign interference ahead of the General Assembly.

Since violence reignited in the country’s Rakhine State in August 2017, more than 700,000 Rohingya fled to neighbouring Bangladesh.

Still some remain within the country without the freedom to move or access basic services such as health care.

Naidoo warned the international community “not to adjust to the Rohingya population living in an open-air prison under a system of apartheid.”

This year’s U.N. General Assembly president Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garces of Ecuador said that while Mandela represents “a light of hope,” there are still concerns about collective action to resolve some of the world’s most pressing issues.

“Drifting away from multilateralism means jeopardising the future of our species and our planet. The world needs a social contract based on shared responsibility, and the only forum that we have to achieve this global compact is the United Nations,” she said.

Related IPS Articles

- [Opinion: Mandela Day – Where Do We Stand Today?](#)
- [Working To Honour Nelson Mandela’s Legacy](#)
- [“We Should Not Wait” — Action Needed on Myanmar](#)
- [Damning U.N. Report Outlines Crimes Against Rohingya As Children Suffer from Trauma One Year Later](#)

Others were a little more direct about who has turned away from such

multilateralism.

“Great statesmen tend to build bridges instead of walls,” said Iranian president Hassan Rouhani, taking a swipe at U.S. president Trump who pulled the country of the Iran nuclear deal and has continued his campaign to build a wall along the Mexico border.

Trump, who will be making his second appearance at the General Assembly, is expected to renew his commitment to the “America First” approach.

Naidoo made similar comments in relation to the U.S. president in his remarks on urging action on climate change.

“To the one leader who still denies climate change: we insist you start putting yourself on the right side of history,” he told attendees.

Trump, however, was not present to hear the leaders’ input as he instead attended a high-level event on counter narcotics.

Guterres highlighted the need to “face the forces that threaten us with the wisdom, courage and fortitude that Nelson Mandela embodied” so that people everywhere can enjoy peace and prosperity.

Machel urged against partisan politics and the preservation of ego, saying “enough is enough.”

“History will judge you should you stagnate too long in inaction. Humankind will hold you accountable should you allow suffering to continue on your watch,” she said.

“It is in your hands to make a better world for all who live in it,” Machel concluded with Mandela’s words.




The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the U.N. awarded Machel an honorary membership of its [Nobel Peace Laureates Alliance for Food Security and Peace](#) in recognition of her late husband’s struggle for freedom and peace.

“It is an honour for us to have her as a member of the Alliance. In a world where hunger continues to increase due to conflicts, her advocacy for peace will be very important,” FAO director general José Graziano da Silva said.

In addition to honouring the centenary of the birth of Nelson Mandela, the Summit also marks the 70th Anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights and the 20th Anniversary of the Rome Statute which established the ICC.

Last Updated on Wednesday, 26 September 2018 10:25

935 readings

[The Long Decline of DKE, Brett Kavanaugh's Fraternity at Yale](#)   

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 26 September 2018 13:12

By Eren Orbey September 25, 2018

<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/the-long-decline-of-dke-brett-kavanaughs-fraternity-at-yale>

Since Brett Kavanaugh's time at Yale, the prevalence of Greek life on the campus has declined, but his fraternity, dke, has maintained a reputation for aggressively loutish antics. Photograph by Mark Peterson / Redux for The New Yorker

Last week, after Christine Blasey Ford went public with an allegation that Brett Kavanaugh sexually assaulted her at a party in high school, the Yale Daily News published an old photograph that directed scrutiny to the Supreme Court nominee's college years. In the black-and-white image, two brothers of the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity march across Yale's campus in an initiation rite, one of them carrying a flag fashioned from women's lingerie.

At the time of the shot, Kavanaugh, who does not appear in the image, was a sophomore in the fraternity. Another man who was a member of dke at the time told the student paper, on Wednesday, that his brothers had obtained the underwear "consensually." But several female classmates suggested otherwise, saying that members of dke often attempted to ransack their rooms during class time. "They were loud, entitled, pushy, and creepy," one alumna tweeted. "They didn't care what we thought." On Sunday, the portrait of Kavanaugh's time at Yale came into sharper focus, when The New Yorker reported that Democrats are investigating a new allegation against him by a college classmate, Deborah Ramirez, who claims that, when they were both Yale freshmen and inebriated at a dorm-room party, Kavanaugh exposed himself and thrust his penis in her face. (Kavanaugh has denied both her allegation and Ford's.)

dke, usually pronounced as a single syllable, rhyming with "reek," was founded at Yale in 1844. It is one of the oldest fraternities in the nation, with chapters on more than fifty college campuses. Since Kavanaugh's time at Yale (where he also belonged to an all-male secret society, Truth and Courage, which was popularly known as Tit and Clit), the prevalence of Greek life on the campus has declined, but dke, sometimes described as the "white football frat," has maintained a reputation for aggressively loutish antics. "When we had a mixer with them, they didn't even want to talk to us,"

a classmate who is in a sorority told me recently. “They just wanted to pour beers on each other’s heads.”

I am currently a senior at Yale. When my class arrived, in the fall of 2015, dke was a dormant presence on campus. It operated mostly outside university bounds because of penalties it had incurred after a now infamous incident five years prior, when a pack of pledges thronged the freshman residential quadrangle to shout an initiation chant: “No means yes, yes means anal.” (Also: “Fucking sluts!” and “I fuck dead women and fill them with my semen.”) Soon after, sixteen students and alumnae filed a complaint with the Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights. The Yale College Executive Committee convened for months, and then issued a five-year ban on the fraternity, forbidding it from conducting activities on campus or using university e-mail to advertise events. To many students, the length of the sanctions seemed harsh. Yale’s administration generally prefers to adjudicate disciplinary infractions as individual cases rather than holding entire student groups accountable. Jonathan Holloway, who was then the dean of the college, told the Yale Daily News that he hoped a five-year ban at a four-year university could help dke to “flush institutional memory and culture out.”

In the years since Yale lifted the restrictions on dke, in 2016, the fraternity has experienced a turbulent return to campus life. In January, Business Insider published detailed accounts from two female undergraduates who alleged that they had been assaulted by dke brothers. One of the accused was a former president of the fraternity, who, in 2016, told the student paper that dkemembers of his generation had “played an important part in the cultural shift” that had occurred since the 2010 incident. (He was eventually expelled from the fraternity and suspended from Yale, for “penetration without consent”; in a statement to the Yale Daily News at the time, he said of the victim, “Though I deny many of the claims made, I respect this person and hope that she can find the same peace that I hope to find.”) Further investigation by the Daily Newsuncovered eight more women who alleged sexual misconduct by dke brothers between 2014 and 2017. (None of these women filed formal Title IX complaints.)

As the university prepared an investigation into dke’s transgressions, the Yale chapter of the fraternity released a set of guidelines designed to foster a “safer and more welcoming environment.” They would deputize co-ed bouncers and so-called sober monitors to maintain safety standards at gatherings. Water coolers would remain filled. Three-second pauses between songs would better allow guests to “avoid uncomfortable interactions.” At the same time, dkequieted down. Few female sports teams, and fewer sororities, agreed to mix with them. The fraternity refrained from advertising parties, seeming to sense that it might have trouble attracting guests, though it continued to host an annual celebration known as Tang, a raucous and muddy affair held after classes ended each spring. This past year, hundreds of students signalled on Facebook their plans to attend, but similar numbers gravitated toward a rival event hosted by

Engender, a student group that advocates for greater inclusion in fraternities. Engender brainstormed a hashtag—#boycottedke—and sent activists to distribute safety flyers outside the fraternity's houses. "In the wake of campus conversations about supporting survivors and denouncing sexual misconduct, partying is political," the group wrote on a Facebook page for the event.

This summer, dke lost its lease on the pair of buildings it has occupied for more than two decades. The fraternity's real-estate manager, himself an alumnus of Yale, told the student paper that the decision not to renew was a consequence of years of disruptive behavior and complaints of misconduct. Many current students cheer, and others lament, that "dke is dead." (In an e-mail, Doug Lanpher, dke's national executive director, told me, "We do not tolerate sexual misconduct in any form. Any member who is found responsible for violating Title IX rules on sexual misconduct is immediately removed from the chapter.") The demise of dke on Yale's campus is just one sign that the "horseplay" typical of fraternity life has become increasingly incompatible with many of the values—of safety, equality, inclusion—toward which most modern universities strive. Many of my peers, though suspicious of dke, find it no more hostile than other fraternities at Yale. In 2015, for instance, Sigma Alpha Epsilon (since rebranded as Leo), faced accusations of turning away students of color from a party and repeatedly shouting, "White girls only." That fraternity, much like dke, had previously been banned from campus as a punishment for violating the university's sexual-misconduct policy at an initiation ceremony and then trying to impede the resulting investigation.

On Monday, some classes at the Yale Law School were cancelled to allow students to protest Kavanaugh's nomination. Hundreds of law students travelled to D.C. Others remained in New Haven to mount a local demonstration. For many, the topic feels personal: one of the law school's top professors, Amy Chua, has been accused of coaching female students on their appearances to help them win clerkships with Kavanaugh. (Chua has called the claims "100% false.") Her husband and colleague at the law school, Jed Rubenfeld, is the subject of an ongoing internal investigation at Yale, whose details are confidential. ("For some years, I have contended with personal attacks and false allegations in reaction to my writing on difficult and controversial but important topics in the law," Rubenfeld told the Guardian. "I have reason to suspect I am now facing more of the same.") By the afternoon, a dozen or so demonstrators still lingered in the law school's main hall, wearing black as a sign of solidarity and drinking coffee from paper cups. "I would say that this community feels very strongly that Kavanaugh should not be confirmed under these circumstances," one told me.

Among undergraduates, reactions have been more subdued. "People here grapple constantly with this place's legacy of untouchable rich white dudes from prep school," Alexa Derman, a senior, told me. When the news reveals

that one such dude “might have been a creep at Yale,” she added, “it doesn’t shatter any illusions.” On Monday, an open letter from alumnae who stand in support of Ramirez—and Ford—began to circulate online. “We are coming forward as women of Yale because we have a shared experience of the environment that shaped not only Judge Kavanaugh’s life and career, but our own,” it said.

During her freshman year, Derman lived one floor above the suite where Ramirez alleges that Kavanaugh exposed himself. “I know the layout of that room,” she said. “It’s really strange. It feels almost so close that I don’t want to touch it. And, obviously, it makes you wonder, What would people say about me? Will people say I’m credible in twenty years, if something happens?” On Sunday, Derman wrote on Twitter that it’s easy to forget, in an “insular” place such as Yale, that, when students who behave badly graduate, “they don’t disappear but instead become part of the fabric of society, & a certain type ascends & ascends.” It’s “been unbearable at times to watch men I know have hurt my friends ascend within clubs to leadership,” she continued, adding, “How will we feel seeing which of them rise in their fields, our fields, invincible & untouchable?”

Brett Kavanaugh, like many men of his generation, is a product of an era in which fraternities were incubators of ambition. Five American Presidents, including the Yale alumni George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush, once belonged to dke. (In the satirical biopic “W.,” about the life of the younger Bush, the head of the fraternity is shown telling incoming freshmen, during a beer-drenched initiation ritual, “Delta Kappa brothers are men of honor, decency, and God-given character. That, along with our family fortunes, is why we rule the world.”) This reality, too, may be changing. Two years ago, Harvard made the historic and controversial decision to penalize single-gender social clubs and Greek organizations by banning their members from serving as the captains of athletic teams, leading official student groups, or receiving the university’s endorsement for top postgraduate fellowships such as the Marshall and Rhodes. Yale’s college dean, Marvin Chun, has established a committee to advise him on the regulation of campus social life, but has so far taken no similar steps. (“We have students who say we should be like Harvard, and we have many students who say we should not be like Harvard,” Chun told the Yale Daily News, earlier this year. “I have not formed an opinion strongly. I’m in listening mode.” In an e-mail on Tuesday, Chun told me, “We haven’t reached any decisions regarding Yale’s policies.”) Some of my classmates who are in dke, particularly the seniors, now distance themselves from the fraternity, admitting that being a member is a “bad look.” It is not hard to imagine a future in which membership in such a community—even one that purports to champion, as dkedoes, “the gentleman, the scholar, and the jolly good fellow”—is not an asset but a liability. We will find out this week, as the Kavanaugh hearings proceed, how near that future might be.

OCTOBER 2018

963 readings

[Why Californians are worried about the Trans Mountain pipeline](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 02 October 2018 10:32

Oilsands exports are headed to the Bay Area, where protests are already gearing up

Posts by James Wilt"

Canadians might imagine Burnaby as the main site of protest against the Trans Mountain oil pipeline and tanker project, the Vancouver suburb marked as it is by dozens of peaceful demonstrations, arrests and [in recent years](#).

[But a new line of opposition is now being drawn on sandy beaches some 1,300 kilometres to the south — in the Bay Area of California. There, residents are increasingly concerned that the expansion of Trans Mountain may result in a major uptick in tankers carrying Alberta oilsands crude to the region's five refineries, which comes with increased risks of spills, local air pollution, refinery accidents and a locking in of fossil fuel usage for decades to come.](#)

[Communities have specifically identified the proposed reconfiguration of the Phillips 66 Rodeo refinery](#) near San Francisco to process more oilsands crude as a sign of things to come — and are already fighting back.

Contrary to the claims often made by government and industry, expanded oilsands production is [far more likely to go to California than Asia](#): the state is much closer in proximity, sports the specialized refining capacity to process heavy oil and needs new imports to make up for dwindling domestic production.

Last Updated on Monday, 08 October 2018 19:14

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Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 04 October 2018 15:23

By [Tharanga Yakupitiyage](#) Reprint |  Print |



Poor dietary intake and lack of food varieties affect huge numbers of children, who mostly hail from large, impoverished families in Nepal. Malnutrition is a significant concern in Nepal as around one million children under 5 years suffer from chronic malnutrition and 10 percent suffer from acute malnutrition.

Credit: Naresh Newar/IPS

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 4 2018 (IPS) - A dramatic shift in the way we eat and think about food is more urgent than ever to prevent further environmental degradation and an even larger health epidemic.

A diverse group of experts from academia, civil society, and United Nations agencies convened at the sidelines of the General Assembly to discuss the pervasive issue of food insecurity and malnutrition and potential solutions to overhaul the system.

“Sustainable food choices is starting to both look good and taste good which hasn’t been the story of the past.” -- founder of EAT Gunhild Stordalen

“It’s striking that we are still, despite all the advances we have seen in

science and technology, we still have this big gap between those who eat too much and those who don't have enough food to eat," [Barilla Centre for Food and Nutrition Foundation's](#) head of media relations Luca Di Leo told IPS.

According to the [State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2018](#), the number of hungry people increased to over 820 million in 2017 from approximately 804 million in 2016, levels unseen for almost a decade.

At the same time, and perhaps paradoxically, obesity rates have rapidly increased over the last decade from 11.7 percent in 2012 to 13.2 percent in 2016. This means that in 2017, more than one in eight adults, or over 670 million people, in the world were obese.

Adult obesity and the rate of its increase is highest in North America, and increasing trends can now also be seen across Africa and Asia.

Participants at the [International Forum on Food and Nutrition](#) stressed the need to deal with both forms of malnutrition, and pointed to the lack of access to healthy food as the culprit.

"It's not just what's in the food, it's what's in the discourse about food...there is more than one way to eat badly," said director of [Yale University's Prevention Research Centre](#) David Katz.

However, many noted that there is a lack of a unified, factual consensus on what constitutes a healthy diet from a sustainable food system.

"Without goals to mobilise collective action, and also no mechanisms to either coordinate nor monitor progress, it is really hard to achieve large-scale system change," said founder of [EAT Foundation](#), a science-based global platform for food system transformation, Gunhild Stordalen.

Katz echoed similar sentiments, stating: "You will never get there if you can't agree where there is...we must rally around a set of fundamental truths."

Fighting the System

Among these truths is the need to overhaul the entire food and agricultural system.

Despite the notorious and shocking findings from the 2004 'Supersize Me' documentary, the consumption of unhealthy processed foods and sugar has only increased.

According to the [Barilla Centre for Food and Nutrition's Food Sustainability Index \(FSI\) 2017](#), the United States had the highest sugar consumption out of 34 countries in 2017.

The average person in the U.S. consumes more than 126 grams of sugar per day, twice the amount that the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) recommends for daily intake.

This not only leads to increasing obesity rates, but it has also contributed to a rise in levels of cardiovascular diseases and diabetes.

“The number of lost years to nutritional deficiencies and cardiovascular diseases has been going up very sharply in the United States,” said Leo Abruzzese from the Economist Intelligence Unit, which develops the index.

“One of the U.S.’ less impressive exports has been bad nutrition...people aren’t necessarily dying but they are living pretty miserable lives. Under those circumstances, wouldn’t you think there has to be something done?” he told IPS.

The [FSI](#) also found that the U.S.’ consumption of meat and saturated fat is among the highest in the world, contributing to unhealthy diets and even climate change.

Related IPS Articles

- [Local Communities in Mexico Show Ways to Fight Obesity](#)
- [India Uses Tech to Power its New Battle Against Malnutrition](#)
- [How the Lack of Affordable Vegetables is Creating a Billion-Dollar Obesity Epidemic in South Africa](#)

According to U.N. University, emissions from livestock account for almost 15 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. Beef and dairy alone make up 65 percent of all livestock emissions.

In fact, meat and dairy companies are on track to become the world’s biggest contributors to climate change, surpassing the fossil fuel industry.

However, Stordalen noted that delivering healthy and sustainable diets is within our reach.

Alternatives to meat have taken many countries by storm, and could slowly transform the fast food and meat industries. Consumers can now find the ‘impossible burger,’ a meatless plant-based burger, in many restaurants and fast food chains such as White Castle.

Recently, the U.S.-based vegan meat companies Beyond Meat and Impossible Foods was recently honoured by [U.N. Environment](#) with the Champions of the Earth award.

“Sustainable food choices is starting to both look good and taste good which hasn’t been the story of the past,” Stordalen said.

“Once people get the taste of better solutions, they not only start craving but even demanding a better future. They come together to make it happen,” she added.

The [FSI](#) is also a crucial tool to guide governments and policymakers to pay attention to progress and weaknesses in their own country’s food systems.

“By collecting all of these [indicators] together, we essentially have a framework for what we think a good food system would look like,” Abruzzese said.



In some African countries even though there is enough food, it is the type of food that is available that counts. In Malawi, for instance, even though families had increased access to maize, nearly half the children are malnourished. In this dated picture, these children from south Madagascar are malnourished. Credit: Miriam Gathigah/IPS

A Problem of Power

The lack of access to healthy food and its consequences can also be seen at the other end of the food value chain: producers.

Women account for up to 60 percent of agricultural labour across Africa, yet still have poor access to quality seeds, fertiliser, and mechanical equipment. At the same time, they often look after the household, taking care of children and cooking meals.

Such gender inequality has been found to contribute to poorer household

nutrition, including increases in stunting among children.

Forum participants highlighted the need to empower women farmers and address the gender inequalities in agriculture in order to advance food and nutrition security as well as establish sustainable societies.

“The opposite of hunger is power,” said University of Texas’ research professor Raj Patel, pointing to the case of Malawi.

In Malawi, more than half of children suffer from chronic malnutrition. The harvesting of corn, which is the southeastern African country’s main staple, is designated to women who are also tasked with care work.

“Even when there was more food, there was more malnutrition,” said Patel.

One northern Malawian village tackled the issue through the Soils, Food, and Healthy Communities Project and achieved extraordinary results.

Alongside actions to diversify crop, the project brought men and women together to share the workload such as cooking together and involving men in care work.

Not only did they achieve gender equality in agriculture, the village also saw dramatic decreases in infant malnutrition.

“We need to value women’s work,” Patel said.

Future of Food

Fixing the food and agricultural system is no easy task, but it has to be done, attendees said.

“We know what the problems are, we’ve also identified the potential solutions...and the main solution is each and every one of us,” Di Leo told IPS.

One of the key solutions is education and empowering people to be agents of change.

“Healthy production will come if the consumer ask for the healthy eating. And healthy eating will come if the consumer has the right education and information,” Di Leo said.

For instance, many do not see or know the link between food and climate change, he added.

In fact, a 2016 study found that there was a lack of awareness of the association between meat consumption and climate change and a resistance to the idea of reducing personal meat consumption.

“It’s a kind of change that needs a bottom-up approach,” Di Leo said.

Stordalen echoed Di Leo’s comments, calling for a global ‘dugnad’—a Norwegian word describing the act of a community uniting and working together to achieve a goal that will serve them all.

“The state of the global food system calls for new collaborative action,” she

said.

"It's time to officially ditch the saying that 'the more cooks, the worse soup' because we need everybody involved to serve our people and planet the right future."

952 readings

[Mexico's new science minister is a plant biologist who opposes transgenic crops](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 06 October 2018 14:55

I'm not a Luddite who is scared of technology," Elena Álvarez-Buylla says. GDA/EL UNIVERSAL/MEXICO/ASSOCIATED PRESS



"I'm not a Luddite who is scared of technology," Elena Álvarez-Buylla says.

GDA/EL UNIVERSAL/MEXICO/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mexico's new science minister is a plant biologist who opposes transgenic crops

By Lizzie Wade Oct. 4, 2018 , 11:30 AM

<https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2018/10/mexico-s-new-science-minister-plant-biologist-who-opposes-transgenic-crops>

MEXICO CITY—In early June, evolutionary developmental biologist Elena Álvarez-Buylla received an out-of-the-blue phone call from the campaign of Andrés Manuel López Obrador, then the front-runner in Mexico's presidential election, with a question. If López Obrador won, would she consider becoming the next director of the National Council of Science and Technology (Conacyt), the country's

science ministry and primary granting agency? "My first reaction was to say, 'I can't,' " recalls Álvarez-Buylla, a professor at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) here. "I have a great passion for scientific research," and she couldn't imagine leaving the laboratory.

But after thinking it over for a few hours, her passion for public service took over. "I started to have a feeling that I couldn't say no," says Álvarez-Buylla, who founded and leads Mexico's Union of Scientists Committed to Society (UCCS). "It doesn't matter how big the personal sacrifice is. ... This is a unique and historic moment" for Mexico.

López Obrador, a progressive populist, won the presidency in a landslide and will be sworn in on 1 December; Álvarez-Buylla is now preparing to leave the lab bench and assume her new role. She will be the president's primary science adviser and determine priorities for Conacyt's approximately \$1.5 billion budget, which funds grants to scientists working in the public and private sectors and supports tens of thousands of Mexican students at home and abroad.

Many scientists are delighted that one of their own will lead Conacyt—most of Álvarez-Buylla's predecessors were career administrators—and that she'll be the first woman to do so. But critics worry about her opposition to genetically modified (GM) maize, which Álvarez-Buylla fears could spoil the country's astonishing agricultural biodiversity. They also worry that in her commitment to socially relevant science, she may neglect basic research. A petition asking López Obrador to pick another director has gathered more than 1000 signatures.

"There's not a clear boundary" between her research and her activism, says Rodrigo Álvarez Aguilera, a science teacher here and one of the petition's organizers. Biochemist Luis Herrera Estrella, director of the National Laboratory of Genomics for Biodiversity in Irapuato, says Álvarez-Buylla is "a very good scientist" but calls her views on GM organisms "radical."

Born into a family of scientists, Álvarez-Buylla studied plant biology at UNAM and received her doctorate from the University of California, Berkeley. She returned to UNAM in 1992, where she now runs several research groups. Colleagues praise her contributions to the understanding of plant root development and how plant genotypes influence their traits. "There's no question that the

research she does is fantastic,” says her former collaborator Chelsea Specht, a plant evolutionary biologist at Cornell University. “And her advocacy is based in very good research.”

That advocacy began after a 2001 *Nature* paper reported that genetic material from the cauliflower mosaic virus, a common addition to GM plants, had been found in native maize varieties sampled in Mexico’s southern state of Oaxaca—likely the result of cross-pollination from industrially grown crops whose origin remains unclear. The finding shocked many because of maize’s all-important role in Mexican history and culture. Maize domestication began here about 9000 years ago, and Mexico now boasts at least 59 native varieties, called landraces, each exquisitely adapted to regional environmental and climatic conditions. Some possess unusual characteristics; in August, for instance, researchers reported that a landrace from Oaxaca can fix nitrogen from the atmosphere with the help of microbes, a trait known from beans and other legumes but never before found in maize. The adaptation allows it to thrive in nitrogen-poor soils; breeding it into other maize varieties could be a boon for farmers and might help reduce fertilizer use. Other landraces may have useful adaptations as well.

Álvarez-Buylla led a team that confirmed the results of the 2001 study and has continued to hunt for transgenic DNA and any possible effects in Mexican landraces, work that helped her win Mexico’s National Science Prize in 2017. She says she has nothing against genetic engineering in itself; her team creates and studies GM plants in the lab, and such experiments should not be prohibited or restricted, she says. “I’m not a Luddite who is scared of technology.” But her own experiments have shown introduced genes can have unpredictable effects. “If a transgene is inserted in one part of [a plant’s] genome, it can be silenced and have no effect. If it’s inserted in another part, it can lead to a tremendous change,” she says. That unpredictability makes it too risky to allow GM maize anywhere near Mexico’s landraces, she argues. Planting GM maize in Mexico has been prohibited since 2013, pending the outcome of a lawsuit. Álvarez-Buylla has been an outspoken proponent of a permanent ban.

Herrera Estrella, who develops GM plants, disputes the risks. In the more than 50 years that landraces have cross-pollinated with commercial, industrially grown maize varieties, “it has had no negative effect. ... It’s not contamination. It’s a completely natural biological process,” he says. If a foreign gene harms the

growth or development of maize, farmers simply won't use seeds from that individual plant the next year, and the damage won't be passed on. "Conacyt needs a director with an expansive view of science and technology and the impact they could have on Mexico's development. I think she has some very biased opinions," he says.

Some scientists have also raised questions about Álvarez-Buylla's plans to open dialogue between Mexico's scientific community and Indigenous knowledge producers. "Mexico has the opportunity to contribute to the world something truly new that comes out of a deep hybridization" of those two forms of knowledge, Álvarez-Buylla says. Critics say that philosophy diminishes Western scientific values and achievements. They also worry basic research will suffer because of Álvarez-Buylla's professed commitment to science that helps solve societal problems such as infant mortality and dwindling water supplies. "That's a fallacy," she says; Conacyt will remain supportive of basic research in all fields.

Álvarez-Buylla has little administrative experience, but she has proved herself capable at building and managing large research groups, says longtime colleague Daniel Piñero Dalmau, a plant population geneticist at UNAM. She has promised to improve Conacyt's grant evaluation process, which many say is frustratingly quantitative and completely opaque. "Changing anything in Mexico is really hard," Piñero Dalmau says. But Álvarez-Buylla "is deeply committed to this country."

997 readings

[UN Experts Warn of 'Climate Catastrophe' by 2040 Without 'Rapid' and 'Unprecedented' Global Action](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 08 October 2018 16:27

"The climate crisis is here and already impacting the most vulnerable," notes 350.org's program director. "Staying under 1.5°C is now a matter of political will."

by Jessica Corbett, staff writer Common Dreams

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change held a press conference on its new report in South Korea on Monday.

IPCC presser

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change held a press conference on its new report in South Korea on Monday. (Photo: @IPCC_CH/Twitter)

Underscoring the need for "rapid, far-reaching, and unprecedented" changes to life as we know it to combat the global climate crisis, a new report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)—the United Nations' leading body for climate science—details what the world could look like if the global temperature rises to 1.5°C versus 2°C (2.7°F versus 3.6°F) above pre-industrial levels, and outlines pathways to reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty.

"This is a climate emergency. The IPCC 1.5 report starkly illustrates the difference between temperature rises of 1.5°C and 2°C—for many around the world this is a matter of life and death."

—Karin Nansen, FOEI

"Climate change represents an urgent and potentially irreversible threat to human societies and the planet," the report reads. "Human-induced warming has already reached about 1°C (1.8°F) above pre-industrial levels at the time of writing of this Special Report... If the current warming rate continues, the world would reach human-induced global warming of 1.5°C around 2040."

Approved by the IPCC in South Korea on Saturday ahead of COP24 in Poland in December, Global Warming of 1.5°C was produced by 91 authors and reviewers from 40 countries. Its release has elicited calls to action from climate campaigners and policymakers the world over.

"This is a climate emergency. The IPCC 1.5 report starkly illustrates the difference between temperature rises of 1.5°C and 2°C—for many around the world this is a matter of life and death," declared Karin Nansen, chair of Friends of the Earth International (FOEI). "It is crucial to keep temperature rise well below 1.5 degrees without offsetting, carbon markets, and geoengineering, but the evidence presented by the IPCC shows that there is a narrow and shrinking window in which to do so."

The report was requested when the international community came together in December of 2015 for the Paris agreement, which aims to keep global warming

within this century "well below" 2°C, with an ultimate target of 1.5°C. President Donald Trump's predecessor supported the accord, but Trump has vowed to withdraw the United States, even as every other nation on the planet has pledged their support for it. In many cases, however, sworn support hasn't led to effective policy.

current policies

"It's a fresh reminder, if one was needed, that current emissions reduction pledges are not enough to meet the long-term goals of the Paris agreement. Indeed, they are not enough for any appropriately ambitious temperature target, given what we know about dangerous climate impacts already unfolding even at lower temperature thresholds," Rachel Cleetus, lead economist and climate policy manager for the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), wrote ahead of its release.

"The policy implications of the report are obvious: We need to implement a suite of policies to sharply limit carbon emissions and build climate resilience, and we must do all this in a way that prioritizes equitable outcomes particularly for the world's poor and marginalized communities," Cleetus added.

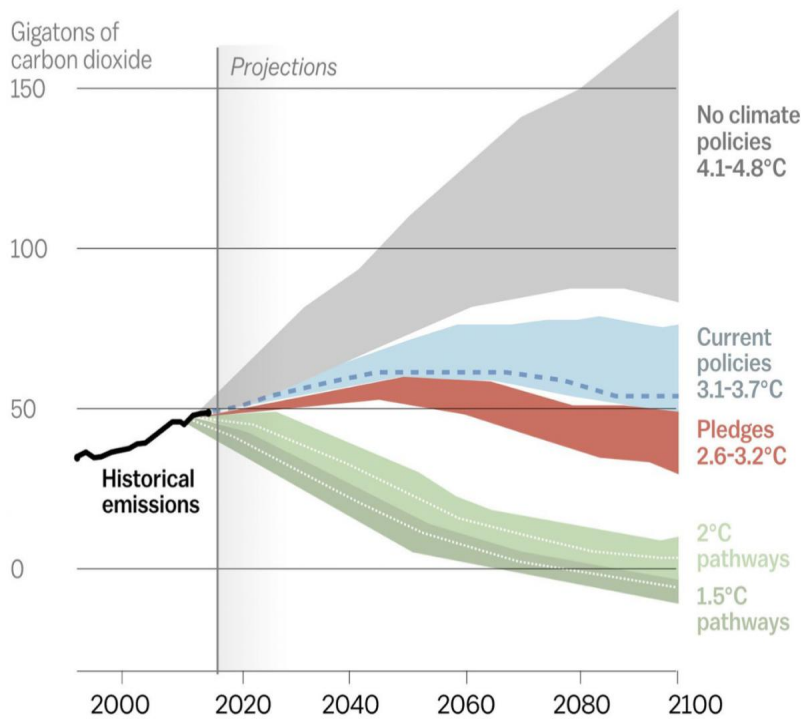
"We want a just transition to a clean energy system that benefits people not corporations," Nansen emphasized. "Only with a radical transformation of our energy, food and economic systems, embracing environmental, social, gender and economic justice, can we prevent climate catastrophe and temperature rises exceeding 1.5°C."

"The science in the IPCC report on 1.5°C speaks for itself. Staying under 1.5°C is now a matter of political will," responded 350.org program director Payal Parekh. "The climate crisis is here and already impacting the most vulnerable and the least responsible for creating it. The only way to achieve it is to stop all fossil fuel extraction and redirect the massive resources currently spent on the fossil fuel economy towards the renewable energy transition."

The report's key findings—outlined in the Summary for Policymakers (pdf)—include:

Effect of current pledges and policies

Global greenhouse gas emissions



Source: Climate Action Tracker

Vox

"It's a fresh reminder, if one was needed, that current emissions reduction pledges are not enough to meet the long-term goals of the Paris agreement. Indeed, they are not enough for *any* appropriately ambitious temperature target, given what we know about dangerous climate impacts already unfolding even at lower temperature thresholds,"

Climate models project robust differences in regional climate characteristics between present-day and global warming of 1.5°C, and between 1.5°C and 2°C. These differences include increases in: mean temperature in most land and ocean regions, hot extremes in most inhabited regions, heavy precipitation in several regions, and the probability of drought and precipitation deficits in some regions;

Climate-related risks to health, livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security, and economic growth are projected to increase with global warming of 1.5°C and increase further with 2°C;

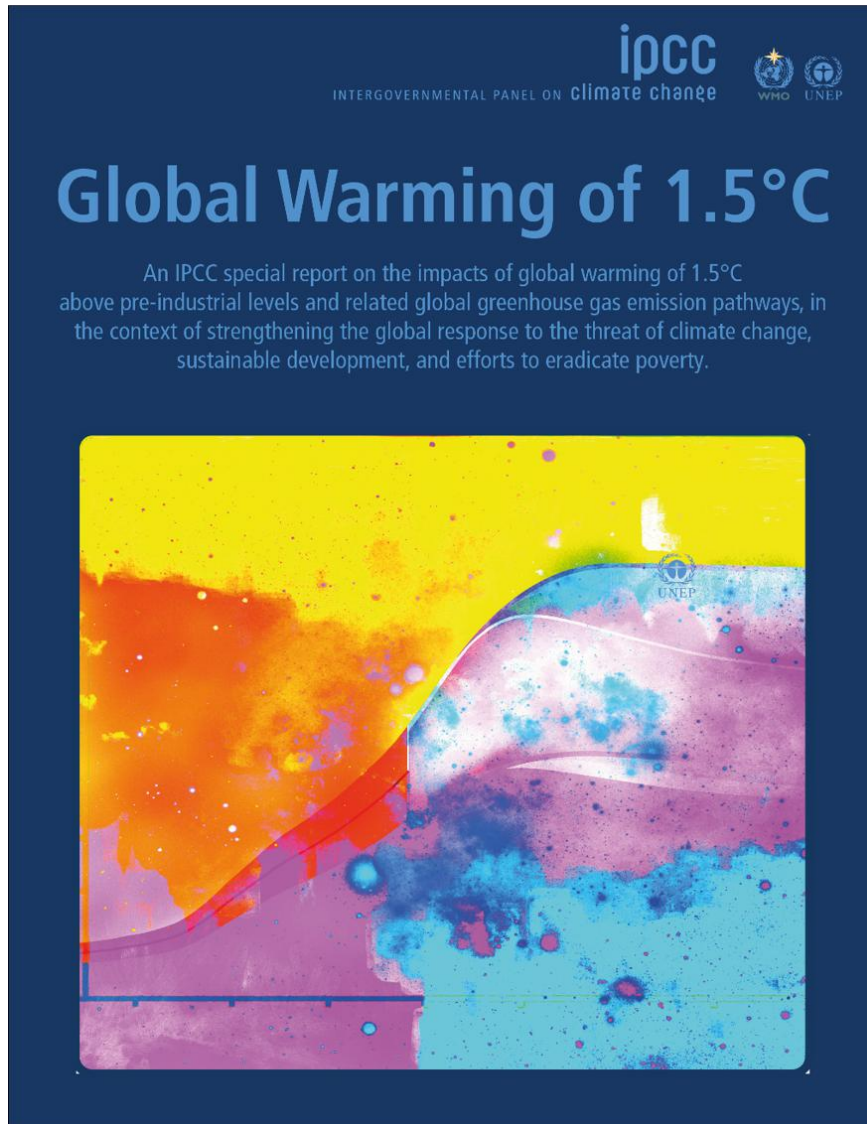
Pathways limiting global warming to 1.5°C with no or limited overshoot would require rapid and far-reaching transitions in energy, land, urban and infrastructure (including transport and buildings), and industrial systems. These systems transitions are unprecedented in terms of scale, but not necessarily in terms of speed, and imply deep emissions reductions in all sectors, a wide portfolio of mitigation options, and a significant upscaling of investments in those options;

All pathways that limit global warming to 1.5°C with limited or no overshoot project the use of carbon dioxide removal (CDR);

Limiting the risks from global warming of 1.5°C in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication implies system transitions that can be enabled by an increase of adaptation and mitigation investments, policy instruments, the acceleration of technological innovation and behavior changes;




Strengthening the capacities for climate action of national and sub-national authorities, civil society, the private sector, indigenous peoples and local communities can support the implementation of ambitious actions implied by limiting global warming to 1.5°C. International cooperation can provide an enabling environment for this to be achieved in all countries and for all people, in the context of sustainable development. International cooperation is a critical enabler for developing countries and vulnerable regions.

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Last Updated on Monday, 08 October 2018 18:56

1059 readings

[Foolish leaders and LNG](#)   

[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 08 October 2018 18:12

I cannot help but reflect this morning on what foolish leaders we have at the head of Canada and BC. They are so happy and excited to announce a \$40 billion LNG facility that will increase Greenhouse gases by 9 million megatonnes per year in BC per year and that includes the GHG from fracking.

If anyone thought Trudeau and Horgan were visionary leaders that would bring positive change to Canada they are sorely mistaken. These two like others are driven by capitalism, the need for money and jobs at the top of their agenda and not

pursuing a world where our grandchildren and great grandchildren will be able to survive increased temperatures, forest fires, flooding and other natural disasters caused by climate change and global warming. Instead of taking direct action on climate, Horgan tells people that forest fires are the new normal? Excuse me? It is easier to say that when it is not your forests, homes and businesses that are burning down. He should be stating what actions he and his government will take immediately to prevent forest fires next year.

I was appointed to BC Climate Solutions and Clean Growth Advisory Council that was announced shortly after the election of the BC NDP government. I was excited to work with a group of like minded individuals that would work on solutions to climate Change and make strong recommendations to government to actually make effective changes to slow down or stop climate change.

But then in December 2017 the BC government announced they would proceed with the Site C dam that would create more GHG. I was devastated that a government I thought would kill the dam decided to proceed with it. I told the Minister I wasn't sure I could remain on the advisory council in light of this decision. Could I work with a government that had these kinds of values? I took a couple of months to think on this and couldn't bring myself to attend these meetings any more.

Then early in the new year they announced they were in favor of LNG and promoting it. I knew then that I had to step off this council. How could I put considerable time, energy and expertise in a group that was trying to achieve solutions when the government was working against us to increase GHG.

I know this was the right decision for me. I can put my efforts into things that can make a difference.

Now I watch the BC government seemingly hesitate over whether they should back out of the equivalency agreement on the TransMountain Pipeline when they say they are opposed to it. If they were serious about BC's interest, that decision would have been made months ago and not just be considered now because of the TseilWaututh court case at the court of appeal.

I wonder what kind of world our children, grandchildren and generations to come will live in? Will they live in constant air conditioning because it is too hot to be outside? Will there be enough food to go around as our ocean warming will have killed off our fish? Or our forests have burned down and there is no wildlife to rely on for meat? Will there be special housing for flooded areas?

First Nations people are the most vulnerable and are greatly at risk for the impacts of global warming. Rising water levels and temperatures, flooding, location of communities in remote areas, and lack of commitment from the federal and provincial governments on funding for fighting fires, natural disasters relief during and after.

We saw many instances this summer where First Nations territories were ravaged

by fires and had one helicopter trying to put out a fire. Areas that could be quickly contained so as not to wreak so much damage burned longer than they should have. Yes, I understand the lack of available resources, but should BC not be prepared to fight all these fires? They did not follow all the recommendations from the Abbot-Chapman report so they should have known conditions would be worse this year.

Trudeau and Horgan look at the jobs for people. But if these people have no homes because they have been destroyed by fire or flooding What good does a job do? Or if they have a life that has little quality to it?

Rebuilding our world will take lots of money, time and in some cases, relocation if that is possible. That is one option if we don't act now.

The other option is to make wise decisions that don't require building businesses that create and increase GHG. Sustainability has to be more than a buzz word.

These two governments, the federal and provincial governments talk about reconciliation with First Nations people. Their actions and decisions don't come close to understanding what reconciliation is. Similarly they say they are implementing The Universal Declaration of indigenous rights that ensure indigenous peoples territories and lands are not developed without their free prior and informed consent. Their actions say they don't want reconciliation. They want what will get them re-elected-or so they think.

Just when you think your opinion of Prime Minister Trudeau and Premier can't go any lower, your opinion sinks to greater depths.

We as a people need to be more vocal and pro active and fight for a world that future generations can live in. We don't want to be responsible for actions that cause hardship and heart ache to them. Trudeau and Horgan will wear this decision and its effects but it is all of us who will have to live with it. These leaders may be fools but if we don't call them on it, we are allowing the foolishness. The time to act was yesterday and time is running out.

Kekinusuqs Judith Sayers

Last Updated on Monday, 08 October 2018 19:25

1208 readings

[U.S. conservation groups decry B.C. decision to allow logging in Skagit River system](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 11 October 2018 10:50

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/british-columbia/article-us-conservation-groups-decry-bc-decision-to-allow-logging->

in/?cmpid=rss&utm;_source=dlvr.it&utm;_medium=twitter&utm;_source=Watershed+Watch+Email+List&utm;_campaign=c1e8ad9a9b-SALMON_NEWS_2018_08_29_COPY_01&utm;_medium=email&utm;_term=0_405944b1b5-c1e8ad9a9b-166906521&mc;_cid=c1e8ad9a9b&mc;_eid=57336e93bf

Published October 9 2018

The B.C. government, which opposes the expansion of the Trans Mountain oil pipeline because of the potential threat to the Salish Sea's marine environment and its endangered killer whales, is putting those same waters at risk by approving logging in a sensitive watershed, a coalition of U.S. conservation organizations says.

The Skagit River system flows south from B.C. through Washington State and into Puget Sound, including waters that are critical to chinook salmon - the primary source of food for the southern resident killer whales.

“Washington State has spent hundreds of millions of dollars restoring one of the largest chinook runs in the Salish Sea. Why mess with that?” said Michelle Connor, past co-chair of the Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission. The jointly funded commission, established through a treaty between B.C. and the city of Seattle, is responsible for maintaining and protecting the watershed.

Over the objections of 15 U.S.-based conservation, recreation and wildlife organizations, logging began earlier this year in what has been dubbed the doughnut hole inside the boundaries of Manning Provincial Park, which borders Washington State. The permits were issued in 2015 for 39,000 cubic metres of timber on 67 hectares of land at the headwaters of the Skagit River. The doughnut hole is a small section within the park that is open to logging and mining, and it is the prospect of a copper mine in that region that has environmentalists especially worried.

Ms. Connor said B.C. is violating the spirit of the Skagit treaty, which was signed in 1984, by allowing logging in that watershed.

“It definitely violated the letter and the spirit of the treaty,” said Ms. Connor, who served as the U.S. co-chair of the commission for eight years.

She said logging is opening up the otherwise pristine valley to industrial development. There are 168 mineral claims in the area.

"It violates common sense to be embarking on this, given what is going on the Salish Sea, particularly as it relates to the [southern resident killer whales]."

Ken Farquharson served on the Canadian side as a commissioner. He said this is the first time that concerns have been raised about the treaty in all the years since it was signed.

"This is more than just an issue over logging. What is being tested here is the treaty itself. This is a breach of the treaty," he said. The government agency B.C. Timber Sales approved logging without consulting first with the commission. "This came as an absolute shock to the commission," Mr. Farquharson said.

Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan has pushed to raise the issue ahead of a meeting that will take place Wednesday between B.C. Premier John Horgan and Washington State Governor Jay Inslee.

Mr. Horgan and Mr. Inslee are meeting to sign a bilateral agreement on innovation, the latest in a series of conferences highlighting co-operation between the two jurisdictions. But conservationists on both sides of the border say Mr. Horgan's government is undermining that relationship by allowing logging in a watershed that is critical to grizzly bear and spotted owl, as well as endangered bull trout in Washington State.

Mr. Inslee has identified chinook salmon recovery as a critical issue for protecting the endangered southern resident killer whales that reside in the shared waters between B.C. and Washington State.

Mr. Horgan, whose government has fought to block the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion, raised the logging issue in a phone call with the Governor in early September, said Jen Holmwood, deputy director of communications for the Premier's office. In that call, Mr. Horgan acknowledged concerns and promised to work on them.

But logging has continued this fall and Joe Foy, co-executive director for the Wilderness Committee, said the B.C. NDP government under Mr. Horgan seems unable or unwilling to listen to environmental concerns, from construction of the Site C dam to the creation of a liquefied natural gas industry. "Even a small area like the Manning Park doughnut hole, we just seem unable to change course," he said. "The fix isn't that difficult."

1282 readings

[New study links common herbicides and antibiotic resistance](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 12 October 2018 11:54

12 October 2018

A new study finds that bacteria develop antibiotic resistance up to 100,000 times faster when exposed to the world's most widely used herbicides, Roundup (glyphosate) and Kamba (dicamba) and antibiotics compared to without the herbicide.

BY Jack Heinemann

A new study finds that bacteria develop antibiotic resistance up to 100,000 times faster when exposed to the world's most widely used herbicides, Roundup (glyphosate) and Kamba (dicamba) and antibiotics compared to without the herbicide.

This study adds to a growing body of evidence that herbicides used on a mass industrial scale, but not intended to be antibiotics, can have profound effects on bacteria, with potentially negative implications for medicine's ability to treat infectious diseases caused by bacteria, says University of Canterbury scientist Professor Jack Heinemann, one of the study's authors.

“The combination of chemicals to which bacteria are exposed in the modern environment should be addressed alongside antibiotic use if we are to preserve antibiotics in the long-term,” he says.

An important finding of the new study was that even in cases where the herbicides increase the toxicity of antibiotics they also significantly increased the rate of antibiotic resistance, which the study's authors say could be contributing to the greater use of antibiotics in both agriculture and medicine.

Previously these researchers found that exposure to the herbicide products Roundup, Kamba and 2,4-D or the active ingredients alone

most often increased resistance, but sometimes increased susceptibility of potential human pathogens such as *Salmonella enterica* and *Escherichia coli* depending on the antibiotic. [1]

“We are inclined to think that when a drug or other chemical makes antibiotics more potent, that should be a good thing. But it also makes the antibiotic more effective at promoting resistance when the antibiotic is at lower concentrations, as we more often find in the environment” Professor Heinemann says.

“Such combinations can be like trying to put out the raging fire of antibiotic resistance with gasoline.”

‘Agrichemicals and antibiotics in combination increase antibiotic resistance evolution’ was published online in the peer-reviewed journal PeerJ on 12 October and can be downloaded without charge from here: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7717/peerj.5801>.

[1] Kurenbach, B., Marjoshi, D., Amabile-Cuevas, C.F., Ferguson, G.C., Godsoe, W., Gibson, P. and Heinemann, J.A. 2015. Sub-lethal exposure to commercial formulations of the herbicides dicamba, 2,4-D and glyphosate cause changes in antibiotic susceptibility in *Escherichia coli* and *Salmonella enterica* serovar Typhimurium. *Mbio* 6, e00009-00015.

Kurenbach, B., Gibson, P.S., Hill, A.M., Bitzer, A.S., Silby, M.W., Godsoe, W. and Heinemann, J.A. 2017. Herbicide ingredients change *Salmonella enterica* sv. Typhimurium and *Escherichia coli* antibiotic responses. *Microbiology* 163, 1791-1801.

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[Rwanda Leverages Green Climate Fund's Opportunities to Fast-Track Sustainable Development](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 12 October 2018 17:31

By Aimable Twahirwa



Greening practices are being adopted in Rwanda which include the terracing on hillsides to control erosion like here in Rulindo district, Northern Rwanda. Credit: Aimable Twahirwa/IPS

KIGALI, Oct 12 2018 (IPS) - In a move to achieve its green growth aspirations by 2050, Rwanda has placed a major focus on promoting project proposals that shift away from “business as usual” and have a significant impact on curbing climate change while attracting private investment.

The latest report published by the Rwanda Environmental Management Authority (REMA) in 2015 states that the country needs to adapt - and keep adapting - so that Rwandans can become climate resilient and be assured that they can thrive under changing climate conditions.

Rwanda is one of a few nations in the world to develop its own climate-related domestic budget to finance mitigation and adaptation projects and leverage international climate finance. Since it was established in 2012, the National Fund for Climate and Environment, commonly known as “FONERWA”, has played a major role in this country’s climate resilient development by financing various green economy projects.

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It is also the focal point for channeling international climate finance into projects in Rwanda, while offering technical assistance to project proponents to ensure the success of investments.

“Thanks to this expertise, much of the core funding has been allocated to projects on a grant basis, returns are being measured in impact,” Daniel Ogbonnaya, the acting country representative and lead, Rwanda programme coordinator of Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), in Kigali, tells IPS.

GGGI is an international organisation that has partnered with the Rwandan government to help the country access the Green Climate Fund (GCF). The GCF, established by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), assists developing countries in adaptation and mitigation to counter climate change.

For example, one of FONERWA’s major impacts during the implementation phase has seen over 130,000 green jobs created, nearly 25,000 families connected to clean energy, and approximately 20,000 hectares of land secured against erosion, according to official estimates.

Now the East African country which has faced challenges related to the pressures on natural resources from a growing population is relying on FONERWA to implement its national Green Growth and Climate Resilience Strategy, adopted in 2011, to achieve some of its national climate targets.

FONERWA, which is the sole vehicle through which environment and

climate change finance is channeled, programmed, disbursed and monitored in the country, is also being used by the government as an instrument to facilitate direct access to international environment and climate finance.

Government departments and districts can access FONERWA funding. But the fund is also open to charitable and private entities, including businesses, civil society and research institutions. However, to be eligible for funding, proposals are required to meet standard criteria set out for achieving the country's green growth.

GGGI is providing technical assistance to strengthen the capacity of FONERWA in designing world class climate resilience projects and to enhance the fund's ability to mobilise more resources.

The institute has been focusing on providing demand-driven technical advisory services; the development of inclusive green growth plans that are gender sensitive; and the creation of an enabling environment to engage and foster public and private sector investment in green growth.

While a significant amount of money has been allocated by FONERWA toward efforts to help mitigate climate change, one of the key criteria for approval of funding proposals was taken into account in selecting public and private adaptation and mitigation projects and programmes to finance.

The director general of REMA and also the national focal person of the GCF, Coletha Ruhamy, explained that growth in Rwanda is only possible if the private sector is on board and plays a leading role.

“This is because business practice in the country has always been associated with environmental pollution and degradation,” she told IPS.

In April, FONERWA proposed a new approach dedicated to encouraging the private sector to take advantage of the existing opportunities in addressing environmental challenges, including climate change.

Since its inception in 2012, FONERWA has successfully funded 35 competitively-awarded, high-impact projects to the tune of 54 million dollars and has also received in 2018 another 33 million dollars of earmarked funding from the GCF as the accredited entity's implementing partner for a new climate-resilience project in Rwanda.

However, some stakeholders in the private sector stress the need for serious sensitisation programmes meant for local investors to understand the opportunities that are in the industrial sector through leveraging on the green fund.

The chief executive officer of the Rwanda Private Sector Federation (PSF), Stephen Ruzibiza, told IPS that local private investors have a lot to access within the green fund.

Currently the PSF is engaging with FONERWA and a limited number of local financial intermediaries to offer long-term loans to private businesses focusing on environmental sustainability with a low interest rate which is fixed at 11.5 percent.

The current average lending interest rate for commercial banks in Rwanda is 17.58 percent, according to the National Bank of Rwanda.

According to Jean Ntazinda, a consultant with the FONERWA Readiness Support Project, the private sector in Rwanda has so far been left behind when compared to government entities in accessing the GCF financing mechanism.

“Although at the national level some private sector projects relating to adaptation got financed, there is a long way to bring the private sector on board due to the lack of another entity accredited by GCF,” Ntazinda told IPS in an exclusive interview.

In 2015, Rwanda’s ministry of environment became accredited with the GCF and received a promise of 10 to 50 million dollars in climate finance. It was the country’s first national institution to receive GCF accreditation.

In March 2018, the government of Rwanda received an additional 32.8 million dollars from GCF to strengthen climate resilience in Gicumbi District, Northern Province.

The ‘Strengthening Climate Resilience of Rural Communities in Northern Rwanda’ project, that will run for six years, is expected to invest in climate-resilient settlements for families currently living in areas prone to landslides and floods, and support community-based adaptation planning and livelihoods diversification.

Currently FONERWA is in the process of developing several innovative

funding mechanisms to finance pro-poor climate projects in Rwanda.

For instance, Result-Based Finance (RBF) is one of the approaches currently being used to fund renewable energy mini-grid projects in poor rural areas of Rwanda at a time when Rwandan officials are aiming to achieve 51 percent of electricity access by the end of 2019, from the current 45 percent.

RBF are payments that are disbursed at the end of the construction of the mini-grids, provided that pre-agreed conditions and milestones are met.

“This incentivises developers to look for private equity and debt to fund the construction costs. And it gives further certainty to the lenders that parts of the debt will be repaid,” Ogbonnaya told IPS.

However, Ogbonnaya is convinced that local commercial banks in Rwanda are willing to promote access to private finance for green initiatives, but don't yet understand the process.

“This is because using government or local budget is key to showing country ownership and to showing that a specific project is part of a broader national strategy, but for adaptation funds, co-benefits such as social, environment, gender impacts and pro-poor impacts are so crucial,” he said.

1512 readings

['Deeply concerning': Canada pension fund invests in US immigration detention firms](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 14 October 2018 17:40

Canada Pension Plan Investment Board has \$5.9m of stock in firms profiting from Trump's 'zero-tolerance' Mexico border policy

This story is co-published with the Documented news website and newsletter

Max Siegelbaum of Documented

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/oct/12/canada-pension-fund-invests-in-us-immigration-detention-firms?CMP=share_btn_fb

Fri 12 Oct 2018 11.00 BST Last modified on Fri 12 Oct 2018 18.32 BST



Last Updated on Tuesday, 06 November 2018 23:19

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[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 15 October 2018 18:07

Rob Shaw

The Province

Published: October 14, 2018

Updated: October 14, 2018 6:00 PM PDT

1679 readings

[the Dutch Court Decision: is a Precedent to be used in a case before the Supreme Court of Canada](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 16 October 2018 08:24

in November 2015 I wrote

At COP 21 in Paris. Ban Ki Moon urged the negotiators to negotiate with a global vision not with national interests (COP 21, Press, Conference, 2015)

A global vision would be to address article 2 and at a minimum to immediately close the tar sands to end all subsidies for fossil fuel, to calculate the carbon budget for Canada, to divest in fossil fuels and to reinvest in renewable energy, to conserve sinks - such as old growth forests and bogs (not just as a means to offset emissions), to strengthen conservation of biodiversity, to avoid all false solutions such as nuclear, geo-engineering and biofuels which would all violate principles within the UNFCCC, promote nature-based solutions along with solar energy, wind energy, wave and geothermal and to compensate for historical emissions, and to institute a fair and just transition for workers affected negatively by the new vision and to reduce and reallocate the military budget and transfer the funds to address climate change

A real global vision, however, would be time lines and targets in line with existing and emerging science such as 20% below 1990 by 2018, 30% below 1990 levels by 2019, 40% below 1990 levels by 2020, 60 % below 1990 levels by 2025, 75% below 1990 below 1990 levels by 2035 and 100% below 1990 emissions by 2040, and reaching Decarbonization with 100% socially equitable ecologically sound renewable energy,

Written in Paris when I attended COP21 2015 in November

In July 2015 I wrote

[AnAnalysis of the Dutch Court Decision: could this be a Precedent to be used in a case before the Supreme Court of Canada?](#)



4304 readings

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 06 July 2015 14:06

Dutch case should influence the commitments made by Canada to COP21 in Paris. Canada should commit to 25% below 1990 levels by 2020

By Joan Russow PHD

Global Compliance Research Project

Before COP21, The Trudeau government should make a commitment based on the principles of the Dutch cas; 25% below 1990 by 2020

After doing a content analysis of the successful Dutch Court Case, brought by environmentalists against the the Dutch government, I could see that there were many precedents in the decision that could be used, by advocates, in Canada. In the content analysis, I have isolated sections; such as norms, targets, international principles, obligations, pace of reduction, urgency, definitive science, per capita relevance etc.

A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE DUTCH COURT DECISION

Joan Russow PHD

Global Compliance Research Project

SEE COURT

DECISION AT <http://uitspraken.rechtspraak.nl/inziendocument?id=ECLI:NL:RBDHA:2015:7196&keyword;=urgenda>

****ENDORSED THE PRINCIPLE OF FAIRNESS

The principle of fairness (i) means that the policy should not only start from what is most beneficial to the current generation at this moment, but also what this means for future generations, so that future generations are not exclusively and disproportionately burdened with the consequences of climate change. The principle of fairness also expresses that industrialised countries have to take the lead in combating climate change and its negative impact. The justification for this, and this is also noted in literature, lies first and foremost in the fact that from a historical perspective the current industrialised countries are the main causes of the current high greenhouse gas concentration in the atmosphere and that these countries also benefited from the use of fossil fuels, in the form of economic growth and prosperity. Their prosperity also means that these countries have the most means available to take measures to combat climate change. [26](#)

**** AFFIRMED THE OBJECTIVE OF THE UNFCCC IPCC

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the IPCC

4.11.

Well before the 1990s, there was a growing realisation among scientists that human caused (anthropogenic) greenhouse gas emissions possibly led to a global temperature rise, and that this could have catastrophic consequences for man and the environment. This realisation led to the UN Climate Change Convention in 1992, of which the objective is formulated in Article 2, referred to in

2.37, as follows: to achieve stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. As stated previously, 195 countries, including the Netherlands and the EU, have endorsed this objective.

4.15.

The IPCC reports referred to here also state that the anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions need to be decreased substantially in order to prevent dangerous climate change. This, too, has been acknowledged by the signatories to the UN Climate Change Convention, including during the 2007 climate conference (Bali Action Plan) and again in 2010 (Cancun). From AR5/2013, supported by publications of other knowledge institutes, such as EDGAR (see 2.25) and UNEP (see 2.29), it is apparent that the global anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases is increasing rather than decreasing. The court also considers this information as certain.

4.16

**** SUPPORTED THE NORM % BELOW 1990 BY 2020

2.19

The parties agree that the severity and scope of the climate problem make it necessary to take measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Based on the State's current policy, the Netherlands will achieve a reduction of 17% at most in 2020, which is below the norm of 25% to 40% for developed countries deemed necessary in climate science and international climate policy.?

25% below 1990 levels by 2020 is less than previously agreed to 24,398 million

metric tons

2.72 Previously Netherlands stated it remains important for the developed countries to take the lead by committing to a joint 30% reduction of their greenhouse gas emissions by 2020, compared to 1990

4.26.

In the period 2007-2009, the Netherlands initially focused its climate policy on a reduction target of 30% in 2020 compared to 1990, which was therefore higher than the EU's target of 20%.

European Union

2.76 The European Union's objective of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 20% is within reach. The European Union has not decided to raise it to the conditional target of 30%, partly because there is no agreement whether or not the formulated condition – a significant reduction by other major economies – has been met

4.25.

In the European context, in response to AR4/2007, the European Council considered that the industrialised countries should take the lead and commit to a collective 30% reduction of their greenhouse gas emissions by 2020, compared to 1990. The Council also believed that the countries should also do this in order to reduce their collective emissions by 60-80% by 2050, compared to 1990. Therefore, the European Council established the reduction target at 30% in 2020, provided that other industrialised countries and economically more advanced countries commit to similar emission reductions. Therefore, the European Council commits to realising an international emission reduction of 20% in 2020 compared to 1990, and to a 30% reduction target if the aforementioned condition is met. However, the condition has not been met so far, keeping the EU-wide reduction target at 20%

****ACKNOWLEDGED GAP PERCEIVED BY UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

4.79.

It is an established fact that climate change is a global problem and therefore requires global accountability. It follows from the UNEP report that based on the reduction commitments made in Cancun, a gap between the desired CO₂ emissions (in order to reach the climate objective) and the actual emissions (14-17 Gt CO₂) will have arisen by 2030. This means that more reduction measures have to be taken on an international level. It compels all countries, including the Netherlands, to implement the reduction measures to the fullest extent as possible. The fact that the amount of the Dutch emissions is small compared to other countries does not affect the obligation to take precautionary measures in view of

the State's obligation to exercise care

**** CONFIRMED NO DISPUTE ABOUT SCIENCE

4.16

It is not disputed between the Parties that dangerous climate change has severe consequences on a global and local level. The IPCC has reported that the ice at the North and South Poles as well as alpine glaciers are melting due to global warming, which will result in a rise in sea levels. Moreover, the warming of the oceans is expected to result in increased hurricane activity, expansion of desert areas and the extinction of many animal species because of the heat, the latter causing a decline in biodiversity. People will suffer damage to their living environment because of these changes, for instance, a deterioration of food production. Furthermore, the temperature rise will lead to heat-related deaths, particularly among the elderly and children. The IPCC reports also state that the current temperature rise causes damage to man and the environment. The 2 °C target, also assumed by the Netherlands, is intended to prevent climate change from becoming irreversible: without intervention, the aforementioned processes will become unstoppable.

.**** ACCEPTED THE CREDIBILITY OF IPCC

4.12

The UN Climate Change Convention also made provisions for the establishment of the IPCC as a global knowledge institute. The IPCC reports have bundled the knowledge of hundreds of scientists and to a great extent represent the current climate science. The IPCC is also an intergovernmental organisation. The IPCC's findings serve as a starting point for the COP decisions, which are taken by the signatories to the UN Climate Change Convention during their climate conferences. Similarly, the Dutch and European decision-making processes pertaining to the climate policies to be pursued are also based on the climate science findings of the IPCC. The court – and also the Parties – therefore considers these findings as facts.

Executive SUMMARY

According to the latest findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), without urgent action, climate change will bring severe, pervasive and irreversible impacts on all the world's people and ecosystems. Limiting dangerous rises in global average temperature to below 2°C compared with pre-industrial levels (the below 2°C objective) will require substantial and sustained reductions

in greenhouse gas emissions by all countries.

**** TOOK AS A GIVEN ANTHROPOGENIC (HUMAN-CAUSED) CAUSES OF CLIMATE CHANGE INCLUDING FOSSIL FUEL CONSUMPTION AND DEFORESTATION

2.18

In 2013-2014, the IPCC published its latest insights into the scope, effects and causes of climate change. In the report concerned (AR5/2013) the IPCC, in accordance with AR4/2007, established that the earth has been warming as a result of the high increase of CO₂ concentrations in the atmosphere since the Industrial Revolution (base year 1850) and that this has been caused by human activity, particularly the combustion of oil, natural gas and coal as well as deforestation:

*** OPPOSED DELAYING OF ACTIONS

Lastly, when action is delayed, options to achieve stringent levels of climate protection are increasingly lost.”

2.19

Delaying mitigation efforts beyond those in place today through 2030 is estimated to substantially increase the difficulty of the transition to low longer-term emissions levels and narrow the range of options consistent with maintaining temperature change below 2°C relative to pre-industrial levels (high confidence). Cost-effective mitigation scenarios that make it at least *as likely as not* that temperature change will remain below 2°C relative to pre-industrial levels (2100 concentrations between about 450 and 500 ppm CO₂eq) are typically characterized by annual GHG emissions in 2030 of roughly between 30 GtCO₂eq and 50 GtCO₂eq (Figure SPM.5, left panel). Scenarios

2.30 although later-action scenarios might reach the same temperature targets as their least-cost counterparts, later-action scenarios pose greater risks of climate impacts for four reasons. First delaying action allows more greenhouse gases to build-up in the atmosphere in the near term, thereby increasing the risk that later emission reductions will be unable to compensate for this build up. Second, the risk of overshooting climate targets for both atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases and global temperature increase is higher with later-action

scenarios. Third, the near-term rate of temperature is higher, which implies greater near-term climate impacts. Lastly, when action is delayed, options to achieve stringent levels of climate protection are increasingly lost.”

4.58.

With the precautionary principle (ii) the UN Climate Change Convention expresses that taking measures cannot be delayed to await full scientific certainty. The signatories should anticipate the prevention or limitation of the causes of climate change or the prevention or limitation of the negative consequences of climate change, regardless of a certain level of scientific uncertainty. In making the consideration that is needed for taking precautionary measures, without having absolute certainty whether or not the actions will have sufficient effects, the Convention states that account can be taken of a cost-benefit ratio: precautionary measures which yield positive results worldwide at as low as possible costs will be taken sooner.

“1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

According to the latest findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), without urgent action, climate change will bring severe, pervasive and irreversible impacts on all the world's people and ecosystems. Limiting dangerous rises in global average temperature to below 2°C compared with pre-industrial levels (the below 2°C objective) will require substantial and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions by all countries.

This global transition to low emissions can be achieved without compromising growth and jobs, and can provide significant opportunities to revitalise economies in Europe and globally. Action to tackle climate change also brings significant benefits in terms of public well-being. Delaying this transition will, however, raise overall costs and narrow the options for effectively reducing emissions and preparing for the impacts of climate change.

All countries need to act urgently and collectively.

4;32 Urgenda argues that the first graph – whose information is detailed further in the second and third graphs – shows that a delayed reduction path results in higher emissions than does a more evenly distributed reduction effort over the entire period up to the year 2050 or with a linear approach. Urgenda claims that graph also shows that a delayed reduction (less reduction until 2030 and more thereafter) will lead to higher total emissions and thereby increases the chances of exceeding

the remaining “budget”

**** REFERRED TO RANGE OF TARGET 1.5 OR 2 DEGREE RISE

2. What emission levels are anticipated for 2020?

Global greenhouse gas emissions in 2020 are estimated at 59 GtCO₂e per year under a business-as-usual scenario. If implemented fully, pledges and commitments would reduce this by 3–7 GtCO₂e per year (...).

3. What is the latest estimate of the emissions gap in 2020?

(...) Least-cost emission pathways consistent with a likely chance of keeping global mean temperature increases below 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels have a median level of 44 GtCO₂e in 2020 (range: 38–47 GtCO₂e). Assuming full implementation of the pledges, the emissions gap thus amounts to between 8–12 GtCO₂e per year in 2020 (...).

6. What are the implications of later action scenarios that still meet the 1.5°C and 2°C targets?

2.49.

At the climate conference in Cancun in 2010, the parties involved issued various decisions, including The Cancun Agreements (Decision 1/CP.16), which contains the following sections, among others:

“Recalling its decision 1/CP.13 (the Bali Action Plan) and decision 1/CP.15 (...),

Noting resolution 10/4 of the United Nations Human Rights Council on human rights and climate change, which recognizes that the adverse effects of climate change have a range of direct and indirect implications for the effective enjoyment of human rights and that the effects of climate change will be felt most acutely by those segments of the population that are already vulnerable owing to geography, gender, age, indigenous or minority status, or disability (...),

Further recognizes that deep cuts in global greenhouse gas emissions are required according to science, and as documented in the Fourth Assessment Report of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change, with a view to reducing global greenhouse gas emissions so as to hold the increase in global average temperature below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, and that Parties should take urgent action to meet this long-term goal, consistent with science and on the basis of equity; also recognizes the need to consider, in the context of the first review, as referred to in

paragraph 138 below, strengthening the long-term global goal on the basis of the best available scientific knowledge, including in relation to a global average temperature rise of 1.5°C;

Durban 2011

2.51.

The parties at the climate conference in Durban in 2011 issued several decisions. Decision 1/CP.17 states the following, among other things:

“ *Recognizing* that climate change represents an urgent and potentially irreversible threat to human societies and the planet and thus requires to be urgently addressed by all Parties (...),

Noting with grave concern the significant gap between the aggregate effect of Parties’ mitigation pledges in terms of global annual emissions of greenhouse gases by 2020 and aggregate emission pathways consistent with having a likely chance of holding the increase in global average temperature below 2°C or 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, (...)”

IPCC has stated in each of its reports how certain or uncertain its observations and findings are.

4.14.

In AR4/2007 and AR5/2013, the IPCC has established that a worldwide climate change is taking place and that it is very probable that human actions, particularly the combustion of fossil fuels (oil, gas, coal) and deforestation, are the main causes of the observed global warming since the middle of the nineteenth century. In AR4/2007, the IPCC furthermore has stated that a temperature rise of more than 2 °C over the pre-industrial level would cause dangerous and irreversible climate change which would threaten the environment and man. This has resulted in the formulation of the aforementioned 2°C target. The IPCC has not changed this target in AR5/2013. The signatories to the UN Climate Change Convention, including, as stated previously, the Netherlands and the EU, have explicitly acknowledged these findings during the climate conference of 2010 (Cancun Agreements). The court therefore finds that the 2 °C target has globally been taken as the starting point for the development of climate policies. Incidentally, this comes with a restriction for a number of countries in the Pacific Ocean, such as Tuvalu and Fiji, for which dangerous climate change, with the associated risk of destruction of their entire territories, probably will already occur at a temperature rise of 1.5 °C. The signatories therefore decided in Cancun to “maintain a view on” a 1.5 °C target.

***ACKNOWLEDGED SEVERITY AND URGENCY

2.19

The parties agree on the severity and scope of the climate problem make it necessary to take measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

2.49.

At the climate conference in Cancun in 2010, the parties involved issued various decisions, including The Cancun Agreements (Decision 1/CP.16), which contains the following sections, among others:

“Recalling its decision 1/CP.13 (the Bali Action Plan) and decision 1/CP.15 (...),

Noting resolution 10/4 of the United Nations Human Rights Council on human rights and climate change, which recognizes that the adverse effects of climate change have a range of direct and indirect implications for the effective enjoyment of human rights and that the effects of climate change will be felt most acutely by those segments of the population that are already vulnerable owing to geography, gender, age, indigenous or minority status, or disability (...),

Further recognizes that deep cuts in global greenhouse gas emissions are required according to science, and as documented in the Fourth Assessment Report of the Inter- governmental Panel on Climate Change, with a view to reducing global greenhouse gas emissions so as to hold the increase in global average temperature below 2°C above pre- industrial levels, and that Parties should take urgent action to meet this long-term goal, consistent with science and on the basis of equity; also recognizes the need to consider, in the context of the first review, as referred to in paragraph 138 below, strengthening the long-term global goal on the basis of the best available scientific knowledge, including in relation to a global average temperature rise of 1.5°C;

2.60

“2. THE CLIMATE CHALLENGE: REACHING THE 2°C OBJECTIVE

Strong scientific evidence shows that urgent action to tackle climate change is imperative. Recent studies, such as the Stern review, reaffirm the enormous costs of failure to act. These costs are economic, but also social and environmental and will especially fall on the poor, in both developing and developed countries. A failure to act will have serious local and global security implications. Most solutions are readily available, but governments must now adopt policies to implement them. Not only is the economic cost of doing so manageable, tackling climate change also brings considerable benefits in other respects. The EU's objective is to limit global average temperature increase to less than 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels. This will limit the impacts of climate change and the

likelihood of massive and irreversible disruptions of the global ecosystem. The Council has noted that this will require atmospheric concentrations of GHG to remain well below 550 ppmv CO₂-eq. By stabilising long-term concentrations at around 450 ppmv CO₂-eq. there is a 50% chance of doing so. This will require global GHG emissions to peak before 2025 and then fall by up to 50% by 2050 compared to 1990 levels. The Council has agreed that developed countries will have to continue to take the lead to reduce their emissions between 15 to 30% by 2020. The European Parliament has proposed an EU CO₂ reduction target of 30% for 2020 and 60 to 80% for 2050.”

“1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

According to the latest findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), without urgent action, climate change will bring severe, pervasive and irreversible impacts on all the world's people and ecosystems. Limiting dangerous rises in global average temperature to below 2°C compared with pre-industrial levels (the below 2°C objective) will require substantial and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions by all countries.

Durban 2011

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The parties at the climate conference in Durban in 2011 issued several decisions. Decision 1/CP.17 states the following, among other things:

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Noting with grave concern the significant gap between the aggregate effect of Parties' mitigation pledges in terms of global annual emissions of greenhouse gases by 2020 and aggregate emission pathways consistent with having a likely chance of holding the increase in global average temperature below 2°C or 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, (...)”

2.52.

At the Durban conference, the Parties also agreed that a new legally binding climate change convention or protocol must be concluded no later than 2015 and must be implemented by 2020. The climate conference which will be held in Paris in December 2015 is a follow-up to this agreement.

In a European context

4.83.

Due to the severity of the consequences of climate change and the great risk of hazardous climate change occurring – without mitigating measures – the court concludes that the State has a duty of care to take mitigation measures. The circumstance that the Dutch contribution to the present global greenhouse gas emissions is currently small does not affect this. Now that at least the 450 scenario is required to prevent hazardous climate change, the Netherlands must take reduction measures in support of this scenario.

The State must do more to avert the imminent danger caused by climate change, also in view of its duty of care to protect and improve the living environment

Therefore, the State should not hide behind the argument that the solution to the global climate problem does not depend solely on Dutch efforts. Any reduction of emissions contributes to the prevention of dangerous climate change and as a developed country the Netherlands should take the lead in this.

2.3:

“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

**** ADVOCATED CALL TO ACTION

2.71.

The “New energy for the climate Work Programme of the Clean and Sustainable Project” (*Werkprogramma Nieuwe energie voor het klimaat van het*

project Schoon en Zuinig) from 2007, in which the then cabinet formulated its climate policy, contains as a climate objective a 30% reduction for 2020 compared to 1990. According to the report, this means that as of 2020 an annual climate ceiling of 150Mt CO₂-eq. will apply. The report states the following, among other things:

“Climate change calls for action, as it threatens our security, food supply, water management and biodiversity. In this work programme, the cabinet focuses on ambitious climate targets: a 30% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in 2020 (compared to 1990) is needed, preferably in a European context (...).

B. Reasons for these proceedings

2.6.

In its letter to the Prime Minister dated 12 November 2012, Urgenda requested the State to commit and undertake to reduce CO₂ emissions in the Netherlands by 40% by 2020, as compared to the emissions in 1990.

In her letter dated 11 December 2012, the State Secretary for Infrastructure and the Environment replied to Urgenda's letter as follows (among other things):

"I share your concerns over the absence of sufficient international action as well as your concerns that both the scale of the problem and the urgency of a successful approach in the public debate are insufficiently tangible (...).

The most important thing is to eventually have a stable and widely supported policy framework which will lead to sufficient action to keep the long-term perspective of a 80%-95% CO₂ reduction by 2050 within reach (...)

It is also clear that collective, global actions are required to keep climate change within acceptable limits. In this context of collective actions, the 25%-40% reduction you refer to in your letter was always the objective. The EU's offer to pursue a 30% reduction by 2020, on the condition that other countries pursue similar reductions, falls within that range. It is a major problem that the current collective, global efforts are falling short and fail to monitor the limitation of the average global temperature rise to 2 degrees. I will cooperate with national and international partners to launch and support initiatives to tackle this (...).

IPCC

2.8.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is a scientific body established by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in 1988, under the auspices of the UN. The IPCC aims to acquire insight into all aspects of climate change, such as the risks, consequences and options for adaptation and mitigation. Mitigation (reducing the problem) is intended to prevent or limit further climate change. Adaptation (adapting to the consequences) is aimed at attempting to make nature, society and the economy less vulnerable to a changing climate. The IPCC itself does not conduct research nor does it keep climate-related data, but studies and assesses the latest scientific, technical and socio-economic information produced worldwide

and publishes reports about it.

2.9.

“Fifth Assessment Report” from 2013/2014 (hereinafter: AR5/2013).

AR4/2007

2.12

In this report, the IPCC – in so far as currently still relevant – established that a global temperature rise of 2°C above the pre-industrial level (up to the year 1850) creates the risk of dangerous, irreversible change of climate: [2](#)

“Confidence has increased that a 1 to 2 oC increase in global mean temperature above 1990 levels (about 1.5 to 2.5o C above pre-industrial) poses significant risks to many unique and threatened systems including many biodiversity hotspots.”

****FACTORED IN BIODIVERSITY

2.71.

The “New energy for the climate Work Programme of the Clean and Sustainable Project” (*Werkprogramma Nieuwe energie voor het klimaat van het*

project Schoon en Zuinig) rom 2007, in which the then cabinet formulated its climate policy, contains as a climate objective a 30% reduction for 2020 compared to 1990. According to the report, this means that as of 2020 an annual climate ceiling of 150Mt CO₂-eq. will apply. The report states the following, among other things:

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above 1990 levels (about 1.5 to 2.5o C above pre-industrial) poses significant risks to many unique and threatened systems including many biodiversity hotspots.”

2.71

“Climate change calls for action, as it threatens our security, food supply, water management and biodiversity. In this work programme, the cabinet focuses on ambitious climate targets: a 30% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in 2020 (compared to 1990) is needed, preferably in a European context (...). The European target is a 20% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the absence of a global agreement. In light of the Dutch objective of -30%, there is a chance that this will cause a shortfall in attaining the overall Dutch target. If European decision-making leads to a shortfall in the reduction targets the Netherlands has committed to, the cabinet will review whether it can reach agreement with other countries in similar situations (formulating high national reduction targets). If this fails, a part of the reduction shortfall will have to be covered by the government (...) and the reduction targets of sectors will be reassessed in consultation with the sectors.”

**** WARNED OF IRREVERSIBLE THREAT

2.12.

In this report, the IPCC – in so far as currently still relevant – established that a global temperature rise of 2°C above the pre-industrial level (up to the year 1850) creates the risk of dangerous, irreversible change of climate: [2](#)

“Confidence has increased that a 1 to 2 oC increase in global mean temperature above 1990 levels (about 1.5 to 2.5o C above pre-industrial) poses significant risks to many unique and threatened systems including many biodiversity hotspots.”

3. The Parties should 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 should not be used as a reason for postponing such measures, taking into account that policies and measures to deal with climate change should be cost-effective so as to ensure global benefits at the lowest possible cost

Durban 2011

2.51.

The parties at the climate conference in Durban in 2011 issued several decisions.

Decision 1/CP.17 states the following, among other things:

“ *Recognizing* that climate change represents an urgent and potentially irreversible threat to human societies and the planet and thus requires to be urgently addressed by all Parties (...),

2.63

“When the EU decided in 2008 to cut its greenhouse gas emissions, it showed its commitment to tackling the climate change threat and to lead the world in demonstrating how this could be done. The agreed cut of 20% from 1990 levels by 2020, together with a 20% renewables target, was a crucial step for the EU's sustainable development and a clear signal to the rest of the world that the EU was ready to take the action required. The EU will meet its Kyoto Protocol target and has a strong track record in climate action.

2.71

“Climate change calls for action, as it threatens our security, food supply, water management and biodiversity. In this work programme, the cabinet focuses on ambitious climate targets: a 30% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in 2020 (compared to 1990) is needed, preferably in a European context (...). The European target is a 20% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the absence of a global agreement. In light of the Dutch objective of -30%, there is a chance that this will cause a shortfall in attaining the overall Dutch target. If European decision-making leads to a shortfall in the reduction targets the Netherlands has committed to, the cabinet will review whether it can reach agreement with other countries in similar situations (formulating high national reduction targets). If this fails, a part of the reduction shortfall will have to be covered by the government (...) and the reduction targets of sectors will be reassessed in consultation with the sectors.”

In summary, after the amendment, Urgenda's claim involves the court, with immediate effect:

to rule that:

(1) the substantial greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere worldwide are warming up the earth, which according to the best scientific insights, will cause dangerous climate change if those emissions are not significantly and swiftly reduced;

(2) the hazardous climate change that is caused by a warming up of the earth of 2°C or more, in any case of about 4 °C, compared to the preindustrial age, which according to the best scientific insights is anticipated with the current emission trends, is threatening large groups of people and human rights;

2.51

“ Recognizing that climate change represents an urgent and potentially irreversible threat to human societies and the planet and thus requires to be urgently addressed by all Parties (...),

3.2.

Briefly summarized, Urgenda supports its claims as follows.

The current global greenhouse gas emission levels, particularly the CO₂ level, leads to or threatens to lead to a global warming of over 2 °C, and thus also to dangerous climate change with severe and even potentially catastrophic consequences.

4.8

In defending the right of not just the current but also the future generations to availability of natural resources and a safe and healthy living environment, it also strives for the interest of a sustainable society. This interest of a sustainable society is also formulated in the legal standard invoked by Urgenda for the protection against activities which, in its view, are not “sustainable” and threaten to lead to serious threats to ecosystems and human societies. In this context, reference can also be made to Article 2 of the UN Climate Change Convention. Relying on Articles 2 and 8 ECHR, Urgenda’s claim is an extension of its objectives formulated in its by-laws. After all, these stipulations are also aimed at protecting the interests Urgenda seeks to defend.

4.14

. In AR4/2007, the IPCC furthermore has stated that a temperature rise of more than 2 °C over the pre-industrial level would cause dangerous and irreversible climate change which would threaten the environment and man. This has resulted in the formulation of the aforementioned 2°C target.

4.32.

From the foregoing it follows that it is currently very probable that within several decades dangerous climate change will occur with irreversible consequences for man and the environment. The State acknowledges that this is a serious problem and that it is also necessary to avert this threat by mitigating greenhouse gas emissions.

4.32.

From the foregoing it follows that it is currently very probable that within several decades dangerous climate change will occur with irreversible consequences for man and the environment. The State acknowledges that this is a serious problem and that it is also necessary to avert this threat by mitigating greenhouse gas emissions.

4.49.

The scope of protection based on various articles of the ECHR regarding environmental issues has been detailed in separate chapters. In the context of this case, the court finds the following principles from the first chapter of part II (“Chapter I: the right to life and environment”) relevant, including the subsequent explanation (the footnotes referring to the rulings of the ECtHR concerned have not been included in the quotation):

“(a) The right to life is protected under Article 2 of the Convention.

This Article does not solely concern deaths resulting directly from the actions of the agents of a State, but also lays down a positive obligation on States to take appropriate steps to safeguard the lives of those within their jurisdiction. This means that public authorities have a duty to take steps to guarantee the rights of the Convention even when they are threatened by other (private) persons or activities that are not directly connected with the State.

1. (...) in some situations Article 2 may also impose on public authorities a duty to take steps to guarantee the right to life when it is threatened by persons or activities not directly connected with the State. (...) In the context of the environment, Article 2 has been applied where certain activities endangering the environment are so dangerous that they also endanger human life.

2. It is not possible to give an exhaustive list of examples of situations in which this obligation might arise. It must be stressed however that cases in which issues under Article 2 have arisen are exceptional. So far, the Court has considered environmental issues in four cases brought under Article 2, two of which relate to dangerous activities and two which relate to natural disasters. In theory, Article 2 can apply even though loss of life has not occurred, for example in situations where potentially lethal force is used inappropriately.

**** AFFIRMED PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE

2.38

3. The Parties should 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

should not be used as a reason for postponing such measures, taking into account that policies and measures to deal with climate change should be cost-effective so as to ensure global benefits at the lowest possible cost^{2.53}.

Article 191 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) currently reads as follows:

Article 191

1. Union policy on the environment shall contribute to pursuit of the following objectives:

- preserving, protecting and improving the quality of the environment;
- protecting human health;
- prudent and rational utilisation of natural resources;
- promoting measures at international level to deal with regional or worldwide environmental problems, and in particular combating climate change.

2. Union policy on the environment shall aim at a high level of protection taking into account the diversity of situations in the various regions of the Union. It shall be based on the precautionary principle and on the principles that preventive action should be taken, that environmental damage should as a priority be rectified at source and that the polluter should pay.

4.19.

Given the severity of the problem of hazardous climate change, climate scientists have investigated with which degree of probability current human actions have negative or positive effects on future climate change. Moreover, there is scientific uncertainty about the question when, where and to what extent which specific effects will occur, but also about the effectiveness and possible negative side-effects of certain precautionary measures.

4.58.

With the precautionary principle (ii) the UN Climate Change Convention expresses that taking measures cannot be delayed to await full scientific certainty. The signatories should anticipate the prevention or limitation of the causes of climate change or the prevention or limitation of the negative consequences of climate change, regardless of a certain level of scientific uncertainty. In making the consideration that is needed for taking precautionary measures, without having absolute certainty whether or not the actions will have sufficient effects, the Convention states that account can be taken of a cost-benefit ratio: precautionary measures which yield positive results worldwide at as low as possible costs will be taken sooner.

the precautionary principle;

- the prevention principle.

4.61.

With the principle of a high protection level, the EU expresses that its environmental policy has high priority and that it has to be implemented strictly, with account taken of regional differences. The precautionary principle also means that the Community should not postpone taking measures to protect the environment until full scientific certainty has been achieved. In short, the prevention principle means: “prevention is better than cure”; it is better to prevent climate problems (pollution, nuisance, in this case: climate change) than combating the consequences later on.

4.62.

Article 191, paragraph 3 TFEU also means that in determining its environmental policy, the EU takes account of:

- the available scientific and technical information;

4.64.

As has been stated before, the Parties agree that due to the current climate change and the threat of further change with irreversible and serious consequences for man and the environment, the State should take precautionary measures for its citizens. This concerns the extent of the reduction measures the State should take as of 2020.

4.76

Moreover, the State cannot postpone taking precautionary measures based on the sole reason that there is no scientific certainty yet about the precise effect of the measures. However, a cost-benefit ratio is allowed here. Finally, the State will have to base its actions on the principle of “prevention is better than cure”.

4.79.

This argument does not succeed. It is an established fact that climate change is a global problem and therefore requires global accountability. It follows from the UNEP report that based on the reduction commitments made in Cancun, a gap between the desired CO₂ emissions (in order to reach the climate objective) and the actual emissions (14-17 Gt CO₂) will have arisen by 2030. This means that more reduction measures have to be taken on an international level. It compels all countries, including the Netherlands, to implement the reduction measures to the fullest extent as possible. The fact that the amount of the Dutch emissions is small

compared to other countries does not affect the obligation to take precautionary measures in view of the State's obligation to exercise care. After all, it has been established that any anthropogenic greenhouse gas emission, no matter how minor, contributes to an increase of CO₂ levels in the atmosphere and therefore to hazardous climate change. Emission reduction therefore concerns both a joint and individual responsibility of the signatories to the UN Climate Change Convention. In view of the fact that the Dutch emission reduction is determined by the State, it may not reject possible liability by stating that its contribution is minor, as also adjudicated *mutatis mutandis* in the Potash mines ruling of the Dutch Supreme Court (HR 23 September 1988, NJ 1989, 743). The rules given in that ruling also apply, by analogy, to the obligation to take precautionary measures in order to avert a danger which is also the subject of this case. Therefore, the court arrives at the opinion that the single circumstance that the Dutch emissions only constitute a minor contribution to global emissions does not alter the State's obligation to exercise care towards third parties. Here too, the court takes into account that in view of a fair distribution the Netherlands, like the other Annex I countries, has taken the lead in taking mitigation measures and has therefore committed to a more than proportionate contribution to reduction. Moreover, it is beyond dispute that the Dutch per capita emissions are one of the highest in the world.

**** MENTIONED THE PREVENTION PRINCIPLE

4.61.

With the principle of a high protection level, the EU expresses that its environmental policy has high priority and that it has to be implemented strictly, with account taken of regional differences. The precautionary principle also means that the Community should not postpone taking measures to protect the environment until full scientific certainty has been achieved. In short, the prevention principle means: "prevention is better than cure"; it is better to prevent climate problems (pollution, nuisance, in this case: climate change) than combating the consequences later on.

Comment joan russow

1. Misconstruing the precautionary principle

In all of them they 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"

[If the evidence is on examining science that could indicate that the substance or practice could be harmful government departments would proceed with caution

It should be noted that funding research outside of industry is much more prevalent. and currently there has also been pressure on journals to retract studies that have indicated harm.

****** AFFIRMED THETRANBOUNDARY PRINCIPLE**

2.36

Recalling also that 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,

Reaffirming the principle of sovereignty of States in international cooperation to address climate change,

Determined to protect the climate system for present and future generations, (...)”

BACKGROUND FOR TRANSBOUNDARY PRINCIPLE (JOAN)

Canada has signed and ratified the UN Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS 1982)

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 Canada made a commitment in the universally adopted Rio Declaration to abide by 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 (Rio Declaration, `1992)

This principle places a duty on all states to act to prevent actions on their own states from impacting on other states.

2.37.

**** PREFERRED MITIGATION OVER ADAPTION

2.51.

The parties at the climate conference in Durban in 2011 issued several decisions. Decision 1/CP.17 states the following, among other things:

“ Recognizing that climate change represents an urgent and potentially irreversible threat to human societies and the planet and thus requires to be urgently addressed by all Parties (...),

Noting with grave concern the significant gap between the aggregate effect of Parties’ mitigation pledges in terms of global annual emissions of greenhouse gases by 2020 and aggregate emission pathways consistent with having a likely chance of holding the increase in global average temperature below 2°C or 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, (...)”

2.8.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is a scientific body established by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in 1988, under the auspices of the UN. The IPCC aims to acquire insight into all aspects of climate change, such as the risks, consequences and options for adaptation and mitigation. Mitigation (reducing the problem) is intended to prevent or limit further climate change. Adaptation (adapting to the consequences) is aimed at attempting to make nature, society and the economy less vulnerable to a changing climate. The IPCC itself does not conduct research nor does it keep climate-related data, but studies and assesses the latest scientific, technical and socio-economic information produced worldwide and publishes reports about it.

2.17.

The IPCC report also states that mitigation is generally better than adaptation: [6](#)

“Over the next 20 years or so, even the most aggressive climate policy can do little to avoid warming already ‘loaded’ into the climate system. The benefits of avoided climate change will only accrue beyond that time. Over longer time frames, beyond the next few decades, mitigation investments have a greater potential to avoid climate change damage and this potential is larger than the adaptation options that can currently be envisaged (medium agreement, medium evidence).”

AR5/2013

The IPCC report also states that mitigation is generally better than adaptation: [6](#)

“Over the next 20 years or so, even the most aggressive climate policy can do little to avoid warming already ‘loaded’ into the climate system. The benefits of avoided climate change will only accrue beyond that time. Over longer time frames, beyond the next few decades, mitigation investments have a greater potential to avoid climate change damage and this potential is larger than the adaptation options that can currently be envisaged (medium agreement, medium evidence).”

AR5/2013

4.14.

In AR4/2007 and AR5/2013, the IPCC has established that a worldwide climate change is taking place and that it is very probable that human actions, particularly the combustion of fossil fuels (oil, gas, coal) and deforestation, are the main causes of the observed global warming since the middle of the nineteenth century. In AR4/2007, the IPCC furthermore has stated that a temperature rise of more than 2 °C over the pre-industrial level would cause dangerous and irreversible climate change which would threaten the environment and man. This has resulted in the formulation of the aforementioned 2°C target. The IPCC has not changed this target in AR5/2013. The signatories to the UN Climate Change Convention, including, as stated previously, the Netherlands and the EU, have explicitly acknowledged these findings during the climate conference of 2010 (Cancun Agreements). The court therefore finds that the 2 °C target has globally been taken as the starting point for the development of climate policies. Incidentally, this comes with a restriction for a number of countries in the Pacific Ocean, such as Tuvalu and Fiji, for which dangerous climate change, with the associated risk of destruction of their entire territories, probably will already occur at a temperature rise of 1.5 °C. The signatories therefore decided in Cancun to “maintain a view on” a 1.5 °C target.

2.18

In 2013-2014, the IPCC published its latest insights into the scope, effects and causes of climate change. In the report concerned (AR5/2013) the IPCC, in accordance with AR4/2007, established that the earth has been warming as a result of the high increase of CO₂ concentrations in the atmosphere since the Industrial Revolution (base year 1850) and that this has been caused by human activity, particularly the combustion of oil, natural gas and coal as well as deforestation: [7](#)

“Warming of the climate system is unequivocal, and since the 1950’s, many of the observed changes are unprecedented over decades to millenia. The atmosphere and

ocean have warmed, the amounts of snow and ice have diminished, sea level has risen, and the concentrations of greenhouse gases have increased (...)

Each of the last three decades has been successively warmer at the Earth's surface than any preceding decade since 1850 (...). In the Northern Hemisphere, 1983-2012 was likely the warmest 30-year period of the last 1400 years (medium confidence).

The globally averaged combined land and ocean surface temperature data as calculated by a linear trend, show a warming of 0.85 [0.65 to 1.06]°C, over the period 1880 to 2012, when multiple independently produced datasets exist. The total increase between the average of the 1850-1900 period and the 2003-2012 period is 0.78 [0.72 to 0.85]°C, based on the single longest dataset available (...).

Human influence has been detected in warming of the atmosphere and the ocean, in changes in the global water cycle, in reductions in snow and ice, in global mean sea level rise, and in changes in some climate extremes (...). This evidence for human influence has grown since AR4. It is extremely likely that human influence has been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century.”

**** EXAMINED RANGE OF EMISSION LEVELS

4.79

Therefore, the court arrives at the opinion that the single circumstance that the Dutch emissions only constitute a minor contribution to global emissions does not alter the State's obligation to exercise care towards third parties.

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2.19

Delaying mitigation efforts beyond those in place today through 2030 is estimated to substantially increase the difficulty of the transition to low longer-term emissions levels and narrow the range of options consistent with maintaining temperature change below 2°C relative to pre-industrial levels (high confidence). Cost-effective mitigation scenarios that make it at least *as likely as not* that temperature change will remain below 2°C relative to pre-industrial levels (2100 concentrations between about 450 and 500 ppm CO₂eq) are typically characterized by annual GHG emissions in 2030 of roughly between 30 GtCO₂eq and 50 GtCO₂eq (Figure SPM.5, left panel). Scenarios

with annual GHG emissions above 55 GtCO₂eq in 2030 are characterized by substantially higher rates of emissions reductions from 2030 to 2050 (...); much more rapid scale-up of low-carbon energy over this period (...); a larger reliance

on CDR technologies in the long-term (...); and higher transitional and long-term economic impacts (...). Due to these increased mitigation challenges, many models with annual 2030 GHG emissions higher than 55 GtCO₂eq could not produce scenarios reaching atmospheric concentration levels that make it *as likely as not* that temperature change will remain below 2°C relative to pre-industrial levels.”

2.20.

The following has been observed about the scope of the emissions: [9](#)

“Total anthropogenic GHG emissions have continued to increase over 1970 to 2010 with larger absolute decadal increases toward the end of this period (*high confidence*). Despite a growing number of climate change mitigation policies, annual GHG emissions grew on average by 1.0 gigatonne carbon dioxide equivalent (GtCO₂eq) (2.2%) per year from 2000 to 2010 compared to 0.4 GtCO₂eq (1.3%) per year from 1970 to 2000 (...). Total anthropogenic GHG emissions were the highest in human history from 2000 to 2010 and reached 49 (±4.5) GtCO₂eq/yr in 2010. The global economic crisis 2007/2008 only temporarily reduced emissions.”

****CONSIDERED IMPORTANCE OF PER CAPITA CALCULATION

2.28.

Per capita emissions in the Netherlands in 2010 were 12.78 tons CO₂-eq. and in 2012 11.72 tons CO₂-eq. In China, per capita emissions in 2012 were 9.04 tons CO₂-eq.; in the United States 19.98 tons CO₂-eq.; in Brazil 15.05 tons CO₂-eq.; in India 2.43 tons CO₂-eq. and in Russia 19.58 tons CO₂-eq.

4.79.

It is an established fact that climate change is a global problem and therefore requires global accountability. It follows from the UNEP report that based on the reduction commitments made in Cancun, a gap between the desired CO₂ emissions (in order to reach the climate objective) and the actual emissions (14-17 Gt CO₂) will have arisen by 2030. This means that more reduction measures have to be taken on an international level. It compels all countries, including the Netherlands, to implement the reduction measures to the fullest extent as possible. The fact that the amount of the Dutch emissions is small compared to other countries does not affect the obligation to take precautionary measures in view of the State’s obligation to exercise care. After all, it has been established that any anthropogenic greenhouse gas emission, no matter how minor, contributes to an

increase of CO₂ levels in the atmosphere and therefore to hazardous climate change. Emission reduction therefore concerns both a joint and individual responsibility of the signatories to the UN Climate Change Convention. In view of the fact that the Dutch emission reduction is determined by the State, it may not reject possible liability by stating that its contribution is minor, as also adjudicated *mutatis mutandis* in the Potash mines ruling of the Dutch Supreme Court (HR 23 September 1988, NJ 1989, 743). The rules given in that ruling also apply, by analogy, to the obligation to take precautionary measures in order to avert a danger which is also the subject of this case. Therefore, the court arrives at the opinion that the single circumstance that the Dutch emissions only constitute a minor contribution to global emissions does not alter the State's obligation to exercise care towards third parties. Here too, the court takes into account that in view of a fair distribution the Netherlands, like the other Annex I countries, has taken the lead in taking mitigation measures and has therefore committed to a more than proportionate contribution to reduction. Moreover, it is beyond dispute that the Dutch per capita emissions are one of the highest in the world.

3.1.

In summary, after the amendment, Urgenda's claim involves the court, with immediate effect:

to rule that:

(1) the substantial greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere worldwide are warming up the earth, which according to the best scientific insights, will cause dangerous climate change if those emissions are not significantly and swiftly reduced;

(2) the hazardous climate change that is caused by a warming up of the earth of 2°C or more, in any case of about 4 °C, compared to the preindustrial age, which according to the best scientific insights is anticipated with the current emission trends, is threatening large groups of people and human rights;

PER CAPITA(3) of all countries which emit a significant number of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, per capita emissions in the Netherlands are one of the highest in the world;

3.2.

Briefly summarized, Urgenda supports its claims as follows.

The current global greenhouse gas emission levels, particularly the CO₂ level, leads to or threatens to lead to a global warming of over 2 °C, and thus also to dangerous climate change with severe and even potentially catastrophic consequences. Such an emission level is unlawful towards Urgenda, as this is contrary to the due care exercised in society. Moreover, it constitutes an infringement of, or is contrary to, Articles 2 and 8 of the ECHR, on which

both Urgenda and the parties it represents can rely. The greenhouse gas emissions in the Netherlands additionally contribute to the (imminent) hazardous climate change. The Dutch emissions that form part of the global emission levels are excessive, in absolute terms and even more so per capita. This makes the greenhouse gas emissions of the Netherlands unlawful.

2.21.

The IPCC expects that temperatures on earth will have increased by 3.7 to 4.8°C by 2100 and that the 450 ppm level will have been exceeded in 2030 if reduction measures fail to materialise: [10](#)

“Without additional efforts to reduce GHG emissions beyond those in place today, emissions growth is expected to persist driven by growth in global population and economic activities. Baseline scenarios, those without additional mitigation, result in global mean surface temperature increases in 2100 from 3.7°C to 4.8°C compared to pre-industrial levels¹⁰ (median values; the range is 2.5°C to 7.8°C when including climate uncertainty (...)) (*high confidence*). The emission scenarios collected for this assessment represent full radiative forcing including GHGs, tropospheric ozone, aerosols and albedo change. Baseline scenarios (scenarios without explicit additional

2.27.

In 2010, the Dutch share in the global emissions was 0.42%; the Chinese share in that year was 21.97%; the share of the United States was 13.19%; the total share of the European Union (then 27 countries) was 9.5%; the Brazilian share was 5.7%; India’s share was 5.44% and Russia’s share was 5.11%.

2.28.

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UNEP

2.29.

The UNEP, referred to in 2.8, has issued annual reports about the “emissions gap” since 2010. The gap is the difference between the desired emissions level in a certain year and the level of emissions anticipated for that year based on the reduction goals pledged by the countries concerned.

2.30.

The “executive summary” of the Emissions Gap Report 2013 includes the following:

“(…) This report confirms and strengthens the conclusions of the three previous analyses that current pledges and commitments fall short of that goal. It further says that, as emissions of greenhouse gases continue to rise rather than decline, it becomes less and less likely that emissions will be low enough by 2020 to be on a least-cost pathway towards meeting the 2°C target.

As a result, after 2020, the world will have to rely on more difficult, costlier and riskier means of meeting the target – the further from the least-cost level in 2020, the higher these costs and the greater the risks will be.

(…)

2. What emission levels are anticipated for 2020?

Global greenhouse gas emissions in 2020 are estimated at 59 GtCO₂e per year under a business-as-usual scenario. If implemented fully, pledges and commitments would reduce this by 3–7 GtCO₂e per year (…).

3. What is the latest estimate of the emissions gap in 2020?

(…) Least-cost emission pathways consistent with a likely chance of keeping global mean temperature increases below 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels have a median level of 44 GtCO₂e in 2020 (range: 38–47 GtCO₂e). Assuming full implementation of the pledges, the emissions gap thus amounts to between 8–12 GtCO₂e per year in 2020 (…).

6. What are the implications of later action scenarios that still meet the 1.5°C and 2°C targets?

Based on a much larger number of studies than in 2012, this update concludes that so-called later-action scenarios have several implications compared to least cost scenario’s, including: (i) much higher rates of global emission reductions in the medium term; (ii) greater lock-in of carbon-intensive infrastructure; (iii) greater dependence of certain technologies in the medium-term; (iv) greater costs of mitigation in the medium- and long term, and greater risks of economic disruption; and (v) greater risks of failing to meet the 2°C target. For these reasons later-action scenarios may not be feasible in practise and, as a result, temperature targets could be missed.

(…) although later-action scenarios might reach the same temperature targets as their least-cost counterparts, later-action scenarios pose greater risks of climate impacts for four reasons. First delaying action allows more greenhouse gases to build-up in the atmosphere in the near term, thereby increasing the risk that later emission reductions will be unable to compensate for this build up. Second, the

risk of overshooting climate targets for both atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases and global temperature increase is higher with later-action scenarios. Third, the near-term rate of temperature is higher, which implies greater near-term climate impacts. Lastly, when action is delayed, options to achieve stringent levels of climate protection are increasingly lost.”

2.29

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2.31.

Chapter 2 of the report contains the following section:

“2.4.5 Pledged reduction effort by Annex I and non-Annex I countries

For Annex I parties, total emissions as a group of countries for the four pledge cases are estimated to be 3–16 percent below 1990 levels in 2020. For non-Annex I parties, total emissions are estimated to be 7–9 percent lower than business-as-usual emissions. This implies that the aggregate Annex I countries’ emission goals fall short of reaching the 25–40 percent reduction by 2020, compared with 1990, suggested in the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report (...).”

2.32.

In contrast to previous reports, the Emissions Gap Report 2014 mainly focuses on the “carbon dioxide emissions budget”. The UNEP concludes that in order to be able to maintain the target of a maximum global temperature rise of 2°C above the pre-industrial level (hereinafter: the 2°C target), the CO₂

budget may not exceed 3,670 gigatonne (hereinafter: Gt). According to the UNEP, at the beginning of the nineteenth century this budget totaled about 2,900 Gt CO₂, of which about 1,000 Gt remains. In the report, the UNEP investigated – in short – the best way to spend this budget (and thereby: which reductions are required). Attention was also paid to the question, given the 2°C target, at what point the world needs to be CO₂-neutral (a net result of anthropogenic positive and negative CO₂ emissions of zero). The UNEP has depicted this in the following figure:

**** SUPPORTED PRINCIPLE OF COMMON BUT DIFFERENTIATED RESPONSIBILITY

2.36.

The purpose of the Convention, in brief, is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and thereby prevent the undesired consequences of climate change. Among other things, Its opening words state the following:

“Acknowledging that the global nature of climate change calls for the widest possible cooperation by all countries and their participation in an effective and appropriate international response, in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities and their social and economic conditions,

2.38.

Article 3 of the UN Climate Change Convention contains the following principles, among other things:

1. 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.

***AFFIRMED THE OBJECTIVE OF THE UNFCCC IPCC

** SUPPORTED THE NORM % BELOW 1990 BY 2020

The harper government does not accept the norm 30% below 2005 by 2030

***ACKNOWLEDGED GAP PERCEIVED BY UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME The Harper government has contributed to the gap

*** CONFIRMED NO DISPUTE ABOUT SCIENCE

Many of the members of the Harper government still question the science

.*** ACCEPTED THE CREDIBILITY OF IPCC

Often discredits the findings of the IPCC

*** OPPOSED DELAYING OF ACTION

There must be a global target for greenhouse gas emission reductions of at least 30% below 1990 levels by 2015, at least 50% below 1990 levels by 2020, at least 75% below 1990 levels by 2030, at least 85% below 1990 levels by 2040 and 100% below 1990 emissions by 2050

The harper government postpones target to 2030

***REFERRED TO RANGE TARGET 1.

Harper government cried foul when the African Caucus declared that if there were

a global rise of 2 degrees that there would be a holocaust in Africa

***ACKNOWLEDGED SEVERITY AND URGENCY

The harper government minimizes the severity and urgency

***FACTORED IN BIODIVERSITY

***WARNED OF IRREVERSIBLE THREAT

The Harper government does not perceive climate change to be an irreversible threat

***AFFIRMED PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE

At Rio = 20 the Harper government deleted reference to the precautionary principle

***MENTIONED THE PREVENTION PRINCIPLE.

***AFFIRMED THE TRANSBOUNDARY PRINCIPLE

*** PREFERRED MITIGATION OVER ADAPTION

*** EXAMINED RANGE OF EMISSION LEVELS

***** CONSIDERED IMPORTANCE OF PER CAPITA CALCULATION

The harper government dismisses the high per capita contribution

To fossil fuels

*** SUPPORTED PRINCIPLE OF COMMON BUT DIFFERENTIATED RESPONSIBILITY

At Rio +20 the Harper deleted reference to this principle

***EXAMINED CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS

At numerous COPs, the Harper government has obstructed strong legal obligations

*** AFFIRMED THE PRINCIPLE OF RIGHTS OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

***APPLIED RIGHT TO LIFE AND DUTY

***ENDORSED THE PRINCIPLE OF FAIRNESS

D. EXAMINED CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS

2.34.

In light of climate change, agreements have been made and instruments have been developed in an international and European context in order to counter the problems of climate change, which have impacted the national legal and policy frameworks.

In a UN context

UN Framework Convention on Climate Change 1992

2.35.

In 1992, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (hereinafter: the UN Climate Change Convention) was agreed and signed under the responsibility of the UN. The UN Climate Change Convention entered into effect on 21 March 1994. Currently, 195 Member States have ratified the convention, including the Netherlands and (the predecessor of) the European Union (both in 1993).

2.36.

The purpose of the Convention, in brief, is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and thereby prevent the undesired consequences of climate change. Among other things, Its opening words state the following:

“Acknowledging that the global nature of climate change calls for the widest possible cooperation by all countries and their participation in an effective and appropriate international response, in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities and their social and economic conditions,

Recalling also that 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,

Reaffirming the principle of sovereignty of States in international cooperation to address climate change,

Determined to protect the climate system for present and future generations, (...)”

2.37.

Article 2 of the UN Climate Change Convention describes the objective as follows:

The ultimate objective of this Convention and any related legal instruments that the Conference of the Parties may adopt is to achieve, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention, stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within a time-frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner.

2.38.

Article 3 of the UN Climate Change Convention contains the following principles, among other things:

1. 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.

(...)

3. The Parties should 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 should not be used as a reason for postponing such measures, taking into account that policies and measures to deal with climate change should be cost-effective so as to ensure global benefits at the lowest possible cost. 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 may be carried out cooperatively by interested Parties.

4. The Parties have a right to, and should, promote sustainable development. Policies and measures to protect the climate system against human-induced change should be appropriate for the specific conditions of each Party and should be integrated with national development programmes, taking into account that economic development is essential for adopting measures to address climate change.

2.39.

The signatories to the UN Climate Change Convention constitute two groups of countries: (1) the developed countries, as listed in Annex I to the Convention, also referred to as “Annex I countries”, and (2) the developing countries, or “non-Annex I countries”, being all other countries which have ratified the UN Climate Change Convention. The Netherlands is an Annex I country. Article 4, paragraph 2 of the UN Climate Change Convention stipulates the following in particular regarding the Annex I countries:

The developed country Parties and other Parties included in Annex I commit themselves specifically as provided for in the following:

(a) Each of these Parties shall adopt national policies and take corresponding measures on the mitigation of climate change, by limiting its anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases and protecting and enhancing its greenhouse gas sinks and reservoirs. These policies and measures will demonstrate that developed countries are taking the lead in modifying longer-term trends in anthropogenic emissions consistent with the objective of the Convention, recognizing that the return by the end of the present decade to earlier levels of anthropogenic emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases not controlled by the Montreal Protocol would contribute to such modification, and taking into account the differences in these Parties' starting points and approaches, economic structures and resource bases, the need to maintain strong and sustainable economic growth, available technologies and other individual circumstances, as well as the need for equitable and appropriate contributions by each of these Parties to the global effort regarding that objective. These Parties may implement such policies and measures jointly with other Parties and may assist other Parties in contributing to the achievement of the objective of the Convention and, in particular, that of this subparagraph;

(b) In order to promote progress to this end, each of these Parties shall communicate, within six months of the entry into force of the Convention for it and periodically thereafter, and in accordance with Article 12, detailed information on its policies and measures referred to in subparagraph (a) above, as well as on its resulting projected anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases not controlled by the Montreal Protocol for the period referred to in subparagraph (a), with the aim of returning individually or jointly to their 1990 levels these anthropogenic emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases not controlled by the Montreal Protocol. This information will be reviewed

by the Conference of the Parties, at its first session and periodically thereafter, in accordance with Article 7; (...)

2.40.

The article thus means that the Annex I countries, separately or jointly, have assumed the obligation to have reduced the growth of their greenhouse gas emissions to the level of 1990 by the year 2000. All Member States are furthermore obliged to annually report their emissions to the UN Climate Change Convention secretariat. The obligations of all other Parties to the Convention (the “non-Annex I countries”) are less far-reaching and they do not have to introduce emission reductions.

2.41.

2.41.

Several countries of the group of Annex I countries, including the Netherlands, have furthermore committed to rendering financial assistance to the non-Annex I countries, in accordance with the UN Climate Change Conventions.

2.43.

In the Protocol, the signatories set as their objective for the period 2008-2012 to reduce the mean annual greenhouse gas emissions in developed countries by 5.2% compared to 1990 (Article 3, paragraph 1 of and Appendix B to the Kyoto Protocol). The reduction percentages differ per country. A reduction target of 8% (Appendix B) was set for the European Union for the same period. The EU proceeded to determine the emission reductions per Member State, after consulting the Member States. An emission reduction of 6% was agreed for the Netherlands.

2.44.

Several countries, including the United States and China, did not ratify the Protocol and Canada withdrew from the Protocol in 2011. Before Canada’s withdrawal, the Protocol covered 14% of global emissions.

2.45.

On 8 December 2012, an Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol was adopted in Doha (Qatar). In the Amendment, various countries and the European Union as a whole as well as its individual Member States agreed on a CO₂ emission reduction target for the period 2013-2020. The European Union committed to a 20% reduction target as of 2020, compared to 1990. The European Union offered to commit to a 30% reduction target, on the condition that both the developed and the more

advanced developing countries commit to similar emission targets. This condition has not materialised thus far nor has the Doha Amendment entered into force yet.

2.46.

Japan, the Russian Federation and New Zealand did not commit to a particular reduction target for this second period. Therefore, the Kyoto Protocol regulates the CO₂ emissions of 37 developed countries, namely the (then) 27 individual EU Member States, Australia, Iceland, Croatia, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Norway, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Switzerland and Belarus, as well as the EU as an independent organisation.

2.49.

At the climate conference in Cancun in 2010, the parties involved issued various decisions, including The Cancun Agreements (Decision 1/CP.16), which contains the following sections, among others:

“Recalling its decision 1/CP.13 (the Bali Action Plan) and decision 1/CP.15 (...),

Noting resolution 10/4 of the United Nations Human Rights Council on human rights and climate change, which recognizes that the adverse effects of climate change have a range of direct and indirect implications for the effective enjoyment of human rights and that the effects of climate change will be felt most acutely by those segments of the population that are already vulnerable owing to geography, gender, age, indigenous or minority status, or disability (...),

4. Further recognizes that deep cuts in global greenhouse gas emissions are required according to science, and as documented in the Fourth Assessment Report of the Inter- governmental Panel on Climate Change, with a view to reducing global greenhouse gas emissions so as to hold the increase in global average temperature below 2°C above pre- industrial levels, and that Parties should take urgent action to meet this long-term goal, consistent with science and on the basis of equity; also recognizes the need to consider, in the context of the first review, as referred to in paragraph 138 below, strengthening the long-term global goal on the basis of the best available scientific knowledge, including in relation to a global average temperature rise of 1.5°C; (...)”

2.50.

At the Cancun climate conference in 2010, the Annex I countries also took the decision which contains the following section, among others: [11](#)

“Decision 1/CMP.6 The Cancun Agreements: Outcome of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto

Protocol at its fifteenth session

(...)

Recognizing that Parties included in Annex I (Annex I Parties) should continue to take the lead in combating climate change,

Also recognizing that the contribution of Working Group III to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Climate Change 2007: Mitigation of Climate Change*, indicates that achieving the lowest levels assessed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to date and its corresponding potential damage limitation would require Annex I Parties as a group to reduce emissions in a range of 25–40 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020, through means that may be available to these Parties to reach their emission reduction targets, (...)

4. Urges Annex I Parties to raise the level of ambition of the emission reductions to be achieved by them individually or jointly, with a view to reducing their aggregate level of emissions of greenhouse gases in accordance with the range indicated by Working Group III to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Climate Change 2007: Mitigation of Climate Change*, and taking into account the quantitative implications of the use of land use, land-use change and forestry activities, emissions trading and project-based mechanisms and the carry-over of units from the first to the second commitment period; (...)"

Durban 2011

2.51.

The parties at the climate conference in Durban in 2011 issued several decisions. Decision 1/CP.17 states the following, among other things:

“ Recognizing that climate change represents an urgent and potentially irreversible threat to human societies and the planet and thus requires to be urgently addressed by all Parties (...),

Noting with grave concern the significant gap between the aggregate effect of Parties’ mitigation pledges in terms of global annual emissions of greenhouse gases by 2020 and aggregate emission pathways consistent with having a likely chance of holding the increase in global average temperature below 2°C or 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, (...)”

2.52.

At the Durban conference, the Parties also agreed that a new legally binding climate change convention or protocol must be concluded no later than 2015 and must be implemented by 2020. The climate conference which will be held in Paris

in December 2015 is a follow-up to this agreement.

In a European context

2.53.

Article 191 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) currently reads as follows:

Article 191

1. Union policy on the environment shall contribute to pursuit of the following objectives:

- preserving, protecting and improving the quality of the environment;
- protecting human health;
- prudent and rational utilisation of natural resources;
- promoting measures at international level to deal with regional or worldwide environmental problems, and in particular combating climate change.

2. Union policy on the environment shall aim at a high level of protection taking into account the diversity of situations in the various regions of the Union. It shall be based on the precautionary principle and on the principles that preventive action should be taken, that environmental damage should as a priority be rectified at source and that the polluter should pay.

In this context, harmonisation measures answering environmental protection requirements shall include, where appropriate, a safeguard clause allowing Member States to take provisional measures, for non-economic environmental reasons, subject to a procedure of inspection by the Union.

3. In preparing its policy on the environment, the Union shall take account of:

- available scientific and technical data,
- environmental conditions in the various regions of the Union,
- the potential benefits and costs of action or lack of action,
- the economic and social development of the Union as a whole and the balanced development of its regions.

4. Within their respective spheres of competence, the Union and the Member States shall cooperate with third countries and with the competent international organisations. The arrangements for Union cooperation may be the subject of

agreements between the Union and the third parties concerned.

The previous subparagraph shall be without prejudice to Member States' competence to negotiate in international bodies and to conclude international agreements.

2.54.

Under Article 192 TFEU, the European Parliament and the Council, acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure (meaning on the proposal of the Commission) and after consulting the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the Committee of the Regions, generally decide what action is to be taken by the Union in order to achieve the objectives referred to in Article 191 (apart from exception formulated the paragraph 2).

2.55.

Article 193 TFEU currently reads as follows:

Article 193

The protective measures adopted pursuant to Article 192 shall not prevent any Member State from

maintaining or introducing more stringent protective measures. Such measures must be compatible

with the Treaties. They shall be notified to the Commission.

2.56.

Partly as a follow-up to the Kyoto Protocol, the EU formulated its environmental objectives and priorities in Decision no 1600/2002/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down the Sixth Community Environment Action Programme as follows:

“Article 2 *Principles and overall aims* (...)

2. The Programme aims at:

— emphasising climate change as an outstanding challenge of the next 10 years and beyond and contributing to the long term objective of stabilising greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Thus a

long term objective of a maximum global temperature increase of 2 °Celsius over pre-industrial levels and a CO₂ concentration below 550 ppm shall guide the Programme. In the longer term this is likely to require a global reduction in emissions of greenhouse gases by 70% as compared to 1990 as identified by the

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC); (...)”

2.57.

The European Union subsequently converted its objectives in European regulations, including by introducing a large number of directives, among them Directive 2003/87/EC establishing a scheme for greenhouse gas emission allowance trading within the Community, which introduced the European Union Emission Trading System (ETS). This system only applies to major energy-intensive businesses, such as major electricity generation plants and refineries (hereinafter also referred to as: the ETS businesses). Non-ETS sectors, including transport, agriculture, housing and small companies, do not fall under the scope of the ETS.

2.58.

The preamble to Directive 2009/29/EC amending Directive 2003/87/EC so as to improve and extend the greenhouse gas emission allowance trading scheme of the Community states the following:

“(6) In order to enhance the certainty and predictability of the Community scheme, provisions should be specified to increase the level of contribution of the Community scheme to achieving an overall reduction of more than 20%, in particular in view of the European Council’s objective of a 30% reduction by 2020 which is considered scientifically necessary to avoid dangerous climate change (...).

(13) The Community-wide quantity of allowances should decrease in a linear manner calculated from the mid-point of the period from 2008 to 2012, ensuring that the emissions trading system delivers gradual and predictable reductions of emissions over time. The annual decrease of allowances should be equal to 1.74% of the allowances issued by Member States pursuant to Commission Decisions on Member States’ national allocation plans for the period from 2008 to 2012, so that the Community scheme contributes cost-effectively to achieving the commitment of the Community to an overall reduction in emissions of at least 20% by 2020.

(14) This contribution is equivalent to a reduction of emissions in 2020 in the Community scheme of 21% below reported 2005 levels, (...).”

2.59.

Articles 1 and 9 of the ETS Directive read as follows – following amendment:

Article 1 Subject matter

This Directive establishes a scheme for greenhouse gas emission allowance trading within the Community (hereinafter referred to as the ‘Community scheme’) in order to promote reductions of greenhouse gas emissions in a cost-effective and

economically efficient manner.

This Directive also provides for the reductions of greenhouse gas emissions to be increased so as to contribute to the levels of reductions that are considered scientifically necessary to avoid dangerous climate change.

This Directive also lays down provisions for assessing and implementing a stricter Community reduction commitment exceeding 20%, to be applied upon the approval by the Community of an international agreement on climate change leading to greenhouse gas emission reductions exceeding those required in Article 9, as reflected in the 30% commitment endorsed by the European Council of March 2007.

Article 9 *Community-wide quantity of allowances*

The Community-wide quantity of allowances issued each year starting in 2013 shall decrease in a linear manner beginning from the mid-point of the period from 2008 to 2012. The quantity shall decrease by a linear factor of 1.74% compared to the average annual total quantity of allowances issued by Member States in accordance with the Commission Decisions on their national allocation plans for the period from 2008 to 2012.

The Commission shall, by 30 June 2010, publish the absolute Community-wide quantity of allowances for 2013, based on the total quantities of allowances issued or to be issued by the Member States in accordance with the Commission Decisions on their national allocation plans for the period from 2008 to 2012.

The Commission shall review the linear factor and submit a proposal, where appropriate, to the European Parliament and to the Council as from 2020, with a view to the adoption of a decision by 2025.”

2.60.

The Communication of the European Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the EESC and the CoR of 10 January 2007, entitled “Limiting Global Climate Change to 2 degrees Celsius. The way ahead for 2020 and beyond”, states the following, among other things: [12](#)

2.60

“2. THE CLIMATE CHALLENGE: REACHING THE 2°C OBJECTIVE

Strong scientific evidence shows that urgent action to tackle climate change is imperative. Recent studies, such as the Stern review, reaffirm the enormous costs of failure to act. These costs are economic, but also social and environmental and will especially fall on the poor, in both developing and developed countries. A failure to act will have serious local and global security implications. Most solutions are readily available, but governments must now adopt policies to implement them. Not only is the economic cost of doing so manageable, tackling

climate change also brings considerable benefits in other respects. The EU's objective is to limit global average temperature increase to less than 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels. This will limit the impacts of climate change and the likelihood of massive and irreversible disruptions of the global ecosystem. The Council has noted that this will require atmospheric concentrations of GHG to remain well below 550 ppmv CO₂-eq. By stabilising long-term concentrations at around 450 ppmv CO₂-eq. there is a 50% chance of doing so. This will require global GHG emissions to peak before 2025 and then fall by up to 50% by 2050 compared to 1990 levels. The Council has agreed that developed countries will have to continue to take the lead to reduce their emissions between 15 to 30% by 2020. The European Parliament has proposed an EU CO₂ reduction target of 30% for 2020 and 60 to 80% for 2050.”

2.62

2020 as part of the Community's efforts to contribute to this global emissions reduction goal. Developed countries, including the EU Member States, should continue to take the lead by committing to collectively reducing their emissions of greenhouse gases in the order of 30% by 2020 compared to 1990. They should do so also with a view to collectively reducing their greenhouse gas emissions by 60 to 80% by 2050 compared to 1990. (...)

(3) Furthermore, in order to meet this objective, the European Council of March 2007 endorsed a Community objective of a 30% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 compared to 1990 as its contribution to a global and comprehensive agreement for the period after 2012, provided that other developed countries commit themselves to comparable emission reductions and economically more advanced developing countries commit themselves to contributing adequately according to their responsibilities and capabilities.

2.63

“When the EU decided in 2008 to cut its greenhouse gas emissions, it showed its commitment to tackling the climate change threat and to lead the world in demonstrating how this could be done. The agreed cut of 20% from 1990 levels by 2020, together with a 20% renewables target, was a crucial step for the EU's sustainable development and a clear signal to the rest of the world that the EU was ready to take the action required. The EU will meet its Kyoto Protocol target and has a strong track record in climate action.

But it has always been clear that action by the EU alone will not be enough to combat climate change and also that a 20% cut by the EU is not the end of the story. EU action alone is not enough to deliver the goal of keeping global temperature increase below 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels. All countries will need to make an additional effort, including cuts of 80- 95% by 2050 by

developed countries. An EU target of 20% by 2020 is just a first step to put emissions onto this path.

That was why the EU matched its 20% unilateral commitment with a commitment to move to 30%, as part of a genuine global effort. This remains EU policy today.

Since the EU policy was agreed, circumstances have been changing rapidly. We have seen an economic crisis of unprecedented scale. It has put huge pressure onto businesses and communities across Europe, as well as causing huge stress on public finances. But at the same time, it has confirmed that there are huge opportunities for Europe in building a resource-efficient society.

We have also had the Copenhagen summit. Despite the disappointment of failing to achieve the goal of a full, binding international agreement to tackle climate change, the most positive result was that countries accounting for some 80% of emissions today made pledges to cut emissions, even though these will be insufficient to meet the 2°C target. It will remain essential to integrate the Copenhagen Accord in on-going UNFCCC negotiations (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change). But the need for action remains as valid as ever.

2.64

2. MILESTONES TO 2050

The transition towards a competitive low carbon economy means that the EU should prepare for reductions in its domestic emissions by 80% by 2050 compared to 1990. The Commission has carried out an extensive modelling analysis with several possible scenarios showing how this could be done, (...).

This analysis of different scenarios shows that domestic emission reductions of the order of 40% and 60% below 1990 levels would be the cost-effective pathway by 2030 and 2040, respectively. In this context, it also shows reductions of 25% in 2020. (...). Such a pathway would result in annual reductions compared to 1990 of roughly 1% in the first decade until 2020, 1.5% in the second decade from 2020 until 2030, and 2% in the last two decades until 2050. The effort would become greater over time as a wider set of cost-effective technologies becomes available. (...)

Emissions, including international aviation, were estimated to be 16% below 1990 levels in 2009. With full implementation of current policies, the EU is on track to achieve a 20% domestic reduction in 2020 below 1990 levels, and 30% in 2030. However, with current policies, only half of the 20% energy efficiency target would be met by 2020.

6. CONCLUSIONS

(...) In order to be in line with the 80 to 95% overall GHG reduction objective by 2050, the Roadmap indicates that a cost effective and gradual transition would require a 40% domestic reduction of greenhouse gas emissions compared to 1990 as a milestone for 2030, and 80% for 2050. (...)

(...) This Communication does not suggest to set new 2020 targets, nor does it affect the EU's offer in the international negotiations to take on a 30% reduction target for 2020, if the conditions are right. This discussion continues based on the Commission Communication from 26 May 2010.”

2.65.

On 15 March 2012, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the Roadmap referred to in 2.64, in which the Roadmap as well as the path and specific milestones for the reduction of the Community's domestic emissions of 40%, 60% and 80% for 2030, 2040 and 2050, respectively, were endorsed

“1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

According to the latest findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), without urgent action, climate change will bring severe, pervasive and irreversible impacts on all the world's people and ecosystems. Limiting dangerous rises in global average temperature to below 2°C compared with pre-industrial levels (the below 2°C objective) will require substantial and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions by all countries.

This global transition to low emissions can be achieved without compromising growth and jobs, and can provide significant opportunities to revitalise economies in Europe and globally. Action to tackle climate change also brings significant benefits in terms of public well-being. Delaying this transition will, however, raise overall costs and narrow the options for effectively reducing emissions and preparing for the impacts of climate change.

All countries need to act urgently and collectively. Since 1994, the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) have focused on this challenge, resulting in more than 90 countries, both developed and developing, pledging to curb their emissions by 2020. However, these pledges are insufficient to achieve the below 2°C objective. For these reasons, in 2012, the UNFCCC Parties launched negotiations towards a new legally binding agreement applicable to all Parties that will put the world on track to achieve the below 2°C objective. The 2015 Agreement is to be finalised in Paris in December 2015 and implemented from 2020. (...)

Well ahead of the Lima conference, the EU continued to show leadership and determination to tackle climate change globally. At the European Summit in

October 2014, European leaders agreed that the EU should step up its efforts and domestically reduce its emissions by at least 40% compared to 1990 by 2030. This was followed by announcements of China and the US. In Lima, EU Member States pledged about half of the initial capitalisation of US\$10 billion to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to assist developing countries. MORE INCLUDE MILITARY Within the EU, a new investment plan was adopted. This will unlock public and private investments in the real economy of at least €315 billion over the next three years (2015-17). These investments will help modernise and further decarbonise the EU's economy.

This communication responds to the decisions taken in Lima, and is a key element in implementing the Commission's priority of building a resilient Energy Union with a forward-looking climate change policy consistent with the President of the Commission's political guidelines. This communication prepares the EU for the last round of negotiations before the Paris conference in December 2015."

In a national context

**** AFFIRMED THE PRINCIPLE OF RIGHTS OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

As mentioned briefly above, Urgenda accuses the State of several things, such as the State acting unlawfully by, contrary to its constitutional obligation (Article 21 of the Dutch Constitution), mitigating insufficiently as defined further in international agreements and in line with current scientific knowledge. In doing so, the State is damaging the interests it pursues, namely: to prevent the Netherlands from causing (more than proportionate) damage, from its territory, to current and future generations in the Netherlands and abroad. Furthermore, Urgenda argues that under Articles 2 and 8 of the ECHR, the State has the positive obligation to take protective measures. Urgenda also claims that the State is acting unlawfully because, as a consequence of insufficient mitigation, it (more than proportionately) endangers the living climate (and thereby also the health) of man and the environment, thereby breaching its duty of care. Urgenda asserts that in doing so the State is acting unlawfully towards Urgenda in the sense of Book 6, Section 162 of the Dutch Civil Code, whether or not in combination with Book 5, Section 37 of the Dutch Civil Code. The State contests that a duty of care arises from these sections for a further limitation of emissions than currently realised by it. The court finds as follows

4.57.

The principle of fairness (i) means that the policy should not only start from what is most beneficial to the current generation at this moment, but also what this means for future generations, so that future generations are not exclusively and disproportionately burdened with the consequences of climate change. The principle of fairness also expresses that industrialised countries have to take the

lead in combating climate change and its negative impact. The justification for this, and this is also noted in literature, lies first and foremost in the fact that from a historical perspective the current industrialised countries are the main causers of the current high greenhouse gas concentration in the atmosphere and that these countries also benefited from the use of fossil fuels, in the form of economic growth and prosperity. Their prosperity also means that these countries have the most means available to take measures to combat climate change. [26](#)

4.76.

The State's options are limited further by the private-law principles applicable to the State and mentioned above. After all, these principles were developed in response to the special risk of climate change and therefore limit the State's options. This also applies, for instance, to the circumstance that Annex I countries, including the Netherlands, have taken the lead in taking mitigation measures and have therefore committed to a more than proportional contribution to reduction, in view of a fair distribution between industrialised and developing countries. Due to this principle of fairness, the State, in choosing measures, will also have to take account of the fact that the costs are to be distributed reasonably between the current and future generations. If according to the current insights it turns out to be cheaper on balance to act now, the State has a serious obligation, arising from due care, towards future generations to act accordingly. Moreover, the State cannot postpone taking precautionary measures based on the sole reason that there is no scientific certainty yet about the precise effect of the measures. However, a cost-benefit ratio is allowed here. Finally, the State will have to base its actions on the principle of "prevention is better than cure".

"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Recalling also that 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,

Reaffirming the principle of sovereignty of States in international cooperation to address climate change,

Determined to protect the climate system for present and future generations, (...)"

2.37.

****REFERENCED THE RESOLUTION 10/4 OF UN HUMAN RIGHTS

COUNCIL

2.49.

At the climate conference in Cancun in 2010, the parties involved issued various decisions, including The Cancun Agreements (Decision 1/CP.16), which contains the following sections, among others:

“Recalling its decision 1/CP.13 (the Bali Action Plan) and decision 1/CP.15 (...),

Noting resolution 10/4 of the United Nations Human Rights Council on human rights and climate change, which recognizes that the adverse effects of climate change have a range of direct and indirect implications for the effective enjoyment of human rights and that the effects of climate change will be felt most acutely by those segments of the population that are already vulnerable owing to geography, gender, age, indigenous or minority status, or disability (...), *Noting* resolution 10/4 of the United Nations Human Rights Council on human rights and climate change, which recognizes that the adverse effects of climate change have a range of direct and indirect implications for the effective enjoyment of human rights and that the effects of climate change will be felt most acutely by those segments of the population that are already vulnerable owing to geography, gender, age, indigenous or minority status, or disability (...),

**** APPLIED RIGHT TO LIFE AND DUTY

4.49.

The scope of protection based on various articles of the ECHR regarding environmental issues has been detailed in separate chapters. In the context of this case, the court finds the following principles from the first chapter of part II (“Chapter I: the right to life and environment”) relevant, including the subsequent explanation (the footnotes referring to the rulings of the ECtHR concerned have not been included in the quotation):

“(a) The right to life is protected under Article 2 of the Convention.

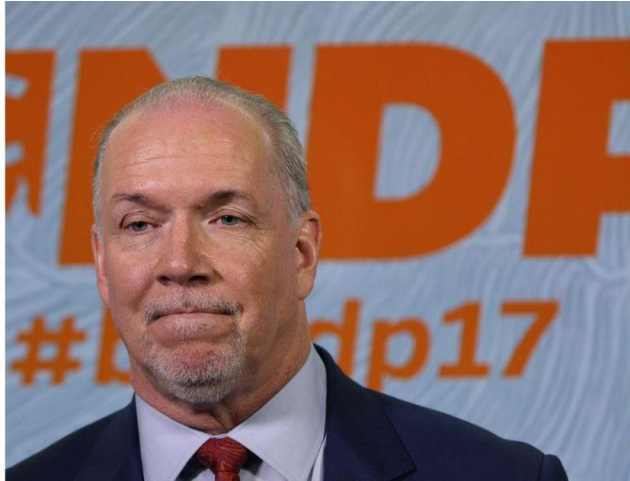
This Article does not solely concern deaths resulting directly from the actions of the agents of a State, but also lays down a positive obligation on States to take appropriate steps to safeguard the lives of those within their jurisdiction. This means that public authorities have a duty to take steps to guarantee the rights of the Convention even when they are threatened by other (private) persons or activities that are not directly connected with the State.

1. (...) in some situations Article 2 may also impose on public authorities a duty to take steps to guarantee the right to life when it is threatened by persons or activities not directly connected with the State. (...) In the context of the environment, Article 2 has been applied where certain activities endangering the environment are so dangerous that they also endanger human life.

2. It is not possible to give an exhaustive list of examples of situations in which this obligation might arise. It must be stressed however that cases in which issues under Article 2 have arisen are exceptional. So far, the Court has considered environmental issues in four cases brought under Article 2, two of which relate to dangerous activities and two which relate to natural disasters. In theory, Article 2 can apply even though loss of life has not occurred, for example in situations where potentially lethal force is used inappropriately.

****ENDORSED THE PRINCIPLE OF FAIRNESS

The principle of fairness (i) means that the policy should not only start from what is most beneficial to the current generation at this moment, but also what this means for future generations, so that future generations are not exclusively and disproportionately burdened with the consequences of climate change. The principle of fairness also expresses that industrialised countries have to take the lead in combating climate change and its negative impact. The justification for this, and this is also noted in literature, lies first and foremost in the fact that from a historical perspective the current industrialised countries are the main causes of the current high greenhouse gas concentration in the atmosphere and that these countries also benefited from the use of fossil fuels, in the form of economic growth and prosperity. Their prosperity also means that these countries have the most means available to take measures to combat climate change. [26](#)



New rules inside the B.C. NDP could limit the ability for some members to publicly criticize the NDP government of Premier John Horgan. CHAD HIPOLITO / THE CANADIAN PRESS

New rules inside the B.C. NDP could limit the ability for some members to publicly criticize the NDP government of Premier John Horgan. CHAD HIPOLITO / THE CANADIAN PRESS

New rules within the B.C. NDP could limit people's ability to criticize the government and party policies.

VICTORIA — B.C.'s governing New Democratic Party has crafted new rules that could prevent some members and officials from publicly criticizing the decisions of Premier John Horgan's government.

A draft of an internal NDP code of conduct, obtained by Postmedia News, shows it would require members of the party's provincial executive and committees to sign non-disclosure agreements that forbid them from publicly disagreeing with party or government policies.

"Individuals agree that they shall, in all public statements (either written or verbal), promote the positions taken by the party through its duly constituted bodies and shall refrain from public criticisms of the party, its positions, or its elected officials," reads the code of conduct. Any criticisms should be expressed only through internal channels, it reads.

The document also says all matters dealt with in party meetings are confidential and not to be discussed publicly.

The code is a draft, but could go before the NDP's provincial council for a vote next month. It would apply to the provincial executive — which includes table officers and two representatives from each region of the province — and the NDP's nine committees where members meet to discuss issues such as the environment, agriculture, women's rights, youth, pride, people living with disabilities and

Aboriginal representation.

Signed agreements could effectively act as gag orders for NDP members who disagree with the Horgan government's decisions to approve the Site C dam, give tax breaks to the LNG Canada project and campaign in favour of proportional representation.

NDP officials argue the intention is not to silence people from speaking their minds, but instead to formalize what has been an implied obligation in the NDP constitution that

people who represent the party — especially on social media — do not criticize it or break with its positions in an official capacity.

“Individuals will still be individuals,” said NDP communications director Glen Sanford. “I think you know the NDP well enough to know there will always be robust discussions and our folks really don't hold back on how they feel about things. That's not going to change. The clarity that's being looked for here is ensuring there's procedures and lines of responsibility and accountability for people who are representing bodies of the party.”

Sanford said the party has already heard concerns from some members about the language used in the draft and the need to more explicitly state that people can still be critical of the party and government as long as they make clear it is their opinion.

The code of conduct, which also includes sections on conflict of interest and dispute resolution, is modelled after those used by federal political parties, unions and corporations, said Sanford.

Nonetheless, the code would be unique among B.C.'s political parties, where pressure to toe the party line is often real but usually unwritten.

The B.C. Liberals and B.C. Greens have confidentiality agreements for officials who have access to financial details, voter databases and the personal information of members and volunteers. But neither has a clause that requires members to support party positions or only voice dissent within confidential internal structures.

“When parties like the NDP use this heavy-handed approach, it makes you wonder what kind of disagreements they are having internally (that) they feel the need to suppress dissent to keep it from spilling into the public,” said the Liberal executive director, Emile Scheffel.

“To me that suggests a symptom of weak leadership. If you are willing to take this step to censor people it suggests you aren't capable of bringing them along internally and making them heard.”

Green leader Andrew Weaver has said the NDP is losing environmental supporters to his party after its Site C and LNG decisions. Some NDP MLAs campaigned against Site C in 2017, even though the official party position was to simply do a “review”

of the project. That review resulted in Horgan announcing in late 2017 that the \$10.4-billion hydroelectric dam near Fort St. John would proceed.

On LNG, many New Democrats fought against the previous Liberal government's attempts to nurture the industry and opposed the pollution the LNG Canada project in Kitimat will cause. Yet Horgan's government offered more than \$5 billion in tax breaks to secure LNG Canada's final approval this month.

Similarly, not all New Democrats support proportional representation in the November referendum. Horgan announced he will campaign in favour, and the party has followed suit with an aggressive fundraising and voter sign-up operation. But some New Democrats are in the campaign to oppose pro-rep, feeling the NDP is better positioned to win majority governments under the existing first-past-the-post system.

The code of conduct would insulate senior officials from blowback on party positions under a section called "mutual respect/inclusion" that says bullying, harassment and "questioning the motives of another member or staff" won't be tolerated.

Last Updated on Tuesday, 06 November 2018 23:09

1766 readings

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Posted by admin

Tuesday, 16 October 2018 21:56

I asked the Saanich Municipal 2018 candidates for Mayor and Councilors these two questions. Following the questions are their responses. Only the candidates listed here responded.

"I have two election questions for each of you that concern me. Note that I may publish your responses including no responses.
1 - Have you located a property to put forward for government funding for homeless people and if not do you intend to do so?
2 - What action will you take to synchronize traffic lights?"

Candidate

Responses.....

...

UPDATE: Oct 18 2018 from Richard Atewll

Just received this response which I think is of interest:

Richard Atwell Thu, 18 Oct 10:20 PM cc

richard@richardatwell.ca : Candidate Questions

Hello Jim,

Answers below:

On Mon, September 24, 2018 10:35 pm, jawight@gmail.com wrote:

> Hi,

>

> I have two election questions for each of you that concern me. Note that

> I may publish your responses including no responses.

>

> 1 - Have you located a property to put forward for government funding for

> homeless people and if not do you intend to do so?

Yes, back in June 2018 I identified the former Emily Carr Library as a

surplus building that BC Housing could use for modular supportive housing

that should be investigated.

The council vote was 2-4 with only myself and Karen Harper in favour with

3 councillors not bothering to show up.

As the vote was only to investigate and not to actually repurpose I felt

the decision short sighted.

Given that BC Housing rejected the "scrap of land" that Saanich did offer,

I feel that we have simply wasted months as a result of a bad decision:

<https://www.timescolonist.com/news/local/saanich-land-rejected-for-modular-housing-project-1.23461383>

> 2 - What action will you take to synchronize traffic lights?

>

>

> Jim

>

>
> Saanich BC

Saanich does not use computers to manage traffic volumes. The boxes have the rack space for the equipment but as yet, there has been no proposal to install the equipment and coordinate the lights.

I would like to pursue this if re-elected and hope that I can count on your vote.

--
Richard Atwell
Mayor of Saanich

October 20 is Election Day in Saanich.
Please visit our website for more info:

<http://unitedforsaanich.ca>

Trevor Barry 4 Saanich Mon, 15 Oct 11:43 PM
Candidate Questions
Hey Jim, I anonymised you - and I have also published in my policy library:
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1zSLB14JP8eeih-G4OuZ-1dkjle-PVkdDDIPRcxs0tFU/edit?usp=sharing>
cheers, let me know if the technical terms are too thick!

On Fri, Oct 12, 2018 at 6:27 PM <jawight...> wrote:

Hi,
I have two election questions for each of you that concern me. Note that I may publish your responses including no responses.
1 - Have you located a property to put forward for government funding for homeless people and if not do you intend to do so?
-- may #SmartSaanich Policy Platform calls for local government to take over ownership, control, responsibility, liability and jurisdiction over the following transportation assets and adjacent properties currently owned by the ministry of highways:

... Douglas, Blanshard, Vernon, Ravine, and relevant segment of McKenzie.

... If this were to happen, then the land that some of the "campers" used as "tent city2" following evacuation of the Regina Park encampment - the triangle between Esso and Ravine - could be used for TEMPORARY modular housing.

(and even if the transportation asset transfer doesn't happen, this could still be a workable site, with cooperation with MoTI).

[keeping in mind, that the long term future of that land must certainly include redesigning multi-modal rights-of-way, in alignment with BC Transit (or future #SmartGrowth/Transp Authority) current plans for future BRT and LRT near current "switch bridge" (including Regina Park as well)

2 - What action will you take to synchronize traffic lights?

-- Traffic signals are capital assets that need replacement (or elements do) according to a fully costed and risk-assessed capital asset management plan.

Moreover these risks and plans should contemplate future needs and threats, e.g. autonomous vehicles and other disruptive mode choices, e.g. impacts of changing climate conditions, respectively.

-- "Synchronisation" as some people call it requires dynamic algorithms coded into the phase controller, perhaps remotely monitored and directed, in order to ensure not only smooth performance in variable peak demand period circumstances, but also such ways that does not exacerbate other traffic/engineering infrastructure, way finding, traffic control, etc., issues; and indeed does not perversely induce vehicular modal behaviour externalities.

Thus - in both cases, the only SMART way to move forward is to first digitise all our corporate knowledge (gosh I hope that has already happened, but the lack of transparency on these issues is 'frank'ly embarrassing) and then publish it all in an #OpenData format (another plank of my policy platform).

From there, we could leverage knowledge and power from Big Data companies such as Google, in order to determine exactly what the most economically efficient implemented changes could and should be. e.g. via expanding "victoria" environmental insights:

<https://insights.sustainability.google/places/ChIJcWgW3Ytzj1QR7Ui7HnTz6Dg/transportation>

Vernon Lord Mon, 15 Oct 5:01 PM to Jim WightRe: Candidate Questions

Jim,

- 1) I have not proposed a property location yet I do believe that finding a location for a camp is most important and needed.
 - 2) I have not given that any thought at this time.
- Vernon Lord
Saanich Council

Benjamin For Saanich Sun, 14 Oct 1:49 PM Re: Candidate Questions

Hello Jim,

1 - Have you located a property to put forward for government funding for homeless people and if not do you intend to do so?

I have not found property as of yet, I am always up for suggestions, and yes I intend to find several properties to be used. I want to get community input before we build anything and weigh the pros and cons of each potential property.

2 - What action will you take to synchronize traffic lights?

I want council to instruct staff to find ways to improve traffic flow throughout the municipality but in particular along our main corridors as this is an easy way to reduce CO2 from idling vehicles, as well, reduced congestion will encourage drivers to use the main corridors not residential roads making it safer for everyone.

Benjamin Allan
Running for my family and yours
<https://allanben22.wixsite.com/saanich2018>

Teale Phelps Bondaroff Sun, 14 Oct 1:44 PM Re: Candidate Questions

Jim,

Thank you very much for your email and questions.

With respect to locating property to offer to the provincial government to take advantage of funding and other projects offered by other levels of government, I have proposed a number of possibilities. I am not currently on council, and as such am not aware of all of the different sites which may have been offered or considered. There ought to be acceptable Saanich land available, and if zoning is an impediment, we should re-zone. This is something that council should have done a year ago. There is plenty of Saanich land available, but even if this were not the case, a Council that was committed to being proactive on the issue would have found another solution. I proposed one:

<https://www.saanichnews.com/letters/letter-innovative-policy-needed-to-tackle-housing-crisis/>

We could also partner with private land-owners, non-profits, and religious organizations to explore other land options.

Regarding light synchronization, do you have a particular intersection in mind?

Thank you for your questions,
Cheers,

Dr. Teale Phelps Bondaroff

Candidate for Saanich Council, 2018

www.teale.ca

778-678-8325

art@artpollard.ca Sat, 13 Oct 6:35 PM to RE: Candidate Questions

Hi Jim,

Thanks for the questions. Personally, I have not. We need to identify properties that are suitable for this.

I honestly, think it is the Provinces responsibility to do so with proper support by the Federal government.

Your second question is an engineering dept issue. I understand there is a technological advance that will allow that to occur.

I like the idea of better synchronizing the traffic flow. It has considerable merit.

Thank you for your query,

Yours sincerely,

Art

Elect Art Pollard, your independent voice for Saanich Council.

Ned Taylor Fri, 12 Oct 3:42 PM to Re: Candidate Questions

Hi Jim,

Thank you for reaching out to me about these two important issues. I have provided my answers below:

1. When the tent city at Regina Park first formed, our provincial government offered to pay for modular housing, which could have been used to provide people living at tent city an option that could better suit their living needs. The District of Saanich was required to donate land that we own or lease for the province to provide that funding, which we did not do. I'm disappointed that our Saanich Councillors did not take advantage of this opportunity until a couple of weeks ago. If we had found suitable land to donate earlier, we would have been able to alleviate the situation, and modular housing could have already been under construction. You can see my full plan to address housing affordability here: <https://www.votened.org/housing>
2. It's crucial that our traffic lights are properly synchronized and timed so that we can ensure the best possible flow of traffic. I

want to make our transportation system in Saanich and Greater Victoria work for all road-users. Part of doing this must include reducing traffic congestion.

Thank you again for getting in touch with me, if you'd like me to elaborate on any of these issues just let me know!

Take care,

Ned

--

Ned Taylor

Candidate for Saanich Council & CRD

250-477-8960

[Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)

Remember to vote on October 20th!

[Click here for more information on voting](#)

Colin Plant Fri, 12 Oct 12:57 PM to Re: Candidate Questions

Dear Jim

Thank you for writing and asking these questions. Your second question is the first time I've been asked about synchronizing traffic lights.

1)

Yes, several.

2)

I would support this as part of our Active Transportation Plan which seeks to make transportation (both vehicular and human-powered) more efficient and safe.

The situation especially on McKenzie needs attention and I would request staff do as much as possible to synchronize the lights.

If you'd like to discuss things further, please let me know.

Sincerely,

COLIN PLANT

Saanich Councillor

Judy Brownoff Sat, 13 Oct 10:30 AM to Re: Candidate Questions

Hi Jim

1. We have. BC Housing has specific requirements ie must be already zoned. Then they evaluate the site for their needs. Unfortunately they turned down a site which was zoned and could have housed around 40 residents. There are Provincial lands in Saanich they could also look at.

2. The synchronizing of traffic lights in Saanich is always being looked at on major roads, but there are many issues, that may impact the flow. I did speak to Engineering and they continue to look at areas where improvement can happen.

Thanks for email.

Judy Brownoff

Fred Haynes Fri, 12 Oct 11:34 AM Re: reply: Candidate Questions

Hello Jim

Thank you for your questions

1 - Have you located a property to put forward for government funding for homeless people and if not do you intend to do so?

Yes.

2 - What action will you take to synchronize traffic lights?

Take this up with staff.

Rebecca Mersereau Fri, 12 Oct 11:27 AM

Thank you for getting in touch! Re: Candidate Questions

Hello,

I'll do my best to get back to you personally as soon as I can - but I am getting a lot of emails at the moment! I'm also still trying to hold down a full-time job while running my election campaign for

Saanich Council and the CRD. Fortunately October 20th is coming fast!

I have published some of my ideas for Saanich on the [Vision](#) page of my website, which may answer some of your questions. If you're interested in learning more about me and my qualifications for the role, please visit the [About Me](#) page.

Thank you very much for your interest in Saanich's future and my candidacy for a Council seat and CRD Director's chair.

--

Sincerely,




Rebecca Mersereau, *MSc, MPA Candidate*

2018 Saanich Council & CRD Candidate

voterebecca.ca

Last Updated on Friday, 19 October 2018 11:17

1768 readings

[Drought in northern and central B.C. has officials worried](#)   

[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 17 October 2018 08:23

B.C. lands ministry is asking for voluntary reductions in water use so fracking can continue.

The Canadian Press · Posted: Oct 10, 2018 10:35 AM PT | Last Updated: October 10



Last Updated on Tuesday, 06 November 2018 23:00

1681 readings

[Hundreds Of Millions Of Tons Of Mine Tailings Are To Be Dumped Into Norway's Fjords](#)

[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 21 October 2018 11:10



<https://www.keikoconservation.com/blog/hundreds-of-millions-of-tons-of-mine-tailings-are-to-be-du>

October 21 2018

Despite public outcry, Norway has decided to stick with plans to dump mine tailings into the majestic fjords, "Førdefjorden" in Sogn and Fjordane and "Repparfjorden" in Finnmark. Mine tailings,

known as "gruveavfall" in Norwegian, are what remain after mining for minerals and metals. Gruveavfall actually quite literally means mine (gruve) garbage (avfall) and can contain chemicals and hazardous materials. The plan is to dump an immense amount into these fjords, with 250 million tons of tailings in Førdefjorden alone!

The fight against mine tailing dumpings in Norway has been long and ongoing. In 2016, 80 activists even chained themselves to the Nordic Minings machinery alongside Førdefjorden. All together they were fined over 1 million kroner. Many people are understandably concerned and angry. These activities threaten the beautiful fjords and, most importantly, the life that resides in and around them. These fjords are homes to many animals including orcas, cod, spiny dogfish, eels and multiple species of birds, mammals and fish. Norway is one of only 5 countries in the world that still allows the dumping of tailings into the ocean and the 4 other remaining countries are even slowly beginning to change their opinion. The government in Norway often promotes the country as clean and respectable with a high focus on a sustainable future, but dumping tailings is not sustainable in any way.

Both of these fjords hold wild salmon. One can only imagine the damage these tailings will have on spawning areas. The large mass of the tailings will lay almost immediately on the ocean floor, suffocating and killing marine life. The mining industry also uses different types of chemicals to perfect their product. These chemicals are mainly Magnafloc 155, Magnafloc 1707 and Lilafloc D817M. Even worse, it is believed that, due to heavy currents inside the fjords, tailing particles may be carried over great distances. Scientists are concerned that these chemicals will not break down effectively and may spread to marine life. These waters have no barriers. What goes on in these fjords will potentially also effect others outside of Norway's borders.

What You Can Do:

Nussir is the name of the company planning to dump tailings in Repparfjord while Nordic Mining plans to dump tailings in Førdefjorden. We hope you will urge them to stop this destructive practice by contacting them through e-mail.

Nussir: info@nussir.no

Nordic Mining: post@nordicmining.com

You can also contact:

Prime Minister Erna Solberg: postmottak@smk.dep.no

Minister of Climate and Environment- Ola Elvestuen:
postmottak@kld.dep.no

-Keiko Norway Team

Last Updated on Sunday, 21 October 2018 11:18

1678 readings

[Over and Under Nutrition: Two Sides of an Unhealthy Coin](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 23 October 2018 10:00

Poor dietary intake and lack of food varieties affect huge numbers of children, who mostly hail from large, impoverished families in Nepal. Malnutrition is a significant concern in Nepal as around one million children under 5 years suffer from chronic malnutrition and 10 percent suffer from acute malnutrition. Credit: Naresh Newar/IPS

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 4 2018 (IPS) - A dramatic shift in the way we eat and think about food is more urgent than ever to prevent further environmental degradation and an even larger health epidemic.

A diverse group of experts from academia, civil society, and United Nations agencies convened at the sidelines of the General Assembly to discuss the pervasive issue of food insecurity and malnutrition and potential solutions to overhaul the system.

“Sustainable food choices is starting to both look good and taste good which hasn’t been the story of the past.” -- founder of EAT Gunhild Stordalen

“It’s striking that we are still, despite all the advances we have seen in science and technology, we still have this big gap between those who eat too much and those who don’t have enough food to eat,” [Barilla Centre for Food and Nutrition Foundation’s](#) head of media relations Luca Di Leo told IPS.

According to the [State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2018](#), the number of hungry people increased to over 820 million in 2017 from approximately 804 million in 2016, levels unseen for almost a decade.

At the same time, and perhaps paradoxically, obesity rates have rapidly increased over the last decade from 11.7 percent in 2012 to 13.2 percent in 2016. This means

that in 2017, more than one in eight adults, or over 670 million people, in the world were obese.

Adult obesity and the rate of its increase is highest in North America, and increasing trends can now also be seen across Africa and Asia.

Participants at the [International Forum on Food and Nutrition](#) stressed the need to deal with both forms of malnutrition, and pointed to the lack of access to healthy food as the culprit.

“It’s not just what’s in the food, it’s what’s in the discourse about food...there is more than one way to eat badly,” said director of [Yale University’s Prevention Research Centre](#) David Katz.

However, many noted that there is a lack of a unified, factual consensus on what constitutes a healthy diet from a sustainable food system.

“Without goals to mobilise collective action, and also no mechanisms to either coordinate nor monitor progress, it is really hard to achieve large-scale system change,” said founder of [EAT Foundation](#), a science-based global platform for food system transformation, Gunhild Stordalen.

Katz echoed similar sentiments, stating: “You will never get there if you can’t agree where there is...we must rally around a set of fundamental truths.”

Fighting the System

Among these truths is the need to overhaul the entire food and agricultural system.

Despite the notorious and shocking findings from the 2004 ‘Supersize Me’ documentary, the consumption of unhealthy processed foods and sugar has only increased.

According to the [Barilla Centre for Food and Nutrition’s Food Sustainability Index \(FSI\) 2017](#), the United States had the highest sugar consumption out of 34 countries in 2017.

The average person in the U.S. consumes more than 126 grams of sugar per day, twice the amount that the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) recommends for daily intake.

This not only leads to increasing obesity rates, but it has also contributed to a rise in levels of cardiovascular diseases and diabetes.

“The number of lost years to nutritional deficiencies and cardiovascular diseases has been going up very sharply in the United States,” said Leo Abruzzese from the Economist Intelligence Unit, which develops the index.

“One of the U.S.’ less impressive exports has been bad nutrition...people aren’t

necessarily dying but they are living pretty miserable lives. Under those circumstances, wouldn't you think there has to be something done?" he told IPS.

The [FSI](#) also found that the U.S.' consumption of meat and saturated fat is among the highest in the world, contributing to unhealthy diets and even climate change.

Related IPS Articles

- [Local Communities in Mexico Show Ways to Fight Obesity](#)
- [India Uses Tech to Power its New Battle Against Malnutrition](#)
- [How the Lack of Affordable Vegetables is Creating a Billion-Dollar Obesity Epidemic in South Africa](#)

According to U.N. University, emissions from livestock account for almost 15 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. Beef and dairy alone make up 65 percent of all livestock emissions.

In fact, meat and dairy companies are on track to become the world's biggest contributors to climate change, surpassing the fossil fuel industry.

However, Stordalen noted that delivering healthy and sustainable diets is within our reach.

Alternatives to meat have taken many countries by storm, and could slowly transform the fast food and meat industries. Consumers can now find the 'impossible burger,' a meatless plant-based burger, in many restaurants and fast food chains such as White Castle.

Recently, the U.S.-based vegan meat companies Beyond Meat and Impossible Foods was recently honoured by [U.N. Environment](#) with the Champions of the Earth award.

"Sustainable food choices is starting to both look good and taste good which hasn't been the story of the past," Stordalen said.

"Once people get the taste of better solutions, they not only start craving but even demanding a better future. They come together to make it happen," she added.

The [FSI](#) is also a crucial tool to guide governments and policymakers to pay attention to progress and weaknesses in their own country's food systems.

"By collecting all of these [indicators] together, we essentially have a framework for what we think a good food system would look like," Abruzzese said.



In some African countries even though there is enough food, it is the type of food that is available that counts. In Malawi, for instance, even though families had increased access to maize, nearly half the children are malnourished. In this dated picture, these children from south Madagascar are malnourished. Credit: Miriam Gathigah/IPS

A Problem of Power

The lack of access to healthy food and its consequences can also be seen at the other end of the food value chain: producers.

Women account for up to 60 percent of agricultural labour across Africa, yet still have poor access to quality seeds, fertiliser, and mechanical equipment. At the same time, they often look after the household, taking care of children and cooking meals.

Such gender inequality has been found to contribute to poorer household nutrition, including increases in stunting among children.

Forum participants highlighted the need to empower women farmers and address the gender inequalities in agriculture in order to advance food and nutrition security as well as establish sustainable societies.

“The opposite of hunger is power,” said University of Texas’ research professor Raj Patel, pointing to the case of Malawi.

In Malawi, more than half of children suffer from chronic malnutrition. The harvesting of corn, which is the southeastern African country’s main staple, is designated to women who are also tasked with care work.

“Even when there was more food, there was more malnutrition,” said Patel.

One northern Malawian village tackled the issue through the Soils, Food, and Healthy Communities Project and achieved extraordinary results.

Alongside actions to diversify crop, the project brought men and women together to share the workload such as cooking together and involving men in care work.

Not only did they achieve gender equality in agriculture, the village also saw dramatic decreases in infant malnutrition.

“We need to value women’s work,” Patel said.

Future of Food

Fixing the food and agricultural system is no easy task, but it has to be done,

attendees said.

“We know what the problems are, we’ve also identified the potential solutions...and the main solution is each and every one of us,” Di Leo told IPS.

One of the key solutions is education and empowering people to be agents of change.

“Healthy production will come if the consumer ask for the healthy eating. And healthy eating will come if the consumer has the right education and information,” Di Leo said.

For instance, many do not see or know the link between food and climate change, he added.

In fact, a 2016 study found that there was a lack of awareness of the association between meat consumption and climate change and a resistance to the idea of reducing personal meat consumption.

“It’s a kind of change that needs a bottom-up approach,” Di Leo said.

Stordalen echoed Di Leo’s comments, calling for a global ‘dugnad’—a Norwegian word describing the act of a community uniting and working together to achieve a goal that will serve them all.

“The state of the global food system calls for new collaborative action,” she said.

“It’s time to officially ditch the saying that ‘the more cooks, the worse soup’ because we need everybody involved to serve our people and planet the right future.”

Last Updated on Tuesday, 06 November 2018 22:47

1846 readings

[THE BIOMASS
DELUSION](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 24 October 2018 11:50

THE BIOMASS DELUSION



Position Statement on Forest Biomass Energy

We share a vision of a world in which thriving natural forests play a significant role in tackling climate change and contribute to a clean, healthy, just and sustainable future for all life on earth. Burning forest wood for large-scale energy production cannot be part of that future for all of the reasons outlined below. Instead we must protect and restore natural forests, thereby reducing emissions and removing atmospheric carbon dioxide while supporting biodiversity, resilience and well-being.

Large-scale burning of forest biomass for energy:

Harms the climate

It is encouraged by flawed accounting - Current carbon accounting rules incentivise forest bioenergy by considering biomass combustion as a zero-emission technology, expressed as zero emissions in the energy sector. The assumption is that all emissions are instead to be accounted for when the biomass is logged, placing the burden on the forest producer rather than the biomass consumer. Yet emissions accounting of forests in the land sector is fatally flawed and generally understates emissions. The true carbon cost of biomass burning rarely appears accurately on any country's balance sheet.

Harms forests

It threatens biodiversity and climate resilience - Using forest biomass for energy can entrench, intensify and expand logging. This degrades forest ecosystems, depletes biodiversity and soils and harms forests' ability to deliver ecosystem services like clean drinking water, flood protection, and clean air. Conversion of forests and other ecosystems to industrial monoculture tree plantations for biomass is especially harmful. These increased impacts come at a time when we recognise that rights-based protection and ecological restoration improve the health and well-being of forests and make them more resilient to climate change and other environmental disturbances.

It undermines the climate mitigation potential of forests - To meet the Paris Agreement goal of pursuing efforts to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees, scientists now agree we will need to draw carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere. A safe and proven way to do this is to protect and restore natural forests. Logging for biomass does the opposite.

Harms people

It undermines community rights and interests - Demand for biomass can exacerbate conflicts over land and forest resources, including land grabbing. This threatens rights, interests, lives, livelihoods and cultural values of indigenous and tribal peoples and local communities as well as established businesses relying on forest resources. The wide-ranging negative effects can also impact food security for the wider populace and for the long term.

It harms human health and well-being - Forests play an important role in safeguarding communities from the worst impacts of climate change. Those living at the front-lines of forest destruction are often most vulnerable to the effects of climate change and also face oppressive extractive industries. In addition, biomass manufacturing and combustion facilities are often located in areas of socio-economic disadvantage, where they pollute the air, increasing incidents of respiratory and other diseases. Local quality of life is affected.

Harms the clean energy transition

It provides a life-line for burning coal for energy production - Co-firing forest biomass with coal extends the life of coal power stations at a time when we need to move beyond emissive, industrial scale burning.

It pulls investment away from other renewables - Biomass undermines less emissive renewable energy solutions because it competes for the same government incentives. Unlike investment in low emission technologies, such as wind and solar, biomass energy entails ongoing feedstock costs and relies on continuous subsidies.

We, the undersigned organisations, believe that we must move beyond burning forest biomass to effectively address climate change. We call on governments, financiers, companies and civil society to avoid expansion of the forest biomass based energy industry and move away from its use. Subsidies for forest biomass energy must be eliminated. Protecting and restoring the world's forests is a

climate change solution, burning them is not.

1874 readings

[Bend The Arc: Pittsburgh We are the Pittsburgh affiliate of Bend the Arc: A Jewish Partnership for Justice.](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 29 October 2018 21:10

Website https://www.bendthearc.us/open_letter_to_president_trump

President Trump:

Yesterday, a gunman slaughtered 11 Americans during Shabbat morning services. We mourn with the victims' families and pray for the wounded. Here in Mr. Rogers' neighborhood, we express gratitude for the first responders and for the outpouring of support from our neighbors near and far. We are committed to healing as a community while we recommit ourselves to repairing our nation.

For the past three years your words and your policies have emboldened a growing white nationalist movement. You yourself called the murderer evil, but yesterday's violence is the direct culmination of your influence.

President Trump, you are not welcome in Pittsburgh until you fully denounce white nationalism.

Our Jewish community is not the only group you have targeted. You have also deliberately undermined the safety of people of color, Muslims, LGBTQ people, and people with disabilities. Yesterday's massacre is not the first act of terror you incited against a minority group in our country.

President Trump, you are not welcome in Pittsburgh until you stop targeting and endangering all minorities.

The murderer's last public statement invoked the compassionate work of the Jewish refugee service HIAS at the end of a week in which you spread lies and sowed fear

about migrant families in Central America. He killed Jews in order to undermine the efforts of all those who find shared humanity with immigrants and refugees

President Trump, you are not welcome in Pittsburgh until you cease your assault on immigrants and refugees.

The Torah teaches that every human being is made b'tzelem Elohim, in the image of God.

This means all of us.

In our neighbors, Americans, and people worldwide who have reached out to give our community strength, there we find the image of God. While we cannot speak for all Pittsburghers, or even all Jewish Pittsburghers, we know we speak for a diverse and unified group when we say:




President Trump, you are not welcome in Pittsburgh until you commit yourself to compassionate, democratic policies that recognize the dignity of all of us.

Bend the Arc: Pittsburgh Steering Committee

Last Updated on Tuesday, 06 November 2018 22:29

NOVEMBER 2018

1690 readings

[Last week \(Oct 24-30\) was UN Disarmament Week, during which member states voted on a range of disarmament decisions and resolutions](#)   

[Peace News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 06 November 2018 14:27

BY Basel Peace Office

Last week (Oct 24-30) was UN Disarmament Week, during which member states voted on a range of disarmament decisions and resolutions. Decisions are binding on the United Nations. Resolutions are indications of governments' positions and intent - they are not binding but can be very authoritative and influential if supported by key countries.

The deliberations and votes took place in an environment of increasing tensions between nuclear armed States, and also an increasing divide between non-nuclear countries and those countries which rely on nuclear weapons for their security.

Nuclear risk-reduction: [Reducing nuclear danger](#) A resolution Reducing nuclear danger submitted by India received 127 votes in favour (mostly non-aligned countries). It failed to get support of nuclear-armed or European countries, primarily because it only calls for nuclear risk reduction measures by China, France, Russia, UK and USA - leaving out the other nuclear armed States - India, Pakistan, DPRK and Israel.

A resolution Decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems [Decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems](#) submitted by a group of non-nuclear countries, was much more successful receiving 173 votes in favour, including from most of the NATO countries and from four nuclear armed States (China, DPRK, India, Pakistan).

Civil society presents to the UN General Assembly First Committee, October 2018

Nuclear prohibition:

A resolution on the Treaty on the Prohibition Nuclear Weapons [Treaty on the Prohibition Nuclear Weapons](#) (TPNW) was supported by 122 countries. This is more than the number who have signed the Treaty, which is 68 (with 19 of these countries having now ratified). The vote indicates that more signatures are likely. However, the resolution was not supported by any of the nuclear-armed countries, nor any of the countries under nuclear deterrence relationships, i.e. NATO, Australia, Japan, South Korea. The opposition of nuclear-armed and allied States to the resolution is another indication that they do not intend to join the new treaty. In general, this means that they will not be bound by the treaty's obligations. However, the customary law against the use of nuclear

weapons which is re-affirmed by the treaty will apply to all States regardless of whether or not they join.

A resolution on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons [prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons](#) submitted by India received 120 votes in favour, including from themselves and another three nuclear-armed States (China, DPRK and Pakistan). Some non-nuclear States have historically opposed the resolution in response to India testing nuclear weapons and becoming a nuclear-armed State in 1998. India has requested these countries to reconsider their opposition, especially in light of the international conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons in which India participated and which highlighted the importance of preventing any use of nuclear weapons.

UN Conferences:

A resolution affirming a previous decision to hold a UN High-Level Conference (Summit) on Nuclear Disarmament [Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament](#), was supported by 143 countries. The resolution, entitled Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament, also promotes negotiations on a Nuclear Weapons Convention – a treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons that includes nuclear-armed States (unlike the TPNW which does not include them). Despite getting a strong vote in favour, including from some nuclear armed states, the proposed conference does not yet appear to have enough political traction to be held. The resolution did not set a date for the conference.

The UNGA adopted a Decision to convene a conference no later than 2019 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Despite the objective of a Middle East Zone being supported by most UN members in a separate resolution (supported by 174 countries), the decision to convene a conference in 2019 to ‘elaborate a legally binding treaty’ was supported by only 103 countries. The hesitation by many countries to support the resolution was due to the fact that they believed that concrete preparations and negotiations for a Middle East Zone Treaty would require the participation of all countries in the region, and currently there is at least one country (Israel) that is not ready to work on such a regional treaty.

Other discussions and resolutions

There were other disarmament discussions at the UN General Assembly last week - included a heated discussion between Russia and the United States over the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF). Both US and Russia claim that the other party is in violation of the treaty, and last week President Trump announced that the US was initiating procedures to withdraw from the treaty.

In addition there were a number of other disarmament resolutions that were introduced, some of which were adopted and some of which are being actioned (voted upon) this week.

For more information see
UNGA First Committee
Press releases: Nov 1 and Nov 2.
Reaching Critical Will UN First Committee
Yours in peace
The Basel Peace Office team

2088 readings

[Planetary
Destruction](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Sue Hiscocks

Friday, 09 November 2018 13:02

The fossil fuel industry has spent 31 million in Washington State to defeat carbon tax as opposed to 15 million others spent in support of carbon tax to fight climate change *

This is not a big deal in itself because even this lowly environmentalist thinks that tax is not effective but that carbon caps are effective if applied at the point that carbon comes out of the ground.

We need to bypass the carbon tax and calculate how much each country needs to cap their extraction of fossil fuels to save the planet and our descendants.

* Times Colonist Nov 8th 2018

Last Updated on Friday, 09 November 2018 13:27

2188 readings

['Troubling allegations' prompt Health Canada review of studies used to approve popular weed-killer](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 13 November 2018 21:11

Maker of Roundup denies any hidden influence on studies used in approval process

Gil Shochat • CBC News • Posted: Nov 11, 2018 4:00 AM ET | Last Updated: November 11

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/technology/monsanto-roundup-health-canada-1.4896311>



Health Canada says its scientists are reviewing hundreds of studies used during the approval process for glyphosate, the active ingredient in Canada's most popular herbicide, Roundup

Health Canada says its scientists are reviewing hundreds of studies used during the approval process for glyphosate, the active ingredient in Canada's most popular herbicide, Roundup.

Health Canada says in light of "troubling allegations," its scientists are reviewing hundreds of studies used during the approval process for glyphosate, the active ingredient in Canada's most popular herbicide, Roundup.

The decision comes after a coalition of environmental groups claimed Health Canada relied on studies that were secretly influenced by agrochemical giant Monsanto, the maker of Roundup, when it re-approved use of glyphosate in 2015 and confirmed that decision in 2017.

The coalition, which includes Equiterre, Ecojustice, Canadian Physicians for the Environment and others, says academic papers looking at whether the herbicide causes cancer were presented to Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency as independent, when in fact Monsanto had a hand in writing them.

How a groundskeeper with cancer took on agricultural giant Monsanto — and won

At the time, Health Canada decided the risks of glyphosate to human health were acceptable, if used as directed in updated product labels. Now it's taking another look.

"Health Canada scientists are currently reviewing hundreds of studies to assess whether the information justifies a change to the original decision, or the use of a panel of experts not affiliated with Health Canada," the health agency told CBC-Radio Canada in an email response to the coalition's claims.

But Sidney Ribaux, the head of Equiterre, isn't satisfied.

He says Health Canada should launch an independent review immediately and suspend use of glyphosate, which is commonly applied to corn, soy, wheat and oats, as well as chickpeas and other pulses.

"This does not in any way meet our demands. Health Canada approved a dangerous product based ... on these studies."

Monsanto Papers

The coalition's contention that Monsanto had an uncredited role in producing some of the studies comes from court documents made public in the case of Dewayne "Lee" Johnson.

In August, a California jury ordered Monsanto to pay Johnson \$289 million US in damages after the former groundskeeper alleged

Roundup gave him non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, a type of blood cancer.

He was diagnosed in 2014 at age 42.

A judge upheld the verdict last month, although Johnson's payout was slashed to \$78 million US.

Judgment for man who alleged Monsanto's Roundup caused cancer reduced to \$78M

The documents filed in the case, including emails between Monsanto and scientific experts, have become known as the Monsanto Papers. The revelations they contain have received worldwide attention.

Plaintiff Dewayne 'Lee' Johnson, seen here during his trial on July 9, was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in 2014 at age 42. A former pest control manager at a San Francisco-area school district, he blames exposure to glyphosate for his illness. (Josh Edelson/Reuters)

The coalition of Canadian groups says those documents prove that important scientific studies were either co-written or reviewed and edited by Monsanto without properly disclosing the company's role.

"Monsanto has been playing around with scientific studies," said Equiterre's Ribaux. "[It's] making these studies look like they are independent, when in fact they were written or heavily influenced by Monsanto.

"What we found is that some of these studies were key in the Government of Canada's decision to give a permit to Monsanto to continue selling glyphosate in Canada.

"Obviously this is very problematic."

In a statement to CBC, German-based Bayer AG which now owns Monsanto says it has an "unwavering commitment to sound science transparency" and did not try to influence scientific outcomes in any way.

The company says in each case where it sponsored a scientific article, that information was disclosed.

U.S. plaintiff calls for more testing

Lee Johnson, the plaintiff in the landmark American case, wants to see glyphosate research re-evaluated and expanded.

"Hopefully the conversation is big enough to where they have to do more testing, more research," Johnson told CBC-Radio-Canada in an exclusive interview during a recent visit to Toronto.

Johnson said he was thrilled to win his suit, but he knows his fight is far from over. He expects years of appeals.

I'm not scared to die. You know, but if I have to die, at least I'll die for something.

- Dewayne "Lee" Johnson

Bayer has already announced its intention to appeal the ruling. Bayer now faces more than 8,000 lawsuits in the U.S. over its glyphosate-based products.

In a post on its website last month, Bayer said it continues "to believe that the liability verdict and damage awards are not supported by the evidence at trial or the law."

The company told CBC-Radio Canada "its product is safe and has been used successfully for more than 40 years."

It also says there is an extensive body of research on glyphosate and glyphosate-based herbicides, including more than 800 studies required by regulators in Europe, the U.S. and elsewhere, that confirms these products are safe when used as directed.




Many government regulators, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 2017, have determined there is no conclusive link between glyphosate and cancer.

But the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer concluded in 2015 that glyphosate is a probable carcinogen.

Johnson, who sprayed Roundup and a similar Monsanto product, Ranger Pro, as part of his job as a groundskeeper at a San Francisco Bay Area school district, says he has found a certain consolation in his struggle against Monsanto.

"I was there to defend the truth," he said. "I'm not scared to die. You know, but if I have to die, at least I'll die for something."

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Provincial rules require spraying of fire-resistant aspen trees to make way for valuable conifers

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Bethany Lindsay · CBC News · Posted: Nov 17, 2018 8:00 AM PT | Last Updated: November 17

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Aspen trees naturally flourish after a wildfire, but they're also less vulnerable to

flames than coniferous trees. (Rick Wilking/Reuters)

Last year, 12,812 hectares of B.C. forest was sprayed with the herbicide glyphosate. It's an annual event — a mass extermination of broadleaf trees mandated by the province.

The eradication of trees like aspen and birch on regenerating forest stands is meant to make room for more commercially valuable conifer species like pine and Douglas fir.

But experts say it also removes one of the best natural defences we have against wildfire, at a time when our warming climate is helping make large, destructive fires more and more common.

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"It blows my mind that nobody is talking about this," said James Steidle, a member of the anti-glyphosate group Stop the Spray B.C.

"The experts know this stuff. They've known about this stuff for decades, but it's just not being translated into reality."

When aspen and other broadleaves are allowed to flourish, they form "natural fuel breaks" if their leaves are out, according to Lori Daniels, a professor of forest ecology at the University of B.C. That's why aspen stands are often referred to as "asbestos forests" in wildfire science circles.

A forests ministry spokesperson said the government recognizes that aspen and other deciduous trees can help reduce the wildfire threat to communities, and that in the future, more thought will be put into planting broadleaf trees near homes and businesses.

- ['Troubling allegations' prompt Health Canada review of studies used to approve popular weed-killer](#)

Nonetheless, the rules about aspen in managed forest stands remain largely unchanged.

The province's Forest Planning and Practices Regulation states that when a block of forest is regrowing after a wildfire or logging, broadleaves can't make up more than five per cent of trees, or two hectares — whichever total is smaller. The concern is that trees like aspen will out-compete conifer species, which are the lifeblood of the timber industry.

If there's too much aspen, the block must be sprayed with glyphosate, a chemical known more familiarly as the active ingredient in Roundup. Over the last three years, 42,531 hectares of B.C. forest have been treated with the herbicide.

'That's just nuts'

"At the end of the day, we have rules that make fire-resistant trees illegal in our forests. That's just nuts," Steidle said.

Aspen naturally thrives after a forest has been cleared by logging or wildfire. Their root systems can survive for thousands of years underground, and they're capable of sprouting new clone trees as soon as there's enough sunshine and moisture.

Glyphosate doesn't just kill aspen trees — it can also destroy the root system.

"When you spray a forest, that's going to last for the lifetime of the forest," Steidle said.



The Shovel Lake wildfire burns through a coniferous forest in the summer of 2018. (B.C. Wildfire Service)

According to Daniels, that's a major loss in a province that struggling with how to prepare for wildfires after two record-setting seasons in a row.

"When fire is burning through needle leaf forest, it tends to be very vigorous and very fast-moving," Daniels said. "When fire comes into a forest that has broadleaf trees in it, the conditions change so the fire behaviour is less vigorous and the rate of spread slows down."

Trees like aspen naturally have a higher water content and don't usually contain the volatile chemical compounds that can make trees like pine so flammable. They also provide more shade, which creates a cooler, more humid environment in the

understory, Daniels explained.

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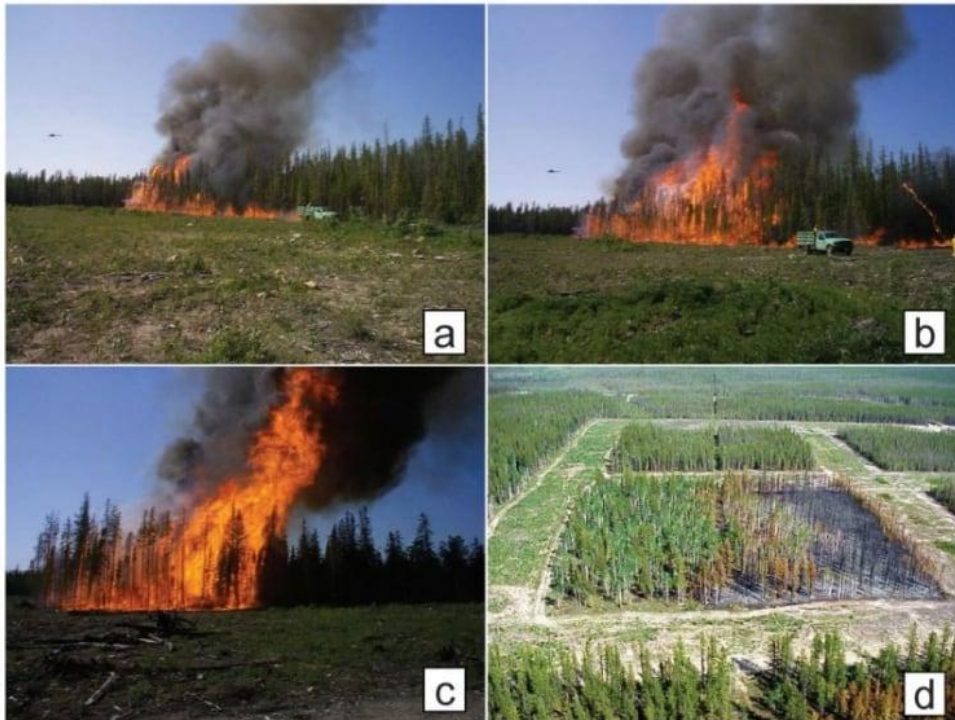
Often, a "candling" wildfire that's engulfed the crowns of a conifer forest will fall back down to ground level when it hits a clump of aspen.

"If a fire is spreading toward a community and we know that there's a band of aspen trees that it's going to have to cross before it approaches that community, the firefighters can use that band of aspen trees to make a stand and try to stop the fire," Daniels said.

Spraying causes 'irreparable harm'

The research backs that up. One 2010 study conducted by a fire behaviour specialist with the federal government tested the fire-resistance of aspen by doing experimental burns of a forest that was split between conifers and trembling aspen.

Even when there was a "high-intensity flame front" in the conifers — with flames leaping into the crowns of the trees — the fire "failed to sustain itself upon entering the leafed-out hardwood portion of the plot," the study says.



A test burn conducted by a federal fire behaviour specialist shows, at bottom right, how aspen can resist a wildfire spreading through jack pine and black spruce. (The Forestry Chronicle)

Daniels believes B.C. needs to immediately change its forest management strategies to prioritize growth of aspen and other broadleaves.

"We're still stuck in the vortex where we're trying to maximize timber production from conifers, and that is causing irreparable harm in our forests, given climate change and the types of changes in forests and insects and fire that we're witnessing," she said.

The province has promised it's updating forest practices as new research becomes available. That includes some recent adjustments to the rules on aspens in the Cariboo-Chilcotin. Because the region is so dry and few aspen can survive anyway, they're not considered a threat to local conifers and don't need to be sprayed, a ministry spokesperson said.

Calls for glyphosate ban

But critics like Steidle would like to see a complete end to the use of glyphosate in forests across the province.

"We need to ban glyphosate. There's no question," he said.



On a recent visit to the area of northern B.C. burned by the Shovel Lake wildfire this summer, James Steidle documented aspen trees that were left standing even though surrounding conifers were incinerated. (James Steidle)

The idea has some political support. Last week, Green Party Leader Andrew

Weaver raised the issue during question period in the B.C. legislature, and asked how the province could justify spraying growing forests.

"The result is reduced plant diversity, leading to monocropped forests that are vulnerable to more frequent and destructive wildfires and beetle infestations," Weaver said.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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Journalist

Bethany Lindsay has more than a decade of experience in B.C. journalism, with a focus on the courts, health and social justice issues. She has also reported on human rights and crimes against humanity in Cambodia. Questions or news tips? Get in touch at bethany.lindsay@cbc.ca or on Twitter through [@bethanylindsay](https://twitter.com/bethanylindsay).

Last Updated on Thursday, 22 November 2018 09:11

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[Alex Neve and Sarah Morales: Site C dam still far from 'point of no return'](#)



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Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 20 November 2018 11:49

Alex Neve and Sarah Morales: Site C dam still far from 'point of no return'

ALEX NEVE & SARAH MORALES Updated: November 19, 2018

<https://vancouversun.com/opinion/op-ed/alex-neve-and-sarah-morales-site-c-dam-still-far-from-point-of-no-return>



Installation of concrete for the south-bank tailrace wall in July at B.C. Hydro's Site C dam construction project on the Peace River near Fort St. John. B.C. HYDRO / PNG
ADJUST

Installation of concrete for the south-bank tailrace wall in July at B.C. Hydro's Site C dam construction project on the Peace River near Fort St. John. B.C. HYDRO / PNG

ADJUST

COMMENT

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Last month, the B.C. Supreme Court handed the Horgan government a victory that may prove much more costly than a defeat.

The West Moberly and Prophet River First Nations had asked the court to temporarily suspend construction of the Site C dam, or at least protect critical areas of the Peace Valley while their still unresolved Treaty rights challenge is being considered. On Oct. 24, Justice Warren Milman dismissed the injunction application entirely. This is exactly what the provincial government and B.C. Hydro had asked the court to do.

At the same time, the judge ruled that the First Nations' legal challenge can continue with the possibility that, if the First Nations are able to prove their case, the dam could be stopped

before plans to flood the Peace River Valley are completed.

In other words, the court told the province, if you so choose, you're free to continue sinking billions of dollars into a project you might never be allowed to complete.

Many commentators have zeroed in on Milman's statement that the First Nations case against Site C is "weak." Critically, however, the injunction process only required the First Nations to bring forward enough evidence to establish that they have a "serious" case — which the court acknowledged they did. Much more evidence and testimony will be heard in the court during the four-year trial that is still to come.

Significantly, a number of legal scholars — including John Borrows, whose writing on the Constitutional protection of Indigenous peoples' rights is frequently cited by the courts — have commented that while First Nations always face an uphill struggle to protect their rights, the West Moberly and Prophet River First Nations actually have a strong case that flooding the Peace Valley is incompatible with protection of their treaty rights.

The responsibility to uphold treaty rights is part of the Canadian Constitution and as such transcends the policies and priorities of the government of the day. The Peace River Valley is one of the few areas left in northeast B.C. that has not been irreparably transformed by industrial development. It is also crucial to the history and cultural traditions of the Dunne-Za and Cree peoples, while sustaining many of the critical plants and wildlife on which they depend.

If First Nations are able to prove that flooding the Peace River will prevent the meaningful exercise of their hunting, fishing and trapping rights, the onus will then shift to the province to prove that a violation of these rights is justified. Meeting the strict requirements for justification of treaty rights infringement under Canadian law may be all but impossible to do given that the B.C. Utilities Commission has already determined that there are less destructive alternatives available at equal or lower cost than completing Site C.

Under the circumstances, one would expect that a prudent government would be reluctant to risk investing even more money in Site C

until they know for sure whether the project can ever be completed. Unfortunately, prudence has never been part of the picture when it comes to the Site C project.

Around this time last year, just weeks before announcing his government's support for continued construction of Site C, Premier John Horgan publicly acknowledged the ultimate fate of the project might be determined in court. The premier had a chance at that moment to make good on his promises to respect the rights of Indigenous peoples. But instead of declaring that the outstanding issue of possible treaty rights violations needed to be resolved before spending another dollar on Site C, the premier embraced his predecessor's claim that the project had already been pushed to "the point of no return." Then, when First Nations launched a new legal challenge, Horgan further alienated First Nations leadership by unleashing government lawyers in an attempt to reinterpret and undermine the very rights he had promised to champion.

The fact is, however, that the Site C dam is still very far from the point of no return. The project is far from even the halfway mark to completion and many questions have been raised about the ability of B.C. Hydro to finish the project on time or on budget even without a court-ordered injunction. Critically, as the examples of the Trans Mountain and Northern Gateway pipelines clearly demonstrate, courts can and will shut down major resource development projects — even projects enthusiastically backed by federal and provincial governments — if Indigenous peoples can establish that these governments have failed their Constitutional responsibilities.

A court-ordered work suspension would have offered the Horgan government a face-saving way out of the reckless gamble of continued investment in Site C. The premier and his cabinet — indeed the whole province — may come to regret the fact that their lawyers prevailed in this first skirmish in the courts.

Alex Neve is secretary-general of Amnesty International Canada. Sarah Morales is an associate professor in the University of Victoria's Faculty of Law and a member of the board of directors of Amnesty International Canada.

Letters to the editor should be sent to sunletters@vancouver.sun.com. The editorial pages editor is Gordon Clark, who can be reached at gclark@postmedia.com.

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New York Times reports says plans for Nicolas Maduro's overthrow fell apart after US officials declined to cooperate.

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Maduro took power after Hugo Chavez death in 2013 and has faced political and economic challenges [AP Maduro took power after Hugo Chavez death in 2013 and has faced political and economic challenges [AP Photo/Ariana Cubillos]

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Trump administration officials held secret meetings with Venezuelan military officers to discuss plans to overthrow President Nicolas Maduro, according to a report by the New York Times.

The news outlet said on Saturday that at least three distinct groups from the military were involved in attempts at overthrowing the Venezuelan leader.

According to the report, there were plans for a coup in the summer of 2017, and later in March and May of this year. However, when US officials declined to cooperate, plans for Maduro's overthrow fell apart.

The report comes just a month after two explosive-laden drones blew up near Maduro in an apparent assassination attempt. He blamed the US, Colombia, and his domestic enemies for the attack.

On Saturday, Venezuelan Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza denounced efforts to overthrow the government of the South American state.

"We denounce in front of the international community, the plans for intervention and the support of military plots against Venezuela by the United States government," he said.

"Even in the US media, blatant evidence has come to light," he added,

Last Updated on Tuesday, 20 November 2018 21:00

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[Calling for 'Corridor of Life and Culture,' Indigenous Groups From Amazon Propose Creation of Largest Protected Area on Earth](#)

[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow



Thursday, 22 November 2018 07:40

"We have come from the forest and we worry about what is happening."

by Jessica Corbett, staff writer Common Dreams

<https://www.commondreams.org/news/2018/11/21/calling-corridor-life-and-culture-indigenous-groups-amazon-propose-creation-largest>



The Xingu River flows near the area where the Belo Monte dam complex is under construction in the Amazon basin on June 15, 2012 near Altamira, Brazil. The controversial project is opposed by many environmentalists and indigenous groups. (Photo: Mario Tama/Getty Images)

Amazon

The Xingu River flows near the area where the Belo Monte dam complex is under construction in the Amazon basin on June 15, 2012 near Altamira, Brazil. The controversial project is opposed by many environmentalists and indigenous groups. (Photo: Mario Tama/Getty Images)

Alarmed by rampant destruction in the Amazon rainforest and the long-term impacts on biodiversity, an alliance of indigenous communities pitched the creation of the world's largest protected area, which would reach from the Andes to the Atlantic Ocean, at a United Nations conference in Egypt on Wednesday.

"We have come from the forest and we worry about what is happening," declared Tuntiak Katan, vice president of COICA, the alliance. "This space is the world's last great sanctuary for biodiversity. It is there because we are there. Other places have been destroyed."

COICA, which represents about 500 groups across nine countries and is seeking government-level representation at the U.N. Convention

on Biodiversity, aims to safeguard a "sacred corridor of life and culture" about the size of Mexico.

The alliance hopes to implement an "ambitious" post-2020 regional plan to protect biodiversity in the Andes-Amazon-Atlantic or "triple-A" corridor from agribusiness, mining, and the global climate crisis, but they are also concerned about territorial rights, as they don't recognize modern national borders created by colonial settlers.

"Indigenous communities are guardians of life for all humanity, but they are in danger for protecting their forest," Katan said. "We are integrated with nature—it runs through our lives and we need rights to defend it."

While fighting for the right to defend the forest from development and the impacts of global warming, the indigenous groups said they welcome opportunities for collaboration.

Although Colombia had crafted a similar triple-A plan that was set to be unveiled at next month's climate talks, as the Guardian noted, "the election of new rightwing leaders in Colombia and Brazil has thrown into doubt what would have been a major contribution by South American nations to reduce emissions."

Outlining recent shifts in regional politics, the newspaper reported:

Colombia's initial proposal was smaller and focused only on biodiversity and climate. But government enthusiasm has waned since an election in June in which the rightwing populist Iván Duque took power. Brazil was more sceptical but had previously engaged in ministerial-level talks on the corridor-plan. Its opposition is likely to grow under its new rightwing president, Jair Bolsonaro, who will take power in January.

Last month Bolsonaro indicated he would only stay in the Paris climate agreement if he had guarantees ensuring Brazilian sovereignty over indigenous land and the "triple-A" region.

Bolsonaro's comments about environmental and indigenous issues on the campaign trail "are concerning because they nurture a

disturbing tendency in different parts of the world, where almost three-fourths of environmental defenders assassinated in 2017 were indigenous leaders; where opposing agroindustry is the main cause for assassination of our leaders worldwide; and where imposing projects on to communities without their free, prior, and informed consent is at the root of all attacks to indigenous and community leaders," said Juan Carlos Jintiach of COICA.

1:03 AM - 21 Nov 2018

"Likewise, we see that it is increasingly frequent for indigenous peoples and communities to face costly and difficult processes to legalize their lands, while corporations obtain licenses with ease," Jintiach noted, calling on Bolsonaro to obey all laws and ensure the rights and safety of the people of Brazil.

Despite the changes to the local political climate, Katan vowed the indigenous communities will keep working to play a key role in protecting the forest. "We know the governments will try to go over our heads," he said. "This is nothing new for us. We have faced challenges for hundreds of years."

"Indigenous peoples and local communities are a solution to the devastation of our ecosystems and climate change both in the Amazon as well as in the rest of the world," Katan added in a statement. "But whether policies addressed at mitigating climate change and promoting the restoration of rainforests succeed, depends on the security of having possession of community lands."

This post has been updated with additional comment from Tuntiak Katan and Juan Carlos Jintiach of COICA.

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Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 02 December 2018 14:43

Manitoba's hydro mess points to Canada's larger problem with megadams

As most of the Western world moves away from large-scale hydro projects, decommissioning dams across the planet, Canada is digging in with a trio of projects, the costs of which are spiralling out of control

Sarah Cox

Nov 22, 2018 12

For eight years, Graham Lane headed a watchdog commission that raised red flag after red flag about the Keeyask dam hydro project on Manitoba's Nelson River.

Politicians ignored the warnings and in 2012 Lane resigned as chair of Manitoba's Public Utilities Board, concerned that Manitoba Hydro had strayed far from its main purpose — to provide low cost energy to Manitobans.

Now the retired chartered accountant is speaking out in the hopes of stemming the losses from the Keeyask dam project and a related transmission line, which he calls “an albatross around the necks of Manitobans.”

“In Manitoba basically everything has gone wrong,” Lane told The Narwhal. “It's quite a disaster.”

Even though the utilities board kept flagging “runaway expenses and changing markets” as reasons to reassess the projects, Lane said the provincial government “just kept going” while the price tag for the dam and transmission line soared from \$9.8 billion to almost \$14 billion, with the dam's final cost potentially \$2 billion more.

“I'd had enough. I hung up my skates. I waited my year away. And then I started writing columns about it.”

‘Vast majority of Canadians don't even know what Keeyask is’
The lesser known Keeyask dam joins B.C.'s Site C dam and Labrador's Muskrat Falls dam on the list of hugely over budget big hydro projects currently under construction in Canada.

“Keeyask seems to fly beneath the radar,” said Garland Laliberte, a dean of engineering emeritus at the University of Manitoba.

“Muskrat Falls gets a lot of exposure and even Site C gets more coverage. I think the vast majority of Canadians don’t even know what Keeyask is let alone what problems it’s causing in this province.”

Four years into construction 730 kilometres northeast of Winnipeg, the Keeyask dam will inundate 93 square kilometres of the Nelson River and boreal taiga lands or “snow forests” of pine, spruce and larch. It will destroy spawning areas and other habitat for fish such as sturgeon and result in habitat loss, alteration and fragmentation for caribou, moose and beaver.

Like the Muskrat Falls and Site C dams, the Keeyask project will also have a significant impact on Indigenous peoples, eliminating trapping, fishing and hunting sites in the traditional territory of Treaty 5 nations. The dam, which will be built at Gull Rapids, is named after the Cree word for gull.

With three large dams in the works, Canada is bucking the trend in Europe and North America, where the unacceptable price tag and profound social and environmental impacts of large hydro projects means that more big dams are being dismantled than are being built.

Keeyask dam map. Image: Manitoba Hydro

Laliberte said the global energy market has changed far faster than Canada’s politicians realized, as the price of wind and solar energy plummets, new energy storage options become available and the cost of building large hydro dams soars, in part because of hefty payouts to affected Indigenous communities.

Manitoba Hydro, for instance, has paid \$169 million to First Nations who will be impacted by the project and is expected to pay out another \$100 million.

“I think the main driver is politicians not understanding the market and thinking that it’s good to be seen to be investing, in all three cases, in renewable energy and thinking it’s going to fly,” Laliberte said in an interview.

“And our politicians were too busy doing other things and they believed that the market doesn’t change. And, of course what happened is that the speed of change now is so much greater than it was even 10 years ago and these guys went out on a limb and they got caught.”

Coalition warns of ballooning Keeyask costs

LaLiberte is a founding member of a grassroots Manitoba group called the Bipole 111 Coalition. The coalition was established by engineers — most of them retired from careers in Manitoba Hydro, the University of Manitoba and the consulting world — to inform provincial hydro customers about the impacts of proceeding with construction of the transmission line and Keeyask dam.

The coalition’s members include dozens of farmers in the Red River Valley whose land is being expropriated for a transmission line that will run through the heart of Manitoba’s most productive agricultural region, dividing farm lands.

The coalition is named after the line that will carry Keeyask’s energy southward, where Laliberte estimates it will be sold to U.S. markets for an average of \$36 per megawatt hour even though it will cost about \$140 per megawatt hour to produce. One consultant for the utilities board warns the Keeyask dam could balloon by another \$2 billion by the time it becomes partly operational in 2021.

Lane said coalition members call the Keeyask dam “our stranded white elephant.”

“The Americans will buy [the power.] Of course they’ll buy it. But they’ll only buy it at a price that works for them.”

Watchdogs undermined

The Keeyask, Site C and Muskrat Falls dam projects have much in common besides their hefty environmental footprint, which includes poisoning fish, a traditional food source for Canada’s Indigenous peoples, with methylmercury.

In all three cases, the independent watchdog body that normally looks out for the public interest was removed, hamstrung or ignored by provincial politicians who were determined to push ahead with big hydro projects even though their electricity was not needed domestically.

B.C., for instance, has had so much extra power that BC Hydro has paid independent energy producers not to generate electricity. And as the Site C project moved forward, BC Hydro slashed its budget for energy conservation programs — programs that according to BC Hydro had saved about as much energy as the Site C dam would produce.

In each province, a change in government brought an opportunity to cancel the projects as costs surged and far cheaper, more nimble and less destructive renewable energy sources became readily available. Yet those opportunities went unseized, with newly elected governments of different political stripes continuing construction and approving cost overruns of billions of dollars.

That has led to another striking parallel: when the dams are complete, after seven to nine years of construction, their electricity will be sold for considerably less than it costs to produce, leaving hydro customers in all three provinces on the hook financially.

The impending pinch is already being felt in Newfoundland and Labrador, where the cost of the Muskrat Falls dam on the Churchill River, now nearing completion, has jumped from \$6.2 billion to \$12.7 billion. Hydro rates are expected to double as a result, and households can calculate how much their bills will likely increase.

Manitoba Hydro recently asked for annual 7.9 per cent rate hikes. Instead, a rate hike of 3.6 per cent was approved this year.

But it's only a matter of time before the “amazing amounts of money” spent on the Keeyask dam and transmission line need to be accounted for, Lane said.

“If costs get to the point where you've got government siphoning it off to the sides so that ratepayers aren't going to be too shocked when they go to the polls this is a bad thing.”

In B.C., the \$10.7 billion bill for the Site C dam — which will flood 128 kilometres of the Peace River and its tributaries, destroying prime farmland, Indigenous burial sites and habitat for more than 100 species vulnerable to extinction — will only come due if the project becomes operational about five years from now.

In October, a B.C. Supreme Court judge ordered that a full civil

trial, to determine whether or not the Site C project violates treaty rights, must take place before the reservoir is flooded, raising the possibility that British Columbians could be left with a stranded asset if two Treaty 8 First Nations win the case.

Site C

Site C dam construction along the Peace River, B.C. Photo: Garth Lenz / The Narwhal

Viability of large hydro dams a question in clean energy future
Lane and Laliberte question whether large hydro dams are still financially viable because there are much cheaper and faster ways to produce clean electricity.

“I can’t see another dam being built in Manitoba,” Lane said. “There’s probably enough river opportunities to build a couple more. But they’re gone. There’s no need for them with the renewables and even with natural gas, the energy efficiencies and everything else under the sun.”

Laliberte pointed to a recent call for bids to replace coal plants in Pueblo, Colorado. Out of 430 bids, 350 were for renewables, he said. The median price for wind power was US \$18 per megawatt hour, and the median price for wind power with storage was US \$21 per megawatt hour.

The Site C dam’s power, by comparison, will cost at least \$120 per megawatt hour to produce, according to independent energy experts such as Eoin Finn, a former partner with KPMG, one of the world’s largest accounting and consulting firms.

“You’ve got too much electricity and you’ve got a lot of hydro in your system now in B.C.,” Laliberte pointed out. “So you have a lot of storage already. Can you really justify Site C in the B.C. circumstance on the basis of storage? I would be surprised.”

“So how are we going to sell this electricity? What are we doing in Canada just because we have hydro and we can claim that it’s renewable, although many would challenge how renewable it is considering what the impact is on the environment?”

Among other environmental impacts, large dams are major emitters of greenhouse gas emissions during construction, due to vast amounts of concrete used to build them and the burning of slash piles when

tracts of land are cleared for transmission lines. Reservoirs are also significant carbon emitters, with about 80 per cent of emissions coming from methane, a greenhouse gas 34 times more potent than carbon dioxide.

A November 7 statement from the Bipole 111 coalition and the Manitoba Energy Council noted that Manitoba Hydro's claim that the transmission line was needed for reliability has never been proven, pointing out that Manitoba Hydro's reputation as the "crown jewel" of the province is in "tatters."

"The proponents in the NDP provincial government and Manitoba Hydro who championed the expansion are long gone, living comfortably on pensions and termination benefits," noted the statement.

The energy council, established this month by Bipole 111 coalition members, aims to find ways to promote the "economic, efficient and beneficial" use of electricity moving forward.

Dams face costly retroactive scrutiny
Faced with Manitoba Hydro's insolvency, the Manitoba government recently announced a \$2.5 million review to examine if the projects were based on sound economics and why the Keeyask project — like the Site C and Muskrat Falls projects — was approved in the absence of domestic demand.

The Manitoba review comes on the heels of a \$37.5 million inquiry launched by the Newfoundland and Labrador government to determine why the Muskrat Falls dam proceeded, why it is so over budget, and whether the decision to exempt it from independent review was justified. As inquiry hearings continued last month, 500 workers were sent home from the Muskrat Falls construction site because there was no money to pay them.

The appointment of former B.C. premier Gordon Campbell to head the Manitoba review concerns Lane, who pointed out that Campbell has little experience in this area.

Campbell championed the Site C dam, announcing it as a \$6.6 billion project when he was premier.

Campbell's government also changed the law to remove the watchdog B.C. Utilities Commission (BCUC) from scrutinizing the Site C

project to determine if it was in the financial interest of BC Hydro customers. A two-year BCUC review in the 1980s rejected the dam, which was also turned down in the early 1990s by BC Hydro's board of directors on the grounds that its energy was not needed and the project was too expensive and unnecessarily destructive.

Campbell, now the CEO of Hawksmuir International Partners, a company that appears to have no website, has until December 2019 to deliver his report.

Lane said he believes the review is a "set up" to help Manitoba's ruling Conservative government "whack the NDP before the next election."

Manitoba's NDP government approved the Keeyask project and the Conservative provincial government opted to continue the project after it was elected in 2016, despite repeated warnings that it was a boondoggle.

"You can just see it coming," Lane said. "They'll be labelling the waste and the cost...but it won't necessarily be an open transparent process."

Lane and other members of the Manitoba Energy Council are calling for a transparent, independent public inquiry to determine why the checks and balances of Manitoba's system failed. Such an inquiry would allow the books to be "thrown open" and the ability to call witnesses so "people could actually understand what's happened over this period of time," said Lane.

In one column for the Winnipeg Sun, Lane wrote that, "Hard questions need to be asked about governance, political oversight, the influence of engineering contractors, the competence of executive managers, the advice provided by consultants, and the role of labour unions in this train wreck."

"None of those parties will emerge looking good, but it is time to ensure a 'never again' future for key provincial infrastructure," he wrote.

Lane also said that special attention needs to be placed on the "lack of action" by Manitoba Premier Brian Pallister, who had an opportunity to cancel the project after he was elected.

Pallister, along with his cabinet and advisors, failed to “grasp the immensity of the problem and take appropriate act

Last Updated on Sunday, 02 December 2018 14:49

1565 readings

[Peak Car’ and the End of an Industry](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 03 December 2018 23:01

In Germany—the birthplace of the modern automobile—carmakers are anticipating the day when people stop owning cars.

By Stefan Nicola and Elisabeth Behrmann August 16, 2018, 9:00 PM PDT

For years, Martin Bruesch was the bread and butter of the German auto industry. He routinely used his 211-horsepower Audi A4 station wagon for the 20-minute trip to the office.

Now on work days his car usually stays parked outside his apartment in the affluent Berlin neighborhood of Charlottenburg and the 32-year-old human resources executive hails a new carpooling service instead.



“If I’m truly honest with myself, then owning a car is too expensive with all these alternatives around,” Bruesch said as he got into one of CleverShuttle’s battery-powered Nissan Leafs one evening this month.

As young people like Bruesch increasingly ditch driving, they’re also accelerating the shift toward what’s being dubbed “peak car”—a time in the not-too-distant future when sales of private vehicles across the western world will plateau before making a swift descent.

This is especially true in big cities where people are becoming more inclined to share rather than own a vehicle that sits idle most of the time. The number of Germans 25 and under getting driving licenses slid 28 percent in the past decade, and it’s a similar story in pretty much every other major economy.

It’s a moment of reckoning for an industry that had been able to count on three things since the automobile was invented in Germany more than a century ago: cars ran on combustion engines and people not only desired to own one, they also drove it exclusively. With the age of car-sharing, battery-powered fleets and self-driving cars upon us, automakers need to reinvent themselves into mobility companies to survive.

It’s hardly surprising, then, that luxury Mercedes-Benz manufacturer [Daimler AG](#) bought a stake in CleverShuttle after it began operations in 2016. The service uses an Uber-like app to pair individuals searching for a ride with other commuters in the same vicinity. In the five German cities it runs, users have more than doubled since January to 650,000.

Fast forward just five years and such services will eat into automobile sales, leaving carmakers vulnerable if they don’t find ways to augment their income, according to Munich-based consultancy Berylls Strategy Advisors. By 2030 in the U.S., where data is most readily available, Berylls predicts that total sales of cars – individually owned and shared – will fall almost 12 percent to 15.1 million vehicles.

“It will be the first time carmakers ever have to deal with a decline that’s structural, and not down to temporary factors like an economic downturn,” said Arthur Kipferler, a Berylls consultant who previously worked for [Jaguar Land Rover Automotive Plc](#). The Tata Motors Ltd.-owned brand this year [teamed up](#) with Alphabet Inc.’s planned self-driving Waymo taxi service to deliver 20,000 electric I-Pace crossovers.

PEAK CAR

With all the mobility alternatives, fewer Americans will buy their own car

Problem is, it’s not as simple as replacing car sales with revenue from mobility services. While German heavyweights like Daimler, [BMW AG](#) and [Volkswagen AG](#) have invested hundreds of millions of euros in various ride-hailing and car-

sharing schemes, they're nowhere near breaking even on them.

Take the DriveNow car-sharing service BMW started in 2011, which charges users by the minute to rent more than 6,000 BMWs and Minis in 13 European cities. After seven years, it's still turning a loss, and last year made up just 0.07 percent of the company's sales. The rest came mostly from selling almost 2.5 million luxury vehicles, like the BMW 3-Series sedan.



A DriveNow BMW Mini Cooper in Berlin.
Photographer: Krisztian Bocsi/Bloomberg

Aside from the cost of building a fleet big enough to serve customers across a city, there are numerous ongoing expenses—things like car maintenance, paying drivers and managing and updating software.

And yet BMW's own estimates show that in a decade, one car-sharing vehicle will replace at least three privately owned ones, and mobility services, including autonomous cars, will account for a third of all trips. According to New York-based consultancy Oliver Wyman, mobility will be a 200 billion euro (\$227 billion)

business by 2040.

“Carmakers are desperate for their mobility divisions to be monetized,” said Michael Dean, a senior automotive analyst at Bloomberg Intelligence. “They must be involved in future mobility to avoid being left behind by the likes of Uber and Lyft.”

Already, [Uber](#) and its Chinese rival [DiDi Chuxing Inc.](#) are together valued at about \$124 billion—just shy of BMW and Daimler’s combined market value, he said.

So much is at stake that BMW [merged](#) DriveNow with its long-time arch rival Daimler’s car2go service in March. Their goal: to build a one-stop-shop where people can do everything from call taxis, locate parking spots and find charging stations for their electric cars.

“As pioneers in automotive engineering, we will not leave the task of shaping future urban mobility to others,” Daimler Chief Executive Officer Dieter Zetsche vowed when the partnership was announced.

Competition is already fierce. In Germany, the plethora of options to get from A to B led the nation’s train operator [Deutsche Bahn AG](#) to buy a stake in CleverShuttle which, for some commuters, is a viable alternative to overcrowded trains.

Berliners can jump into street-side rental cars powered by gasoline or batteries that charge by the minute and can be dropped off nearly anywhere. They can use one of thousands of rental bikes for as little as a euro an hour. For 3 euros every 30 minutes, they can even navigate the city center on an electric scooter.

UBER CALLING

Nearly a billion people worldwide are using their smartphones to catch a ride

A similar smorgasbord of mobility options is available in most big cities. Car-sharing fleets globally have increased in size by 91 percent in the past year, according to Bloomberg New Energy Finance. Hailing services like Uber, Lyft or Grab—all of which carmakers have invested in—reached nearly a billion users during the second quarter, it said.

Shuttling with strangers, the latest fad, is also catching on. Aside from CleverShuttle, ViaVan started in [London](#), Amsterdam and Berlin in the spring as a joint venture between Daimler and New York-based [Via Transportation Inc.](#) Volkswagen, too, in July launched [Moia](#) in Hanover, Germany, using 35 VW-designed electric vans and growing to 250 by 2020.

“We must reduce inner-city traffic,” said Bruno Ginnuth, CleverShuttle’s CEO. “A good way to do that is convincing people they don’t need to own a car anymore.”

MORE MOBILE

Global car sharing fleets surge in size to improve availability

CleverShuttle expects to turn a profit in one German city, Leipzig, by year-end and plans to buy another 130 Nissan Leafs and Toyota Mirai hydrogen cars to expand in two more cities.

Commuters are relishing in the choice. Bruesch pays about 8.50 euros for the four-mile journey to Berlin's central square called Potsdamer Plaz, half the price of a taxi and less than what garages near his office charge for parking.

"It's cheap, I don't need to search for a parking space, and I like the fact that a trip is environmentally friendly," he said.

Last Updated on Monday, 03 December 2018 23:25

1377 readings

[Lopez Obrador's Plans to Lead Mexico out of Neoliberalism Will Mean Crossing Swords with the US](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 10 December 2018 11:19

from the Rea News

<https://therealnews.com/stories/lopez-obradors-plans-to-lead-mexico-out-of-neoliberalism-will-mean-crossing-swords-with-the-us>
December 9, 2018

We now have a politically experienced president in Mexico - gone are the days when Mexico kowtows to the US. This will mean a more sovereign economic and foreign policy, says Vijay Prashad of Tricontinental Institute for Social Research

SHARMINI PERIES: It's The Real News Network. I'm Sharmini Peries, coming to you from Baltimore.

A bold transformation of Mexico's economy is one of the many promises the newly inaugurated President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, known as AMLO, is promising his people. Some have deemed this the fourth transformation of Mexico. But that won't be easy for the newly elected president. Joining me now to discuss the

challenge is Vijay Prashad. He is the executive director of the Tricontinental Institute for Social Research. Vijay, good to have you back.

VIJAY PRASHAD: Thanks a lot. Great to be with you.

SHARMINI PERIES: All right. Vijay, let's listen to a clip from AMLO in his inaugural address.

ANDRES MANUEL LOPEZ OBRADOR: The neoliberal economic policies have been a disaster. If you ask me to explain one phrase of the plan of this government, I'll say: Wipe out corruption and impunity.

SHARMINI PERIES: All right, Vijay, now, he called this neoliberal model a disaster. And he said, you know, for the last 36 years it has not delivered anything for the people. And this was bold, because his predecessor Peña Nieto was sitting right next to him when he was delivering this address. So tell us what you make of the speech itself, and the promises made.

VIJAY PRASHAD: Well, Sharmini, firstly it's I think a moment of celebration for people who lean to the left politically to have AMLO become the new head of state, head of government in Mexico. I think this is a very important development; it should not be underestimated. This is the third time he has attempted to become the president of Mexico. He says, I think, and with good evidence, that the previous two times the post taken away from him. This time he was able to secure a mandate. And his party also has a mandate in the legislature.

The reason I'm saying this, Sharmini, is because he made two points in the inaugural address that I think are very important and are related to the fact that he's been at this game a long time, and that his party now has some presence in the legislature. Two points he made. The first point, I think, the important point, is he pretty much went after the question of corruption, saying that corruption is in the heart of Mexican society and in the state. I think, very importantly, he said, look, there's no point in me opening up the files and going for long-term accountability. As he put it, there are not enough jails in Mexico to hold the corrupt. I think this is a good message he's sending to people, that his is a forward-looking government. He also, as is typical, gave immunity to the outgoing president and his administration. I think that was a strategic move. It's not a bad move. AMLO doesn't have enough political power to actually go after people like his predecessor.

So I think this was a good move.

The second issue that he raised is the really fundamental question. And this bears on the fact that he's been at the political game a long time, including as the mayor of Mexico City. What he said was for the last 30 to 40 years, the economic model followed by the Mexican government, the policy slate that goes by the name neoliberalism, is utterly bankrupt and has only increased suffering and poverty for the country. You know, the beginnings of neo liberalism are in the 1980s. But in a sense, the little flower on top of the neoliberal cake was the North American Free Trade Agreement, which came into effect in 1994.

So AMLO has said quite clearly that he thinks it's this policy slate of neoliberalism that has brought Mexico to one crisis after the other. And he's very keen to find an exit from there. And again, the reason I said he's been at this game a long time, it's important to recognize that he has himself said that he can't change everything in Mexico overnight, but he really wants to start the process toward a different kind of policy arrangement. It's not clear exactly what that arrangement will be, but he's at least promised to seek it out.

SHARMINI PERIES: All right, Vijay, I think you and I could agree that this is going to be one of the greatest challenges for the region, particularly because Mexico shares a border with the United States. They are not happy with anyone departing from their economic mission or their political mission. And they've had basically compliance from Mexico for a very long time. Do you think that the new president is going to take the risk of alienating its largest trade partner in the world?

VIJAY PRASHAD: In a sense, Sharmini, I don't think he has a choice. I mean, if he's going to pivot out of the neoliberal policy sphere, or at least begin the journey, he's going to certainly cross swords with Washington, D.C. Now, whether he wants to hit the sword very hard, that's another issue.

But let's put something on the table quite openly. This is not an economic question. I think that would be an error to allow the technocrats, and the economists in particular, the International Monetary Fund and others to, in a sense, monopolize the conversation on the policy framework. Let's take the question of the debt to GDP ratio. That means that the level of debt that a

country is faced with, the debt against the Gross Domestic Product, Mexico's debt to GDP is about 46 percent. You know, it's a manageable amount. Let me give you three more debt to GDP ratios, to put it into context. The debt to GDP ratio of France is at 90 percent. And you know, you've seen recently massive demonstrations in Paris and Lille and other parts of France around the fuel price hike. France's economy is in much worse shape than Mexico in terms of its finances. Japan and Italy, even worse. Italy, more than 120 percent is their debt to GDP ratio, and Japan it's 153 percent debt to GDP.

And yet, Sharmini - and this is why I said it's not about economics. And yet international capital lends money to Japan, Italy, and France at far better rates than it lends to places like Mexico. You know, this is something that I hope very much AMLO will bring onto the table and make it into something, at least, that people should discuss. Why is it that international banks lend at a higher rate of interest to countries like Mexico than to countries like Japan or France? You know, they will say it has to do with fundamentals, economic fundamentals, and this, that, and the other thing. I think it has much more to do with the power equation in the world, and the fact that certain countries, countries like Mexico, countries that are trying to assert themselves back into the international stage, they are penalized by international finance for standing up. Whereas other countries, part of the old club, the Group of Seven, seemed to get an open lane, a free ride, even though the economy is a much more difficult financial problem.

SHARMINI PERIES: All right. Finally, Vijay, there is an expectation on AMLO because the region is shifting so far to the right, and in alliance with the United States. There is an expectation on AMLO and Mexico to uphold the left values, or more progressive values, more reasonable values, in Latin America. And the pressure is enormous, largely coming from maybe Bolivia, Venezuela, Cuba. Do you think it is advisable for AMLO to stick his neck out at this point in the region?

VIJAY PRASHAD: Well, again, I think maybe he won't have a choice. I mean, look, the United States government has made it quite clear through John Bolton's speech in Miami that they are going to put much more pressure on what they call the Troika of Tyranny. In other words, Nicaragua, Venezuela, and Cuba. And it's very likely that the sanctions regime will be intensified against Venezuela. It's equally likely that they're going to make a push against

Cuba. And if there's even a sniff of regime change activity against any of these countries, Mexico is going to be drawn into it and will have to take a position. I don't think it's a question of whether AMLO would like to stand up against the forces pushed by the United States, Colombia, perhaps the new government in Brazil, and so on. I don't think it's going to be his choice. I think he is going to be drawn into a choice that the United States government is going to force upon him.

Because if the U.S. government, for instance, attempts to conduct a regime change operation in Nicaragua, there is no question that this is going to have a bearing on Mexico, and therefore the Mexican government is going to have to take some sort of position. Gone are the days when the Mexican president has essentially treated himself as a kind of ATM machine, eating off the state's exchequer, bowing before the United States. I feel like with this new government there is going to be a much more aggressive attempt to control corruption, to perhaps take sovereign control over Mexico's economy, and therefore he will have to take a position if the United States threatens war in the region. That is just inevitable.

December 9, 2018

We now have a politically experienced president in Mexico - gone are the days when Mexico kowtows to the US. This will mean a more sovereign economic and foreign policy, says Vijay Prashad of Tricontinental Institute for Social Research

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inevitable.

1476 readings

[Iran, Huawei and Samsung](#)   

[Justice News](#)

Posted by dragonslayer

Friday, 14 December 2018 11:20

Found this article on google search. It is from the Financial Tribune which appears to be an Iranian based news outlet. As such it may be 100% propaganda. The article needs to be verified with an independant investigation by someone with more resources than I have.

The article suggests that both Samsung and Huawei have a substancial investment in Iran. If true the question arises "Why is Huawei being singled out?" which leads to China's assertion that the attack on Huawei is all about competition and the inability of other providers to compete with Huawei. Any way here is the Financial Tribune article.

Financial Tribune

THURSDAY December, 13 2018

Sci & Tech January 14, 2018 17:05 Samsung, Huawei Dominate 83% of Iran Android Phone Market
The Android market Café Bazaar reports that 51% of its users have handsets produced by the South Korean tech giant Samsung which translates into 17.8 million users



Samsung has an official representative in Iran and has established after-sales service centers in many cities

Iran's largest Android app market, Café Bazaar, has released a report that indicates that 83% of its users have Samsung or Huawei handsets. The company has 35 million users.

Since smuggled cellphones until recently had a 95% share of the local market, reports like the one Bazaar publishes on its website are the only source to roughly know the pulse of the mobile phone market.

Since most Iranian Android phone users have the Bazaar app installed on their handsets, the data can be expanded to the market as a whole.

According to Bazaar, Samsung and Huawei have consolidated their footprint in the smartphone market. The company reports that 51% of its users have handsets produced by the South Korean tech giant Samsung which translates into 17.8 million users. Samsung's Galaxy J5 has the biggest share.

Next comes the China-made Huawei with a 32% share (11.2 million), LG 8% (2.8 million) and HTC 3% (1 million). Sony, Lenovo and Asus each have 1% share.

Samsung's low-end smartphones Galaxy J series, which are made with low-cost hardware and have an average performance, have the biggest share (22%). The most popular models in the series are J5 (9%), J7 (7%), J1 (4%) and J3 (2%). Two models of its upper mid-range Android smartphones namely Galaxy A3 and A7 are also among the popular Android phones, each with a 2% share.

Huawei XE8 (3%) and G7 (2%) are the Chinese company's most popular models in the market.

Samsung has an official representative in Iran and has established after-sales service

centers in major cities. The company's direct presence in the country in addition to the wide range of products offered by the company explains why smartphones produced by the prominent South Korean firm are so popular in Iran.

Android phones produced by Samsung are of better quality compared to their Chinese counterparts.

Samsung is the leading smartphone maker worldwide. In 2016, the company's market share of the global market was close to 20% with Apple as its closest competitor (18.3%). For full-year 2016, 1.47 billion smartphones were sold around the world by all brands.

According to Iran's Telecom Ministry statistics, Apple iPhones have an 11% share of the smartphone market. It is estimated that 6 million Iranians have an iPhone.

>Popular Apps

The most downloaded applications during the three months between (Sep. 23 - Dec. 21) were messengers with 1.7 million downloads followed by video streaming services (837,000), mobile tools (635,000), shopping (610,000), social media platforms (548,000), photo editing apps (530,000) and transportation including ride-hailing and ride-sharing apps (511,000).

The report indicates that every week on average 600 people downloaded a messenger app and about 1,000 updated the messengers they had already had installed on their handsets. Every week on average, 400 people downloaded social media apps and about 900 updated their apps.

Bazaar's report includes some interesting points. For instance, the company's mobile tools sales' peak time was 10 in the morning while games sold better around 9 in the evening.

Last Updated on Friday, 14 December 2018 17:47

1428 readings

[Quoting 'The Lorax,' Court Pulls Permit For Pipeline Crossing Appalachian Trail](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 15 December 2018 08:02

December 14, 2018 6:43 PM ET

[LAUREL WAMSLEY](#)

[TwitterNational](#)



Downed trees mark the route of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline in Deerfield, Va., in February. A federal appeals court has blocked development of portions of the pipeline.

Steve

Helber/AP<https://www.npr.org/2018/12/14/676950106/quoting-the-lorax-court-pulls-permit-for-pipeline-crossing-appalachian-trail?>

A federal appeals court has thrown out company's permit to build a natural gas pipeline across two national forests and the Appalachian Trail – and slammed the U.S. Forest Service for granting the approvals in the first place.

In [a decision](#) filed Thursday by the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, Va., a three-judge panel declared the U.S. Forest Service "abdicated its responsibility to preserve national forest resources" when it issued permits for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline to build through parts of the George Washington and Monongahela National Forests and a right of way across the Appalachian Trail.

"This conclusion," they wrote in a unanimous judgment, "is particularly informed by the Forest Service's serious environmental concerns that were suddenly, and mysteriously, assuaged in time to meet a private pipeline company's deadlines."

The judges cited Dr. Seuss' *The Lorax*: "We trust the United States

Forest Service to 'speak for the trees, for the trees have no tongues.'"

The court concluded that the Forest Service's decisions violated both the National Forest Management Act and the National Environmental Policy Act, and found the Forest Service lacked the authority to grant the pipeline a right of way across the Appalachian Trail.

Last Updated on Saturday, 15 December 2018 08:16