

The following archives are posted in order of placement at the archive site. They are posted in a 'date range' rather than chronological order.

There are a few archives from 2015 included in this web page.

They were not found in the 2015 archive but appeared here after the fact and were considered well worth posting regardless of date.

We have done our best to preserve pictures and links.

Please keep in mind that some links may not work and pictures may occasionally be missing due to archive inconsistency and dead originating site links.

2015 -December

733 readings

[Confined livestock management help young farmers to plant trees for fodders and to make an income in Cameroon](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 06 December 2015 04:41

By AARON KAAH,for IPS. reporting in Cameroon .



The scarcity of grazing land and the rampant farmer grazer conflicts in most communities has led to confined livestock management in barns, fences and stables across Cameroon. In the semi urban peripheries of most towns where the prices of dairy products like fresh milk, yogurt and butter are sky rocking every day; most young farmers have taken up zero grazing livestock management to get food and to make income.

At the santa sub division in the NW region of Cameroon these young

farmers who are now working in self help groups are planting leucaena trees, elephant grass and lucerna trees as fodder for animal and fuel wood production. Mr. Tamasang Alias was one of the pioneer farmers to get in to zero grazing at this community. He has planted two acres of elephant grass and the leucaena trees to use the grass and leaves as fodder for his animals. To day we are visiting him.....sir why did you choose to rear animals in confinement

2 how do you get feed for these cattle

3how satisfied are you in this initiative.

Mme Atanaga Victorine is a new farmer in zero gracing in this community.

She was lured in to this business by the gains she saw farmers like

Alias making .Mme. you are at work in your farm and we will like to

know from you why you got in to zero grazing

2what have you done to secured feed for these animals

3 Are they any gains in this project?

Mr. Bassam Emmanuel is a professional vet working for a livestock charity in yaounde Cameroon. We are glad to meet you sir we want to know from you the advantages of feeding animals in confinement with fodder like tree leaves and grass

2 can grass and tree planting for forage be a good option for those who are integrated livestock management.

3 etc.

Conclusion.

Livestock management is an essential component of farming through out Africa. Animals provide farmers with cheap labor, transport,

fertilizer and food. These animals are also a very huge investment for these farmers and in zero grazing livestock management systems tree and grass planting for animal forage fencing of barns and fuel wood production can really help these farmers to source for income and to restored degraded land and forest.

Last Updated on Sunday, 06 December 2015 05:44

829 readings

[HERACKLES FARMS: From Forest to Palm oil](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 06 December 2015 05:35

By Aaron Yancho kaah and Ngalla Killian

bamenda cameroon



In the thick tropical forest of Ndian division in Cameroon's South West Region, a group of chimpanzees skip from tree branch to tree branch as they forage for food . This pristine forest is also sanctuary to a wide variety of mammals including Monkeys, Antelopes, insects and birds.

Nonetheless the bio-diversity of this forest is at risk. The US base Agro Industrial Cooperation Herackles Farms has established a 73000 hectares of plantation plants seedlings in this vast forest reserve. This project is in the heart of one of Africa's most cherished bio diversity and forest zones. This 99 years lice granted Herackles by the Cameroon government is adjacent several important reserves including the world renowned Korup national park.

The Herackles palm oil plantation that has covered farm land and forest patches also has left over 14000 people without a livelihood. Many local people in this community have being opposed to this project. "We don't want them because they are no advantages that our people here will have and we don't need them. We don't need them we are fine." remarked Ayuk Sunde a resident of the locality. "And if they come to say they want to take this land from us we are not ready for it" cried another villager Thomas Ojong.

Despite these complains Herakles went ahead with the project in its current location.. This Agro Industrial Company had vowed to abide to strict environmental and social standards and posits that the plantation will

provide economic development for the region. However many of the residence of this region are poor and 45% of Cameroonians live on less than 1 dollar a day even as the unemployment rate stands at 65%. Herakles commitment goes beyond creating jobs. The firm has created a Non Profit Organization-All For Africa to fund social ventures across the continent with profits from income generated through the Cameroon oil project.




Conservationist are seeing all these pledges under a different radar. Many different international organizations see it as a vehicle for selling a controversial idea to down play social and environmental concerns. Jushua Osih is a Cameroon member of parliament from the Ndial locality. He is low kid about the Herakles Farms and says his people are used to such lofty promises most of them from big organizations operating in the area. "Plantation jobs are modern day slavery... We have seen a lot of industrial plantations developing around this area but nothing happened absolutely and positively for the people". This Member of parliament said.

Despite these clarion calls and agitations Herackles had opened pathways in to the forest and is developing its palm oil plantation. Although this plantation project is heading forward, local and international NGO's have been calling for the project to be brought to a halt. Irene Wabiwa is the forest campaigner for Green Peace Africa. Today Green Peace had requested the Cameroon government to stop Herakles Farms because according to them Herackles was jeopardizing the future of communities and the future of Cameroon.

Green Peace in its initial steps had funded a local NGO the Citizens Association for the Defense of Collective Interest to undertake a research study on an alternative to the Herakles farms palm oil plantation in Cameroon. Wabiwa recalled that the research project suggested that Cameroon could make do without the Herackles Farms. "A small scale farming by communities is really a solution if government institutions and international donors supported and helped these communities to do their agriculture and improve technology. We are sure and Green Peace believes that Agriculture done by communities can really be an alternative solution for this kind of Agro business that is a menace to communities and the environment" Irene Wabiwa of Green Peace Concluded..

Last Updated on Sunday, 06 December 2015 05:41

1724 readings

[cop21 “RED LINES” : AVENUE DE LA GRANDE ARMÉE MORE THAN 10,000 PEOPLE EXPECTED TO COME](#)   

[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 11 December 2015 18:58

MEDIA MEETING POINT:

WHERE: 2 Tunnel de l'Étoile, 75017 Paris --
Google map link [here](#).

WHEN: Saturday 12th December - 11:00am
CET

ACTION WILL TAKE PLACE AT: Avenue de la Grande Armée, Arc de Triomphe

A major public demonstrations is planned for this **Saturday, 12th**

December. As the climate talks come to an end, [350.org](#), Attac, Confédération Paysanne, Réseau Sortir du Nucléaire, Climate Games and others[1] are taking the message to the streets tomorrow at 12PM (that is 12.12.12). Defying a ban on public protests that has been implemented in France under the State of Emergency, campaigners are planning for a gathering of thousands.

WHY: At the start of Avenue de la Grande Armée is the Arc de Triomphe and the grave of the unknown soldier. We will use this place to commemorate known victims of climate change (past and future) and pledge our commitment to continue the fight for climate justice. Thousands will stand along the Avenue to draw a red line with their bodies, signifying our commitment to defend our common homes. The line will point towards the real perpetrators of climate crimes in La Défense, where the headquarters of major fossil fuel companies and their financial backers can be found. The action will be a reminder that there is no complete triumph in the battle against climate change--too much has already been lost--but that any progress will be led by the people, not our politicians.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

12:00PM: 30 fog horns will blast mournfully. Hundreds holding red umbrellas and flowers will step out into the Avenue de la Grande Armee near the Arc de Triomphe to make a redline with their bodies that should stretch up to 2km along the avenue.

12:10: A samba and brass band will begin to play music, and two 100m long banners will be unfolded, one that says “It’s up to us to keep it in the ground” and the other “Crime Climatique – Stop!”

12:30: Bands stop playing and the foghorns are heard again marking the start of a 2 minute silence for the victims of climate crimes. Thousands of red flowers will be raised in the air. At the end of this moment of silence, protestors will lay their flowers along the red line.

12:40: Band will start playing music again to mark defiance and resistance. A commitment to escalate for 2016 and keep up the fight for climate justice after the Paris talks.

13:00: Final foghorn heard again, marking the end of the mobilization. Thousands of protesters will dissolve into the city

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[1] Additional groups involved in planning D12 include: Reclaim the Power, AITEC, and Climate Justice Action (CJA) and Global Justice Now

833 readings

[COP21: “1.5 Degrees is More Than Enough” Arctic and Island States Call on Leaders to Agree to Deep Cuts to Greenhouse Gas Emissions](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 09 December 2015 21:35

PRESS RELEASE

“1.5 Degrees is More Than Enough”

Arctic and Island States Call on Leaders to Agree to Deep Cuts to Greenhouse Gas Emissions

December 9, 2015 – Paris, France – Voices from some of the world’s coldest and hottest regions were raised in unison today calling for ambitious greenhouse gas emissions targets that would limit the average global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The call was issued by Indigenous Peoples’ representatives from the Inuit Circumpolar Council, Saami Council, the Pacific and the Government of the Seychelles after the release of the latest draft negotiating text at the climate change negotiations underway in Paris.

“We are seeing significant climate related impacts in the Arctic at one degree Celsius so 1.5 degrees is more than enough,” said Okalik Egeesiak, Chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council, which represents Inuit in Canada, Greenland, Chukotka (Russia) and Alaska. “Since the Arctic is warming at least twice as fast as the rest of the world, the two degree limit being discussed here in Paris will lead to dramatic and irreversible effects on Arctic communities.”

“Arctic and island peoples have much in common,” said Ronny Jumeau, Seychelles Ambassador for Climate Change and Small Island Developing State Issues. “We are on the front lines of climate change. Science tells us that 2 degrees is a threshold after which climate change effects will become even more severe. Even 1.5 is too high but it will buy us some time to adapt.”

“We are calling on the states here in Paris to have the political will to commit to this target,” said Aile Javo, President of the Saami Council. The Saami are Indigenous Peoples who live in the northern parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland and northwest Russia.

“This is not a technical question of when or if climate change is affecting our communities. Under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change all countries have committed to upholding their common but different

responsibilities. Now we need to see some action and fast.”

“As islanders and Pacific Indigenous Peoples, we do not want to lose our home islands, any more than anyone would want to lose their home in any part of the world. So we’re here fighting and we’ll continue to fight, and we call upon everyone else to join us,” said Milañ Loeak, who is from the Republic of the Marshall Islands and is a member of the Pacific Indigenous Network.

“We are a pragmatic and adaptable peoples, but 2 degrees Celsius will be an insurmountable challenge not only for Indigenous Peoples. As the Arctic melts and the sea level rises one billion people living in low lying areas are at risk of becoming the new environmental migrants,” said Eegeesiak.

The Arctic and island leaders pointed to the Government of Canada, which recently adopted the position of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), and announced it supports the 1.5 degree target, as an example of the kind of commitment that countries at COP21 need to demonstrate for the negotiations to succeed.

"It has been clearly identified by Indigenous Peoples for many years from our respective homelands and here at COP21 that there must be an immediate, concerted effort by the global community to address climate change,” said Maatalii Okalik, President of the National Inuit Youth Council in Canada. “History proves that when parties work together for a common goal that objectives can indeed be met. Youth call on all states to commit to 1.5 degrees -- for this generation and the many to come in the future. Our future depends on it."

“Canada recently joined the chorus that has been building here in Paris,” said Jumeau. “I call on all my fellow leaders to commit to the 1.5 C target.”

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886 readings

[COP21; International Human Rights Day event at Peace Wall](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 09 December 2015 20:11

[Grassroots Global Justice Alliance](#)



On Dec 10, International Human Day, a broad coalition of impacted communities will gather for a street theater protest at the Peace Wall in Paris calling on the US delegation to reject false solutions that are the basis of the COP21 agreement.

Representatives from Indigenous, Black, Latino, Asian and Pacific Islander organizations have united under the banner, ***It Takes Roots to Weather the Storm***, representing communities living alongside fracking wells, coal power plants, and oil refineries and already facing the worst impacts of the climate crisis. **“The US delegation has been leading other member states in a strategy of pollution trading that allows big oil to continue to pollute our communities and also threatens the livelihood of indigenous communities across the Global South. On both fronts, COP21 will lead to massive human rights violations,”** noted Cindy Wiesner, national co-ordinator of Grassroots Global Justice Alliance, and an *It Takes Roots* delegate.

The three-pronged action includes performances with powerful visual metaphors of roots, storm and seeds. This action-performance will illustrate the current, global spiral towards environmental and economic destruction, while shining a light on

the resilience of climate change impacted communities that are resisting these devastations head on. The action will highlight how it is also these very marginalized communities who are coming up with the real, alternative solutions that can simultaneously rebuild economies through alternative models like just transition, cooperative systems, collective ownership, etc. while restoring essential ecological balance.

“We are deeply concerned at President Obama’s failure to model authentic leadership in the global arena, and appalled by the glaring contradictions between his moving speech and actual action. The US has been leading the model of voluntary emission cuts, carbon market loopholes, and false solutions. We refuse to accept that,” said Brandon King of the *It Takes Roots* Delegation.

The protesters chose the Peace Wall to also call attention to rising US militarism, resource wars and global conflicts. Representatives from Iraq Veterans Against the War will lift a large “No War, No Warming” banner in protest of the escalating bombing of the Middle East.

When: Thursday December, 10, 2015 at 11am

Where: The Peace Wall, Paris, France

Visuals: Street theater, Song, Drums, Banners

UPDATE

MEDIA ADVISORY | December 10, 2015

Human Rights Day, US Impacted Communities Denounce US Leaders Grassroots Groups Say Climate Policies Violate Human Rights & the Rights of Indigenous People

FRANCE) Grassroots leaders from climate-impacted communities in the US rallied at the Paris Peace Wall to denounce the role of the US delegation for a legacy of environmental racism and in undermining the possibility for genuine climate justice coming out of Paris COP21 accord.

Over 350 people participated in an action in front of the Peace Wall in Paris, a venue chosen to symbolically challenge the grave and violent implications of the current COP21 Agreement.

Massive banners, signs, fierce chanting, singing, and street theatre marked the It Takes Roots delegation-led action for Human Rights Day.

Paris, as with every COP before now, we see the role of the US in holding back any efforts at real mandatory emissions cuts, and accepting true historic and current responsibility as a leading greenhouse gas emitter. The US has been leading other member states in a strategy of pollution trading that allows big oil to continue our communities and also threatens the livelihoods of indigenous communities from the Global North to the Global South. The decisions coming out will lead to massive violations of human rights and the rights of Indigenous peoples," read Edgar Franx, from the *It Takes Roots* delegation's statement to Obama on Human Rights Day.

The prosperity of fossil-fueled societies has been built on the backs of historically marginalized communities: Indigenous Peoples, coal miners, fisherfolk, working class communities across the world -- all of whom have paid the price of our "cheap fuels" and suffer the consequences of global climate chaos disproportionately.

Plans that protect the welfare and rights of these communities will prove more durable, more equitable, and safer - for all of us. Indeed, on December 10 Human Rights day, there can be no better demand of COP21 - to be accountable to all people," noted Dallas Goldtooth, with the Indigenous Environmental Network, and an *It Takes Roots* delegate.

Representatives from Indigenous, Black, Latino, Asian and Pacific Islander organizations have united under the banner, ***It Takes Roots to Weather the Storm***, representing communities living alongside fracking wells, coal power plants, and oil refineries and already facing the worst impacts of the climate crisis.

Peace action called out the US and other countries of the Global North whose invasive foreign policies have played a large role in the current devastating and vicious refugee crises, conflicts, and resource wars due to land grabs and displacement triggered by neo-liberal globalization.

[Check out](#) the list of media spokespeople from the *It Takes Roots* delegation.

[Check out updates](#) about our events/actions the delegation participated/co-organized

[Flickr Photostream](#) (please credit photos to: It Takes Roots)

[quick video highlight of today's action](#) by Indigenous Environmental Network

Schedule interviews with our media spokespeople, and to get video clips from today's action contact:

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[Grassroots Global Justice Alliance](#)
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Comment by Joan Russow

A chance on international Human Rights Day and the 70th Anniversary
the

United nations of the failure of the United states to ratify key international agreements

here is assessment, which could be read out, of US disregard for International instruments in solidarity

Joan Russow

Global compliance Research Project

THE UNITED STATES HAS NOT RATIFIED OR ADOPTED THE FOLLOWING LEGALLY BINDING AGREEMENTS

45 Charter of the United Nations

45 International Court of Justice (THE US NO LONGER RESPECTS ITS JURISDICTION OR DECISIONS)

48 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (adopted)

51 Convention related to the Status of Refugees

63 International Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of racism

66 International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights the optional Protocol (NOT RATIFIED)

66 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its Protocols

68 Non- Proliferation Treaty

69 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (NOT RATIFIED)

72 UN Convention for the Protection of cultural and Natural Heritage

72 Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their destruction

73 Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

75 Convention the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women and its protocol (NOT RATIFIED)

76 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

82 UN Convention on the Law of the Seas (NOT RATIFIED)

84 Convention Against Torture (BUT HAS REDEFINED WHAT CONSTITUTES TORTURE)

89 Convention on the Rights of the Child (NOT RATIFIED)

90 Convention on the rights of migrant Workers and their families

(NOT RATIFIED)

90 Rome Statute International Criminal Court

(NOT RATIFIED)

92 Convention on Biological Diversity (NOT RATIFIED)

92 UN Framework convention on climate change

92 Convention to Combat Desertification and Drought

93 Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction

97 Ottawa Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty (NOT RATIFIED)

97 The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer

2007 THE UN DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (NOT ADOPTED)

2013 Arms Trade Treaty (NOT RATIFIED)

Geneva protocols on prohibited weapons

Geneva Protocols, including Protocol V, which requires the removal of remnants of war Treaty (NOT ALL OF THEM)

LABOUR CONVENTION

C029 - Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)

[C087 - Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 \(No. 87\)](#) **(NOT RATIFIED)**

[remuneration Convention, 1951 \(No. 100\)](#) **(NOT RATIFIED)**

105 - Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105)

11 - Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)

(NOT RATIFIED)

Last Updated on Thursday, 10 December 2015 23:24

910 readings

[Civil Society Denounces Latest Draft of Paris Text Considered The Great Escape for the Wealthiest Countries of the World](#)

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 10 December 2015 20:36

Civil Society Denounces Latest Draft of Paris Text Considered *The Great Escape* for the Wealthiest Countries of the World

Paris, France - While the French drive an outcome on the eve of the climate talks, civil society groups call the latest draft a massive disappointment as it fails to create a blueprint to avoid the climate crisis. Groups say the text exposes developed countries' intention to escape their legal obligations and their fair share of responsibility for cleaning up the planet.

“What we feared about the text has happened – it is an agreement that is good for the US and bad for the developing world as it amounts to a rewriting of the rules of the Convention. It says there should be a ‘shared effort’, which means both poor and wealthy countries are responsible for providing climate finance – this totally a rewriting of the existing climate Convention. This is indeed what the US and other developed countries have been pushing for for years.” *Meena Raman, Third World Network*

Most notably, the much-celebrated 1.5 degree target has been excluded from the text, leaving it as only an aspirational goal. Other key issues with the current text: Human Rights was eliminated from the body of the text (on human rights day); there are no pre-2020 goals, delaying progress by five years of progress; there are no clear dates or obligations for emissions reductions.

“President Obama promised to be both accountable and take responsibility for our roles in the current climate crisis. As the talks nearly come to a close, we can now see that this was not only empty rhetoric, but a great escape for polluters. The low expectations of this draft have been surpassed beyond belief, it does nothing to cut emissions or give hope to the poor and most vulnerable. The next 24 hours are critical if we don't want this document to sink the planet.

Asad Rehman, spokesperson for Friends of the Earth England, Wales, and Northern Ireland

“For the Least Developed Countries, the issue of loss and damage is particularly key and is a red line that can't be crossed for LDC peoples. By introducing an ‘exclusion clause’ against liability or compensation, the US and EU are trying to make sure they will never be held accountable for their climate crimes. Where's the ambition and solidarity with the Least Developed Countries and people impacted by climate change which Obama and Hollande talked about last week?”

Prerna Bomzan, advocacy coordinator, LDC Watch

“This agreement sells young people down the river. Once again, rhetoric is out of tune with reality: last week Obama, Cameron, and Hollande talked the talk. But this week they've proven they won't walk the walk. Young people need to see immediate pollution cuts in order to know that we are free to live and love life. This agreement kicks the responsibility down the road to 2020 and beyond, leaving us all facing the future possibility of what youth in the global south are already facing today: climate chaos.”

Nathan Thanki, Global North Focal Point for the official Youth Constituency

904 readings

[Indigenous Peoples Take Lead at D12 Day of Action in Paris - Official response to COP21 agreement](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 13 December 2015 08:08

By Indigenous Environmental network Project

Posted on [Dec 12, 2015](#)



For Immediate Release

December 12th, 2015

Press Contacts

Dallas Goldtooth, dallas@ienearth.org, 1-708-515-6158

“The Paris accord is a trade agreement, nothing more. It promises to privatize, commodify and sell forested lands as carbon offsets in fraudulent schemes such as REDD+ projects. These offset schemes provide a financial laundering mechanism for developed countries to launder their carbon pollution on the backs of the global south. Case-in-point, the United States’ climate change plan includes 250 million megatons to be absorbed by oceans and forest offset markets. Essentially, those responsible for the climate crisis not only get to buy their way out of compliance but they also get to profit from it as well.” – Alberto Saldamando, Human Rights Expert & Attorney. [1]

Paris, France – At 8am, Indigenous Peoples block took to the streets of Paris for an Indigenous Rights action to start the closing day of COP 21, hours before the final agreement was to be presented and a huge mobilization of civil society for a D12 march was to begin.

Representatives from Indigenous nations of **Circumpolar, Amazon, South Pacific** and **North America** joined for an early morning sunrise ceremony prayer at the foot of the historic Notre Dame Cathedral, to close the climate negotiations. The ceremony was disrupted by Paris Police who came to the square and begun to remove banners.

“We, Indigenous Peoples, are the redline. We have drawn that line with our bodies against the privatization of nature, to dirty fossil fuels and to climate change. We are the defenders of the world’s most biologically and culturally diverse regions. We will protect our sacred lands. Our knowledge has much of the solutions to climate change that humanity seeks.



It's only when they listen to our message that ecosystems of the world will be renewed” – **Tom Goldtooth Executive Director of Indigenous Environmental Network**

The morning prayer circle was moved down the street to the infamous Pont des Arts, also known across the world as the ‘Love Lock Bridge’ where Indigenous Peoples staged a direct action. Their collective message was clear – *“People discuss ‘red lines’, we are the red line. We are the keepers of the land, protectors of animals, the seas, the air. We are the solution.”*

“Our planet is hotter. The seas are rising. Our communities are facing reality that we may have to move, we have winter wildfires happening in the Arctic. We are out of time. Any solutions that do not talk about cutting emissions at the source, or keeping fossil fuels in the ground, are false solutions. We don’t have time to talk about carbon markets, carbon trading, REDD+ projects. We must act now [3]. ” – **Dallas Goldtooth, Dakota/Dine, Campaigner with Indigenous Environmental Network.**

“The seas are rising, our communities have nowhere else to go” – **Sina Brown-Davis, Maori activist**

At noon, Indigenous peoples joined in solidarity with the global D12 REDLINE action at Arc de Triomphe. At the front of action, Indigenous Peoples held a conference condemning the failed leadership of nation states for their exclusion of Indigenous rights and human rights in the operational text of the Paris agreement .

“Here at the COP21 they are proposing false solutions to the climate crisis, they are proposing a commodification of the sacred, they want to put a price

on the air we breathe. They want to go into other countries, displace our Indigenous brothers and sisters, so that they in the US can continue killing our people. We are the frontlines, we are the red lines” – Kandi Mossett (Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara, North Dakota) speaking at the march.

During the march, a traditional Ponca cradleboard was presented to the people of Paris. The cradleboard represents future generations and was carried by **Casey Camp-Horinek (Ponca Nation, Oklahoma, USA)** who spoke at the march – *“We come here with a present for Paris, we know what happened on November 13. We Indigenous people know how that feels to have someone kill the innocent ones. We offer this symbol in memory of lives lost, and we thank-you for hosting us on this sacred day.”*





[1] US, European and other states push for exclusion of binding Indigenous rights from agreement

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/true-north/2015/dec/07/indigenous-activists-take-to-seine-river-to-protest-axing-of-rights-from-paris-climate-pact>

[2] Lack of acknowledgement of Indigenous Peoples Rights in draft treaty of Paris Climate Accord could negatively impact both them and the climate

http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/12/10/indigenous-rights-knowledge-left-out-in-cop21.html?utm_content=bylines&utm_campaign=ajam&utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=SocialFlow

[3] UN Paris Accord could end up being a Crime against Humanity and Mother Earth <http://no-redd.com/indigenous-peoples-un-paris-accord-could-end-up-being-a-crime-against-humanity-and-mother-earth/>

www.indigenusrising.org

Last Updated on Thursday, 31 December 2015 00:42

2016

640 readings

[Venezuela Passes Law Banning GMOs,
by Popular Demand](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 04 January 2016 23:19

JANUARY 1, 2016

WILLIAM CAMACARO - FREDERICK B. MILLS - CHRISTINA M.
SCHIAVONI



Farmer, Cooperativa Aracal in the State of Yaracuy. Credit: Fred Mills

The National Assembly of Venezuela, in its final session before a neoliberal dominated opposition takes the helm of legislative power on January 5, passed one of the most progressive seed laws in the world on December 23, 2015; it was promptly signed into law by President Nicolas Maduro. On December 29, during his television show, "[In Contact with Maduro, number 52](#)," Maduro [said](#) that the new seed law provides the conditions to produce food "under an agro-ecological model that respects the pacha mama (mother earth) and the right of our children to grow up healthy, eating healthy." The law is a victory for the international movements for agroecology and food sovereignty because it bans transgenic (GMO) seed while protecting local seed from privatization. The law is also a product of direct participatory democracy –the people as legislator– in Venezuela, because it was hammered out through a deliberative partnership between members of the country's National Assembly and a broad-based grassroots coalition of eco-socialist, peasant, and agro-ecological oriented organizations and institutions. This essay provides an overview of the phenomenon of people as legislator, a summary of the new Seed Law, and an appendix with an unofficial translation of some of the articles of the law.

The People as Legislator of Seed Policy

The Legal Basis

The Seed Law is a glowing example of the legal personality of popular power (poder popular) at work in Venezuela, the people as legislator. As Article 5 of the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela indicates, "Sovereignty resides intransferable in the people, who exercise it directly as provided for in this Constitution and in the law, and indirectly, through suffrage . . ." An example of the direct legislative powers of citizens is found in Article 204, no. 7 of the Constitution which specifically names citizens as potential legislators, should they organize a petition of at least one percent of the registered voters (see also Article 205). There are also numerous references to the legislative power of communal structures in the organic Laws of Popular Power (Poder Popular) passed in 2009 and 2010.

Venezuela's seed policy had been based on an earlier 2002 Seed Law that was passed in a highly polarized political environment, just months after a short-lived coup against then President Hugo Chavez and just weeks prior to an opposition-led strike and sabotage of the oil industry. That law was superseded in April of 2004, when after halting a project to plant Monsanto's transgenic soybeans on 500,000 acres of land, then [President Hugo Chavez declared](#), "The people of the United States, of Latin America, and the world, need to follow the example of Venezuela free of transgenics." This declaration constituted a virtual ban of transgenics. It was also consistent with the government's emphasis on endogenous development. Endogenous

development, as [Christina Schiavoni and William Camacaro describe it](#), means development from within:

“[Endogenous development] implies first looking inside, not outside, to meet the country’s needs, building upon Venezuela’s own unique assets. This means valuing the agricultural knowledge and experience of women, Indigenous, Afro-descendants, and other typically marginalized campesino (peasant farming) populations as fundamental to Venezuela’s food sovereignty. This also means preserving Venezuela’s native seeds, traditional farming methods, and culinary practices.”

Such endogenous development received further support when in June 2012, Chavez made the Country Plan (2013 – 2019) his presidential campaign platform. The Plan, which is now the law of the land, includes among its five major objectives, “the construction of an eco-socialist economic model of production based on a harmonic relationship between humans and nature that guarantees the rational and optimal use of natural resources, respecting the processes and cycles of nature.” The Plan also prioritizes the expansion of agricultural production, but only in a way that advances the goal of food sovereignty (1.4) and accelerates democratic access to the necessary resources for sustainable agricultural production (1.4.2).

Chronology of the People as Legislator of Seed Policy

The blog of Eco-Socialist Space of Popular Power (CDR-SUR) provides a detailed chronology of the popular struggle for input and impact on the new Seed Law. In “[The Process of the Collective Construction of the New Seed Law in Venezuela](#),” CDR-SUR indicates that the people as legislator of seed policy first emerged in response to a notice by the legislative branch of government in mid-2012 that the National Assembly would be considering a substantial revision of the 2002 Seed Law. Since a transgenic and big agribusiness lobby had been at work trying to influence seed policy, it was also time for eco-socialists and other ecological movements to weigh in on the issue.

In response to the Assembly’s notice, several hundred social and ecological organizations organized the “International Meeting of Guardians of Seeds” in Monte Carmelo (October 26 – 29, 2012), in the State of Lara, in order to draft measures for consideration by the National Assembly that would unequivocally ban transgenic seed and protect Indigenous, Afro-descendant and peasant seed from privatization. More than 1000 persons, 116 organizations, and 162 institutions participated in the grassroots (popular) deliberations (CDR-SUR).

While the idea of the people as legislator is grounded in the Constitution and the organic laws of popular power, it took some public pressure on the National Assembly and government ministries (called Ministries of Popular Power!) for this legislative voice to be heard and taken into account. In March of 2013, while the relevant legislative committees and government ministries were holding hearings on the Seed Law Project, the “Venezuela Free of

Transgenics Campaign” (VFTC) lobbied unsuccessfully for inclusion in the initial phase of debate. The ecological movement, undeterred, organized the Venezuela Free of Transgenics Open Seminar at the Bolivarian University of Venezuela in March of 2013 which sponsored periodic forums on the debate over seed policy.

On May 25, 2013, the VFTC collected signatures at a national mobilization held in the Plaza de Los Museos in Caracas, to petition the National Assembly to include the coalition’s voice as a legislative partner in the Seed Law deliberations (CDR-SUR). The next day, according to CDR-SUR, Alfredo Ureña, a deputy of the National Assembly and president of the Permanent Subcommittee on Agro-Food Development, formulated an action plan to ensure that the Seed Law would be anti-transgenic.

In June of 2013, the VFTC stepped up its organizing and education efforts. These efforts included, as part of the Fourth Venezuelan Congress on Biological Diversity (June 28), a workshop on the “collective construction of a Seed Law proposal” (CDR-SUR). This collective effort produced documents directly relevant to the legislative deliberations on the Seed Law.

On October 21, 2013, as documented by William Camacaro and Frederick B. Mills in [Venezuela and the Battle against Transgenic Seeds](#) (December 6, 2013), the VFTC mobilized in front of the National Assembly to prevent the advance of a Seed Law proposal because it contained stealth provisions that would have opened the door to transgenic seed and possibly allow the privatization of locally shared “free” seeds. This was a critical turning point in the eco-socialist struggle to influence the nation’s seed policy. As CDR-SUR points out, on October 22, in a meeting between the VFTC and legislators involved in drafting the Seed Law, it was agreed that there would be popular participation in the construction of the Seed Law, referred to as the Popular Constituent Debate on the New Seed Law.

According to CDR-SUR, “The Popular Constituent Debate convened on the 28 and 29 of October in Monte Carmelo, Sanare in the State of Lara on the occasion of the Day of Peasant Seed (Semilla Campesina).” It was here that a consensus was hammered out by a large variety of agroecological organizations on the basic objectives of the Seed Law.

As a follow up to this conference in Monte Carmelo, “the second round of discussion [by 135 peasant collectives and educators] took place in the City of Naguanagua in the State of Carabobo from November 1 to 3, 2013” (CDR-SUR). The focus of this round was in large part to determine the procedures of popular debate to ensure that the final product was indeed a result of collective deliberation in concert with key legislators of the National Assembly. These procedures were to ensure the practice of inclusion, public dissemination of information, and the constitutionally grounded praxis of the people as legislator.

The third round of discussion was held at the Latin American Institute of Agroecology Paulo Freire (IALA) in Barinas state on November 22, 2013.

During this round the Popular Constituent Debate constructed a proposed preamble, objectives, and structure for the proposed law. It was agreed that the Popular Constituent Debate would meet two more times in the states of Aragua and Merida.

After the last round of Popular Constituent Debate on the New Seed Law, the members of the Popular Movement for the New Seed Law and the National Assembly set up a work group to construct the consensus draft of the law and it is this version that entered into the first of the two required discussions by the National Assembly. On October 14, 2014 the proposed Seed Law was approved by the first discussion, one of two discussions normally required prior to the passage of a proposed bill.

During 2015, workshops were set up to review the proposed seed law before the final discussion; these workshops included members of the National Assembly, the Venezuela Free of Transgenics Campaign, and several government ministries. Through the workshops, several additional mechanisms were built into the law. These included a means for popular control over seeds by means of the recognition of the Popular Council for the Storage and Protection of Local, Peasant, Indigenous, and Afro-descendant Seed, as well as a recognition of the government's role in licensing free seed and thereby protecting it from patents or other forms of privatization.

In "[Venezuela to Consider Ban on Transgenic Seed](#)" (June 8, 2015), Camacaro and Mills discuss the consensus reached by the collective efforts of the agroecological movement with regard to seed policy. In short, the popular version of the Seed Law proposal (June 2015) was constructed over a two year period of collective deliberation by a broad coalition of agro-ecological oriented organizations and movements. On December 26, 2015, [The Popular Movement for the New Seed Law](#) issued a celebratory statement declaring:

"This 22 of December, with the approval of the new Seed Law by the National Assembly, we close the legislative cycle of popular constituent debate and collective deliberation that we initiated more than two years ago. The product of our struggle is a law that has no precedent anywhere in the world in terms of both its emancipatory content and the way it has been made possible by the protagonistic participation of the People as Legislator."

The Seed Law was also endorsed, "after ample discussion," by the Presidential Council of Communes. [A statement issued by the Council on June 3 reads:](#)

"From the diverse voices of the Presidential Council of Popular Government of the Communes, the comuneros (members of communes) of the country solicit the prompt approval, in the second discussion [by the National Assembly], of the Seed Law . . . The Seed Law, constructed collectively from the grassroots, is anti-transgenic and makes us advance significantly towards the recovery and consolidation of local, peasant, Indigenous and Afro-descendant seeds. Moreover we are speaking about a proposed Seed Law, profoundly anti-imperialist and ecosocialist, that incarnates the legacy of the

Leader of the Bolivarian Revolution, Hugo Chavez, at a moment in which the transnationals of agribusiness aim at privatizing seed and life.”The people as legislator, then, consisting of both the nationwide agroecological movements as well as the highest level of communal representation, made full use of their constitutionally grounded constituent power to partner with the liberal democratic state to forge the nation’s seed policy.

Summary of the Seed Law

The new Seed Law is inspired by the eco-socialist movement in Venezuela and the worldwide peasant movement [La Via Campesina](#) and is informed by the Indigenous philosophy of *vivir bien* (living well). As President of Bolivia, Evo Morales Ayma explains:

“*Vivir Bien* well is to live in equality and justice. It is where there is no exploited and no exploiters, where there are no excluded and no persons who exclude others, where there are no marginalized persons and no persons who marginalize others. *Vivir Bien* is to live in community, in collectivity, in reciprocity, in solidarity, and, most important, in complementarity.” (note 2)

The Seed Law contributes to *vivir bien* and advances eco-socialist principles by promoting small- and medium-scale farming using agroecological methods rather than monoculture that depends heavily on environmentally harmful chemical interventions. Moreover, it prioritizes the collective interest in the farming community’s control of the means of production, distribution and consumption of food. This law bans transgenic seeds and thereby avoids the political capture of seed policy by the corporate interests of transnational big agriculture while promoting and protecting the heirloom seeds and farming methods of Venezuela’s Indigenous, peasant, and Afro-descendant communities. Traditional seeds (*semillas campesinas*) will be immune to patents and privatization and come under the control of the communities that share them. The seed is considered a living thing, and as such is not only an object at hand for use in agriculture, but a subject that is entitled to certain rights and protections. These rights, combined with the philosophy of *vivir bien* and eco-socialist principles, form the ethical and legal basis for the development of food sovereignty and food security and of resistance to transnational corporate capture of the nation’s agricultural policy.

The law is consistent with Article 127 of the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela: “The genome of living things cannot be patented, and the law that refers to bio-ethical principles regulates the matter.” It is also consistent with the Country Plan 2013 -2019 that declares one of the “great historic objectives” to “construct an eco-socialist economic model of production, based on the harmonious relation between man and nature, that guarantees the use and rational and optimal utilization of vital natural resources.” (p. 19-20).

In closing, with the passage of the Seed Law, history is being made in Venezuela. Not only is the law extraordinary in and of itself, both for its content and the for the highly participatory way in which it was developed,

but the fact that it was passed at this very moment, in the face of adverse circumstances both globally and nationally, is all the more extraordinary. Globally, national seed legislation is increasingly being co-opted by corporate agribusiness interests, with many governments turning a blind eye, or worse, actively colluding in the process, as has been powerfully [documented by GRAIN and La Via Campesina](#). Nationally, Venezuela's food system has been under attack by, among other things, an "[economic war](#)" being waged by some elements of the opposition, resulting in food shortages that played a definitive role in influencing the recent elections. The economic war has shown that, despite [important advancements made toward food sovereignty](#), i.e., toward greater national and local popular control over the food system, since the inception of Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution, much work remains to be done to achieve a food system that is truly equitable, sustainable, and under the firm control of the people, in partnership with the government. The people, however, are clearly determined, and they are not going to sit back passively and wait for this to happen, as we have seen with the major popular organizing and mobilizing efforts that ultimately led to the successful passage of the Seed Law.

The passage of the Seed Law thus marks a major step forward for food sovereignty in Venezuela, as well as a victory for the global food sovereignty movement, and a warning sign to corporate agribusiness. However, as they say in Venezuela, "la lucha sigue" – the struggle continues – and indeed the passage of the Seed Law is one step, albeit an important step, in a much longer process. As the popular movements who worked on the Law's passage are already emphasizing, now is the time to disseminate it, defend it against likely backlash, and push forward its full implementation. While the Venezuelan people will remain the protagonists in this process, they are calling for international solidarity to defend what might arguably be the world's most revolutionary seed law.

APPENDIX: Highlights of Several Articles of the Seed Law (unofficial translations)

Article 1 of the law summarizes its main features:

"The present Law has as its objective to preserve, protect, and guarantee the production, propagation, conservation, and free circulation and use of seed, as well as the promotion, research, distribution, and commercialization of the same, based on a socialist agroecological vision, with the aim of consolidating our food security and sovereignty, prohibiting the release, the use, the propagation, and the entrance into the country and the national production of transgenic seeds as well as the patents and right of the breeder over the seed, in a manner that is sovereign, democratic, participatory, co-responsible and in solidarity, making special emphasis on the valorization of the Indigenous, afro-descendent, peasant and local seed, that benefits biodiversity and helps to preserve life on the planet in conformity with what is established in the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela."

Article 2 lays out the goals of the law:

1. Promote the transition from conventional systems of production based on monoculture and the use of agrochemicals with agro-industrial and/or corporate seed for conventional use, to an agroecological system and the preservation of the environment in the short, medium and long term, based on agro-biodiversity.
2. Promote the production of seeds that are necessary to guarantee national production, with the goal of avoiding importation and achieving national sovereignty.
3. Promote the transition to communal and eco-socialist agriculture, in order to protect agro-biodiversity by means of the production of local, peasant, Indigenous, and Afro-descendant seed.
4. Revalorize and re-legitimize the local, traditional, and ancestral knowledge wisdom, beliefs and practices of the peasant, Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and other communities.
5. Prohibit the privatization of seed.
6. Orient the organization and planning of public policy in function of the different scales of production, distinguishing the policies intended for family agriculture or polyculture in small-scale production from the policies intended for big producers.

Article 3. Seed is recognized as a living thing and a constituent part of Mother Earth and for this reason it is considered an object as well as the subject of right and the application of norms pertaining to the preservation of life on the Planet and the conservation of biological diversity.

Article 4. The local peasant, Indigenous, and Afro-descendant seed is declared a common good of public, cultural as well as natural material and immaterial interest of the peoples; this seed is considered a contribution of our communities to the improvement of vegetable varieties and their propagation and preservation for a sustainable form of agriculture that constitutes the basis of our food and our culture.

Article 5. The production, importation, commercialization, distribution, release, use, propagation and entrance into the country of transgenic seed is prohibited. The National System of Seeds will develop and guarantee the technical, organizational, and institutional capacity to prevent, identify, detect, correct, return, and to sanction the violations of this prohibition.

One of the principle values of the law, expressed in Article 8, is that it “promotes, in a spirit of solidarity, the free exchange of seed and opposes the conversion of seed into intellectual or patented property or any other form of privatization.”

With regard to popular power (grassroots democracy), Article 9 provides that a Popular Council will be responsible for the storage, protection and regulation of Indigenous, Afro-descendant and peasant seed “with an emphasis on the exchange and local distribution of seed to guarantee our food sovereignty and the construction of an eco-socialist model of economic production.

Article 11 of the law also creates a National Seed Commission constituted by officials from several ministries related to agriculture, as well as representatives from both the Presidential Councils that deal with seed policy and the Popular Council for the storage and protection of local, Indigenous, peasant and Afro-descendant seed. This Commission will be responsible for planning and promoting seed policy as well as facilitating research, development, production and commercialization of seed.

Article 14 creates the National Institute for Seed (INASEM) which will be responsible for providing the material resources and administration necessary for implementing much of the policy developed by the Seed Plan, such as operating labs, offering technical assistance and issuing licenses for the disposition of certain categories of seed. This institute will also include spokespersons from the Presidential Council concerned with seed policy, but is largely a governmental body.

Notes:

1. In the section on chronology, the authors are indebted to the content of a chronology of the struggle produced by the [CDR-SUR](#) (Espacio Ecosocialista Del Poder Popular, Nov. 6, 2015). We have translated parts of that document into English. All shortcomings are, of course, our own.

2. Entrevista al President Evo Morales Ayma, con motivo de la aprobacion en la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas de la Declaracion de las Naciones Unidas sobre los derechos de los pueblos indigenas, La Paz, 24 septiembre, 2007 in Vivir Bien: Mensajes y documentos sobre el Vivir Bien, 1995-2010, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia.)

3. All translations of government documents are unofficial.

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Last Updated on Wednesday, 20 January 2016 23:59

664 readings

[COP21 leaves nuclear dream
adrift](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 01 January 2016 18:08

BY Paul Brown The Ecologist

1st January 2015



Qinshan Phase III Units 1 & 2

ake a significant contribution to China's future electricity needs. Photo: Atomic Energy of Canada Limited via Wikimedia Commons.

Charlatans, or planetary saviours? Post-Paris views on the nuclear industry suggest few experts believe it will bring closer a world rid of fossil fuels, writes Paul Brown. Despite the best efforts of nuclear lobbyists, no revival is due any time soon.

There are still some who hope that nuclear power will magically undergo a massive expansion. The evidence so far suggests that this is a false hope, one that is best abandoned if we are to deal with climate change with the seriousness the problem demands.

In Paris, in early December, the advocates of nuclear power made yet another appeal to world leaders to [adopt their technology](#) as central to saving the planet from dangerous climate change.

Yet analysis of the plans of 195 governments that signed up to the Paris Agreement, each with their own individual schemes on how to reduce national carbon emissions, show that nearly all of them exclude nuclear power.

Only a few big players - China, Russia, India, South Korea and the United Kingdom - still want an extensive programme of new-build reactors.

To try to understand why this is so the US-based [Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists](#) asked eight experts in the field to look at the future of nuclear power in the context of climate change.

One believed that large-scale new-build nuclear power "*could and should*" be used to combat climate change, and another thought nuclear could play a role, although a small one.

The rest thought new nuclear stations were too expensive, too slow to construct and had too many inherent disadvantages to compete with renewables.

Industry in distress

Amory Lovins, co-founder and chief scientist of the [Rocky Mountain Institute](#), produced a devastating analysis saying that the slow-motion decline of the nuclear industry was simply down to the lack of a business case.

The average nuclear reactor, he wrote, was now 29 years old and the percentage of global electricity generated continued to fall from a peak of 17.6% in 1996 to 10.8% in 2014. "*Financial distress stalks the industry*", he wrote.

Lovins says nuclear power now costs several times more than wind or solar energy and is so far behind in cost and building time that it could never catch up. The full details of what he and other experts said are on [the Bulletin's site](#), with some of their comments below.

Professor Jeff Terry, of the physics department at Illinois Institute of Technology, was the greatest enthusiast for new nuclear build: "*Nuclear energy is a reliable, low carbon dioxide source of electricity that can and should be used to combat climate change.*"

"China, India, Russia, and South Korea are all building nuclear plants both at home and in other countries. Therefore, nuclear energy will continue to play a role in mitigating the effects of climate change for the next 80 years.

"Why are these countries turning to nuclear energy? Mainly due to the versatility and stability of nuclear generation. Nuclear power has the highest capacity factor of any low carbon dioxide-emitting power source."

Too slow

Another potential enthusiast was Seth Grae, president and CEO of

the [Lightbridge Corporation](#), who believes [light water nuclear reactors](#) "must increase globally" if the world is to reach the goals of the [Paris Agreement](#).

However, new technologies that could have a major impact on de-carbonising global electricity generation, including advances such as [grid-level electricity storage](#), more efficient wind turbines and new types of nuclear reactors, are not being developed fast enough, he argues.

"Unfortunately, these technologies are not economically competitive enough for utilities to deploy at a large enough scale to prevent catastrophic climate change", Grae writes. "Sufficient improvement in economic competitiveness might not be achieved in time to prevent the worst effects of climate change."

M.V. Ramana, of the Nuclear Futures Laboratory and the Program on Science and Global Security at Princeton University, was dismissive:

"There are still some who hope that nuclear power will magically undergo a massive expansion within a relatively short period of time. The evidence so far suggests that this is a false hope, one that is best abandoned if we are to deal with climate change with the seriousness the problem demands."

Peter Bradford, adjunct professor at Vermont Law School, and former Nuclear Regulatory Commission member, agreed: *"Climate change, so urgent and so seemingly intractable, has become the last refuge of nuclear charlatans throughout the Western world."*

He said James Hansen, perhaps the most visible of the climate scientists who advocate heavy reliance on breeder or other innovative reactor designs, did so without paying any attention to their track record of long and costly failure.

Hui Zhang, physicist and senior research associate at Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, said China had a big programme to build nuclear power stations. But they currently generated only 1% of the nation's huge electricity needs, and even if the target of 110 power reactors by 2030 were achieved, they would produce only 5%.

"While a fleet of nuclear reactors with 130 GWe by 2030 would represent a substantial expansion (over four times China's current capacity of 30 GWe, and more than the current US capacity of about 100 GWe), it would account for only 5% of total energy use in the country and would constitute just one quarter of the non-fossil energy needed."

"In practice, the total energy use will likely be higher than the planned cap, so the share of nuclear power in the overall energy mix would be even less."

"Eventually, nuclear power is important if China is to address concerns about air pollution and climate change, but it is only one piece of a huge puzzle."

Paul Brown writes for [Climate News Network](#).

Last Updated on Thursday, 21 January 2016 00:25

[Leave It In The Ground ! ... But, But, But ...](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Administrator

Wednesday, 30 December 2015 22:06

Excerpt from the speech by Mark Carney to Lloyd's of London

"Take, for example, the IPCC's estimate of a carbon budget that would likely limit global temperature rises to 2 degrees above pre-industrial levels.

That budget amounts to between 1/5th and 1/3rd world's proven reserves of oil, gas and coal.

If that estimate is even approximately correct it would render the vast majority of reserves "stranded" – oil, gas and coal that will be literally nonburnable without expensive carbon capture technology, which itself alters fossil fuel economics."

Mark Carney also points out...

"But a wholesale reassessment of prospects, especially if it were to occur suddenly, could potentially destabilize markets, spark a pro-cyclical crystallization of losses and a persistent tightening of financial conditions.

In other words, an abrupt resolution of the tragedy of horizons is in itself a financial stability risk.

The more we invest with foresight; the less we will regret in hindsight."

Aside:

Recently Nevada Public Utilities Commission voted to increase the

charges — and lower the compensation — for rooftop solar installations. This prompted Solar City ([see article here](#)) to close operations in Nevada. Obviously not the right direction. So what if Nevada was forced to reduce its fossil fuel use by 66% to 80% instantly. The result would put the price of fossil fuels out of reach and make it impossible for anyone to raise the capital to install solar or other clean energy source.

But what would happen if Nevada were forced to reduce their fossil fuel consumption by 10-15% per year? People would start converting as fast as possible to avoid the skyrocketing cost of waiting. This would create pressure to convert and provide opportunity for clean energy producers. It would be more advantageous for fossil fuel producers to invest in clean energy which would accelerate the process even more. In 10 years we could be well on the way to a better economy and a cleaner planet. If the fossil fuel producers can be made to change gears, everyone can win.

Here is the entire speech reproduced from the [Bank of England archived here](#)

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<iframe width="560" height="315"
src="https://www.youtube.com/embed/V5c-eqNxeSQ"
frameborder="0" allowfullscreen></iframe>
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Breaking the tragedy of the horizon - climate change and financial stability - speech by Mark Carney

Last Updated on Sunday, 03 January 2016 20:42

Jamaica's Drought Tool Could Turn the Table on Climate Change

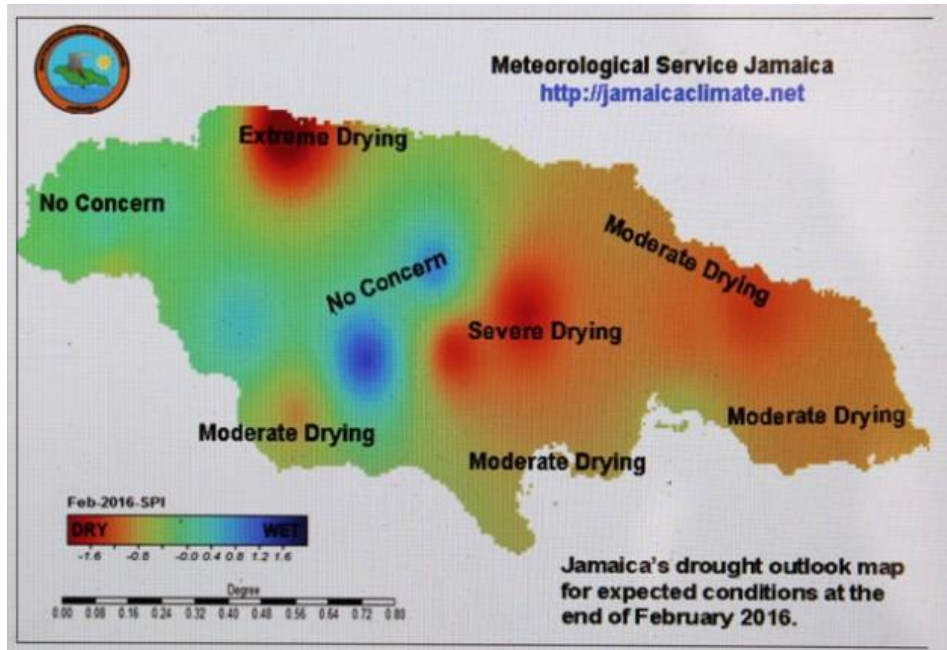


[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 15 February 2016 11:46

By [Zadie Neufville](#)



KINGSTON, Jamaica, Jan 13 2016 (IPS) - On a very dry November 2013, Jamaica's Meteorological Service made its first official drought forecast when the newly developed Climate Predictability Tool (CPT) was used to predict a high probability of below average rainfall in the coming three months.

By February, the agency had officially declared a drought in the eastern and central parishes of the island based on the forecasts. July's predictions indicated that drought conditions would continue until at least September.

Said to be the island's worst in 30 years, the 2014 drought saw Jamaica's eastern parishes averaging rainfall of between 2 and 12 per cent, well below normal levels. Agricultural data for the period shows that production fell by more than 30 per cent over 2013 and estimates are that losses due to crop failures and wild fires amounted to one billion dollars.

Jamaica's agricultural sector accounts for roughly seven per cent of the island's gross domestic product (GDP) and employs about 20 per cent of its workforce.

The Met Service's, Glenroy Brown told IPS, "The CPT was the main tool used by our Minister (of Water, Land, Environment & Climate Change) Robert Pickersgill throughout 2015 to advise the nation on the status of drought across the island ."

It was also used but the National Water Commission (NWC) to guide its implementation of island-wide water restrictions.

A technician with Jamaica's Met Service, Brown designed and implemented the tool in collaboration with Simon Mason, a climate scientist from Columbia University's International Research Institute (IRI) for Climate and Society with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

"The tool provides a Windows package for constructing a seasonal climate drought forecast model, producing forecasts with updated rainfall and sea surface temperature data," he explained.

The innovation was one of the first steps in building resilience under Jamaica's national climate policy. It provides drought-monitoring forecasts that allows farmers to plan their planting around dry periods and has been "tailored for producing seasonal climate forecasts from a general circulation model (GCM), or for producing forecasts using fields of sea-surface temperatures," Brown said.

The tool combines a number of applications including Google Earth and localized GIS maps, to generate one to five day forecasts that are country and location specific. The information is broken down and further simplified by way of colour-coded information and text messages for the not so tech-savvy user.

The tool designed by Brown and Mason also incorporated IRI's own CPT (designed by Mason) that was already being used by Caribbean countries with small meteorological services and limited resources, to produce their own up-to-date seasonal climate forecasts. The new tool combined data on recent rainfall and rainfall predictions to provide a forecast that focused specifically on drought.

"It was important for us to design a system that addressed Jamaica's needs upfront, but that would also be suitable for the rest of the region," Mason noted.

The scientists explained, "Because impact of a drought is based on the duration of the rainfall" and not only the amount of rainfall, looking forward is not enough to predict droughts because of factors related to accumulation and intensification.

"What we're doing is essentially putting a standard three-month rainfall forecast in context with recent rainfall measurements," Mason, told USAID's publication Front-lines last May. He noted that if below-normal rainfall activity was recorded during an unusually dry period, indications were there was a "fairly serious drought" ahead.

Sheldon Scott from Jamaica's Rural Agricultural Development

Authority (RADA) told IPS that farmers who used the SMS information were able to avoid the worse effects of the drought.

“The impacts were visible in relation to farmers who used the information and others who didn’t, because those who did were able to manage the mitigating factors more effectively,” he said.

During the period, more than 500 farmers received text alerts and about 700,000 bulletins were sent to agricultural extension officers.

Among the farmers who signed up for text messaging service, Melonie Ridsen told Front-lines, “The information we received from the Met office gave us drought forecasts in terms of probabilities. We still decided to plant because we were fortunate to have access to the river and could fill up water drums ahead of time in anticipation of the drought.”

Ridsen lost the corn she planted on the 13-acre property in Crooked River, Clarendon, one of the parishes hardest hit by the drought with only two per cent of normal rainfall, but was able to save much of the peas, beans and hot peppers.

Six months after Jamaica’s Met Service made its ground-breaking forecast, the CIMH presented the first region-wide drought outlook at the Caribbean Regional Climate Outlook Forum in Kingston. Now 23 other Caribbean and Central American countries are using the tool to encourage climate change resilience and inform decision-making.

“Regionally the tool is now a standard fixture across several countries within the region, including the Dominican Republic, Cuba and Haiti. This regional effort is coordinated by the CIMH,” Brown said.

Back in Jamaica, the tool is being hailed “a game-changer” in the climate fight by Jeffery Spooner head of the Met Service, who described the CPT as “an extremely important tool in Climate Change forecasting and specifically for the agricultural – including fisheries- and water sectors for rainfall projection .”

The CPT is now also used to provide regular monthly bulletins that are published by the Meteorological Service on their web site www.jamaicacclimate.net. RADA has also continued to use the CPT in its extension service, to enhance the ability of farmers’ and other agricultural interests to improve water harvesting, planting and other activities.

Since most of the island’s small farms depend on rainfall, more farmers – including those with large holdings – are using the information to better manage water use and guide their activities, Scott said.

Local and international scientists have linked the extreme atmospheric conditions related to the droughts affecting Jamaica and the region to the persistent high-pressure systems that has prevented the

formation of tropical cyclones to global warming and climate change.

Across the agricultural sector, Jamaica continues to feel the impacts of drought and the challenges are expected to increase with the climate change. In a 2013 agricultural sector support analysis, the Inter-American Development Bank estimated, low impact on extreme climate events on Jamaica's agriculture sector by 2025 could reach 3.4 per cent of "baseline GDP" annually.

In fact, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Synthesis Report (AR5) pointed to tools like the CPT to mitigate the impacts of climate change. Its importance to Jamaica's and the region's food security and water sector cannot be overlooked.

In addition to adaptation for the water sector, the CPT is being modified to provide early warning indicators for wind speeds and coral bleaching among among other applications, said the report.

And as showers of blessings cooled the land and brought much relief in the closing months of the year, CPT shows the drought could well be over.

621 readings

[Jamaica' s Climate Change Fight Fuels Investments in Renewables](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 15 February 2016 11:42

By [ZadieNeufville](#)



Jamaica's electricity generation systems and grid will require significant upgrades and expansion. Credit: Zadie Neufville/ IPS

KINGSTON, Jan 18 2016 (IPS) - By year's end, Jamaica will add 115 mega watts (MW) of renewable capacity to the power grid, in its quest to reduce energy costs and diversify the energy mix in electricity generation to 30 per cent by 2030.

With 90 per cent of its electricity coming from fossil fuels, the government is committed to reducing the country's carbon emissions by increasing the amount of electricity generated from renewables from 9 per cent now, to 15 per cent by 2020.

Junior Minister Julian Robinson told IPS via email, a National Energy Policy is guiding actions to cut costs and comply with the international agreements to reduce carbon emissions; among them are plans to reduce the amount of electricity generated from petroleum from 95 to 30 per cent.

Reliance on fossil fuels is also costing the country in terms of high local pollution, healthcare costs and its contribution to global climate change. According to Jamaica's 2nd National Report to the United Nations Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC,) in 2000, the energy sector accounted for 86 per cent of the 9,532 Giga-grams (Gg) of carbon dioxide emissions, up 1,114 Gg over 1994.

And according to business leaders, the high energy cost is a major barrier to the country's economic development and is a leading cause of business failure in the country. At 0.40 cents per kilowatt-hour, Jamaicans pay one of the highest rates for electricity in the region.

In 2011, 1.48 billion dollars or 15 per cent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was spent on petroleum imports. Even with

oil prices currently hovering at an all-time low of below 34 dollars per barrel, a falling Jamaican dollar, the possibility of higher petroleum prices and as much as 22.3 per cent generation and distribution losses (at 2011 estimates) mean the country is unlikely to divert from the course set by the energy policy.

Estimates are that 10 medium-sized wind farms producing 60MW each, could supply the energy needs of more than half of the island. So in 2015, several companies were invited to bid for a chance to help the country reduce its dependence on fossil fuels.

More than 200 million dollars were invested to bring a mix of wind and solar projects online. The Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR), the agency responsible for overseeing the operations of utility companies, approved 80MW of additional capacity by way of Blue Mountains Renewables' (BMR) 36.3 MW wind farm and a 24.4 MW addition to the state-owned Wigton wind farm.

To complete the 115 MW of renewable energy commissioned in 2015, Content Solar Limited (CSL) -a Jamaican subsidiary of the Florida based WRB Enterprises – was approved and began construction of a 20 megawatt solar photovoltaic facility, which president Robert Blenker noted will supply enough electricity to power 20,000 homes.

Another 37 MW was tendered at the end of the year, said Robinson who sits in the Ministry of Science and Technology, Energy and Mining.

According to Blenker, "Content Solar will be the largest project of its kind in the Caribbean, delivering clean and reliable renewable energy at a stable price to Jamaica and will displace more than 3 million gallons of fossil fuel currently burned each year."

Content's plan falls in line with commitments to make electricity cheaper and more efficient under the new electricity act, Robinson said. The act "provides the framework to maximise efficiencies by the provision of a dispatcher (JPS) that will dispatch the cheapest source of electricity to the end user," he added.

In addition, the minister noted the government has introduced net billing so that householders who produce excess energy could sell back to the grid. He also pointed out that a "30 per cent reduction in the cost of solar panels" and an improvement in technology that makes wind and solar technologies more efficient will ensure that investments in renewables continue even as the price of oil falls.

World Watch Institute's Sustainable Energy Road-map for Jamaica 2013 stated that increasing the number of households using solar water heaters, could save an additional 75 to 100 GWh of electricity per year. It concluded that there was a need to create a "smooth transition" to a sustainable and economically viable energy system.

Experts say that by making the switch to an electricity system based

mainly on renewables could save the country as much as 12.5 billion dollars by 2030, freeing up much needed cash for public and social spending in a country that according to 2012 estimates, spends around 54 per cent of its earnings on debt servicing.

If Jamaica transitioned to an electricity system powered almost exclusively by renewables, Jamaica could reduce the average cost of electricity by 67 per cent when compared to 2010 by 2030 the Worldwatch report said.

The transition, could create up to 4,000 new jobs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the electricity sector to the equivalent of 0.7 million tons of CO₂-annually. Accelerating the process would require high levels of up-front investments but so far, Jamaica has been lucky, since the bulk of the investments have come from investor, private sector and donor funding.

Alexander Ochs, Worldwatch's Director of Climate and Energy confirmed the report's findings, noting that Jamaica's "entire electricity demand could be met with renewable resources" from solar and wind energy.

The public sector has already begun its own programme of retrofitting and energy reduction strategies that is said to be saving millions of dollar in expenditure at government agencies and institutions.

Worldwatch noted that investments of roughly 6 billion dollars could increase the contribution of renewables to Jamaica's electricity production to 93 per cent by 2030, while significantly slashing energy costs.

So armed with feasibility studies that points to the possibility for hydro-power development along six rivers, Robinson is setting his sights on the road ahead, and another 26MW of power in the very near future.

Last Updated on Monday, 15 February 2016 11:44

527 readings

[Water, Water Everywhere but Too Much or Too Little](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 15 February 2016 11:34

By [Francesco Farnè](#) |



Water is at the core of Sustainable Development and it is crucial in Climate Change adaptation and mitigation strategies. Credit: Amantha Perera/IPS

ROME, Jan 1 2016 (IPS) - "Water is at the core of the Lima-Paris Action Agenda (LPAA), but it is true that for a long time water and oceans issues have been marginalized in climate conferences, considering that 90 per cent of natural catastrophes are linked to water and 40 per cent of global population will face water scarcity from now to 2050," stated Marie-Ségolène Royal, French Minister of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy, during the press conference at the launch of the #ClimatelsWater initiative at COP21.

“It is through water that it is possible to measure climate change impacts,” she said.

On 2 December, “Resilience Day,” the international water community gathered in Paris Le Bourget for the launch of the #ClimateIsWater initiative. A series of events and a press conference took place with the aim of increasing visibility and raising awareness on how water is key to addressing climate change. The initiative brought together several organizations representing civil society and stakeholders.

Sustainable water management is fundamental for addressing climate change. “Actors across all sectors should contribute to climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies integrating water into future climate architecture.” In order to meet this goal, financing is a crucial aspect, declared Torgny Holmgren, of the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), during the press conference.

Water is at the base of all forms of life on earth, and its existence on the planet created the preconditions for the origin of life and the billion years of evolution. Through the history of humanity many civilizations flourished depending on a water source. Mesopotamia, (land between the rivers in ancient Greek), and known as the “cradle of civilization” depended on the Tigris and Euphrates. Ancient Egypt developed on the Nile, the Chinese empire prospered along the Yellow and Yangzi basins and developed a complex administrative machine based on water management for agricultural irrigation.

It is possible to say that human development is water-driven, and this crucial resource is vital to economic and social prosperity. Today in many countries water is a common good, underlining the importance of its universal access. On the other hand, especially in western countries, water is often taken for granted. But without being able to either control its abundance as in floods and bursting sea levels and extreme weather or its scarcity with drought and desertification, water can be catastrophic.

In 2015, the World Economic Forum ranked water as the highest risk affecting global society. According to [World Water Council](#) (WWC), one in eight people live without safe drinking water and two people in five do not have adequate sanitation globally. Moreover, nearly 3.5 million deaths from water related diseases are registered every year. Unfortunately, the most affected people live in the global south.

In addition to these shocking facts, directly linked to our so called “water crisis,” there are very strong connections between water and some of the core areas of sustainable development, such as agriculture and food security, demography and urbanization, as well as climate and the environment.

According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)), agricultural irrigation accounts for 70 per cent of global water withdrawals, an impressive ratio considering demographers’ preoccupations for population growth projections. Indeed, food

demand is expected to increase by 60 per cent and energy by 100 per cent by 2050.

Water is inextricably connected to energy. It is necessary not only for hydro power, but also for cooling power plants, for oil and gas hydraulic fracturing or fracking, and for bio-fuels. Some 1.3 billion people, mainly in Africa, have no access to electricity.

New urban development from 2010-30 is expected to equal what was built in all of human history. This will increase water withdrawals from municipalities, implying issues of access, infrastructure, sanitation and safety from extreme water hazards.

Surprisingly, in spite of all the above evidence, for a long time water has not been at the top of global agenda. It is not highlighted in climate issues, even though “the effects of climate change will be felt mainly in the water cycle, “ said Benedito Braga, President of WWC, during the press conference. Water management has a great potential for both Climate Change adaptation and mitigation, he said.

According to WWC estimates, there have already been 2.5 trillion dollar economic losses from disasters 70 per cent related to floods and droughts so far this century. And other key issues such as migration and infrastructure damage are connected to climate disasters related to water.

Even though water is not specifically mentioned in the final Paris Agreement, it is possible the international water community is gaining momentum. At the seventh World Water Council held in Daegu & Gyeongbuk last April, the Republic of Korea was a notable participant. This council also brought water into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include a goal completely dedicated to water.

[SDG 6](#) aims at ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. SDG 6 covers the entire water cycle, including the management of water, waste-water and ecosystem resources, and have strong linkages to all of the other SDGs. In fact, its realization would mean a huge step towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

There is further evidence that civil society plays a crucial role in mainstreaming water in the Global Agenda. In fact, the LPAA that brought water at the centre of discussions in Paris, involves national governments, cities, regions and other sub national entities, international organizations, civil society, indigenous peoples, women, youth, academic institutions, as well as businesses. And over 300 organizations signed Paris pact on water and adaptation to climate change in river basins at COP21.

The Eighth Water Council will be held in Brasilia, Brazil in 2018. The fact that a developing country and one of the countries most affected

by the water crisis will host the event puts once again the attention on the central role of emerging economies in addressing climate and water issues.

(End)

558 readings

[Nevis Has A Date With Geothermal Energy](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 15 February 2016 11:30

By [Desmond Brown](#)



Mount Nevis sits at the centre of the volcanic island of Nevis, which has reserves of geothermal energy. Nevis is the smaller island of the pair, known as the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis. Credit: Desmond Brown/IPS

CHARLESTOWN, St. Kitts and Nevis, Jan 25 2016 (IPS) -

Legislators on the tiny volcanic island of Nevis in the northern region of the Lesser Antilles say they are on a path to going completely green and have now set a date when they will replace diesel-fired electrical generation with 100 per cent renewable energy.

The island, with a population of 12,000 currently imports 4.2 million gallons of diesel fuel annually, at a cost of 12 million dollars, a bill it hopes to cut down significantly. Nevis consumes a maximum of 10 mw of energy annually.

Deputy Premier and Minister of Tourism of Nevis, and Minister of Foreign Affairs of St. Kitts and Nevis Mark Brantley said geothermal energy is something that sets Nevis apart.



Mark Brantley – Deputy Premier and Minister of Tourism of Nevis, and Minister of Foreign Affairs of St. Kitts. Credit: Desmond Brown/IPS

“About 10 years ago we discovered that we have geothermal energy here. It has taken a while but we are not at a stage where all the exploration work has been done and we have been assured that geothermal goes live in December of 2017,” Brantley told IPS.

“What that means is that when that plant switches on in December of 2017, fully 100 per cent of Nevis’ electricity will be supplied by renewables. Nowhere else in the world can boast that and so it will make us the greenest place on planet earth. That’s the new tagline – the greenest place on planet earth.”

Nevis is the smaller island of the pair, known as the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis. It is home to active hot springs and a large geothermal reservoir. Seven volcanic centres have been identified on Nevis and drilling at three sites has indicated that the geothermal reservoir is capable of producing up to 500mw of constant base load

power year round.

Brantley said the shift to geothermal could not have come at a better time.

“We’ve just come out of Paris with COP21; the world is talking about climate change and what we can do. I think it really gives Nevis another string to its bow in terms of things that we can talk about and exciting developments here that would drive traffic to the island as people come and would want to be a part of something that is so natural,” Brantley said.

“First of all, we’ll certainly go completely green. Our emissions, our carbon footprint is reduced to almost zero. Secondly, we have a situation where you have the cost savings are likely to be anywhere from 40 to 50 per cent.

Traditionally we pay anywhere from 40 to 45 US cents per kilowatt hour. Geothermal is being offered at about 17 or 18 cents per kilowatt hour. So just imagine, your operating costs are cut dramatically and how that can attract businesses. We are already having interest from people wanting to do electric scooters so just think Jetsons,” Brantley added.

Brantley referred to the 1960’s American animated sitcom ‘The Jetsons’ where the family resides in Orbit City. All homes and businesses are raised high above the ground on adjustable columns. George Jetson lives with his family in the Skypad Apartments: his wife Jane is a homemaker, their teenage daughter Judy attends Orbit High School, and their early-childhood son Elroy attends Little Dipper School. Housekeeping is seen to by a robot maid, Rosie, which handles chores not otherwise rendered trivial by the home’s numerous push-button Space Age-envisioned conveniences.

“The idea here, if you can imagine a place where visitors come, there are electric cars, electric scooters and everything because we have a cheap source of energy. Not only that, the experts are telling us that we have maybe somewhere north of 150 megawatts of available energy. Nevis only uses 10, so you have enough to export to St. Kitts because they are just two miles away,” Brantley said.

“In fact we’ve already done the inter-connectivity studies; but also islands that are within that radius so Antigua is a possibility because they have no prospects for geothermal energy there.

“Anguilla has no prospects there but we also have neighbouring islands like St. Barts, Saba, St. Eustatius who have potential so Nevis can potentially, I think in a year become a net exporter of energy. And as a net exporter of energy we can change the whole economic paradigm in terms of what we rely on here so that we can wean ourselves even off tourism as a main stay and have energy and energy production instead. So I think there are some exciting times ahead for Nevis,” he added.

Dominica recently launched its own geothermal project with plans to construct a small power plant for domestic consumption and a bigger plant of up to 100mw of electricity for export to the neighbouring French islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique.

A Geothermal Energy Bill is to go before the House of Assembly in the first quarter of this year. Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit said the Geothermal Bill shows the commitment by his Government to pursue geothermal energy development.

“We’re hoping in the first quarter of this year to go to parliament to pass the legislation. It had to go through a rigorous review by our partners. That has been concluded. You know we had the challenge with the French consortium. We are engaging new partners but we’re also looking at the possibility of going with a small plant on our own. We’re engaging friendly governments, we’re engaging institutions,” he said.

“As you know we have an offer of a loan from the World Bank and that is still on the table. So the government now has to look at the financing options and decide which way it’s going to go with the geothermal plant. But we believe, notwithstanding the storm, it is important for us to pursue those renewable energy imperatives because based on advice, this would certainly be a major plus for the economy of Dominica.”

In August Tropical Storm Erika tore across Dominica, devastating villages, wrecking bridges and leaving a reconstruction bill worth half the country’s annual GDP.

About 10 inches of rain fell in a few hours, turning rivers on the mountainous island into torrents and hillsides into deadly mudslides. The capital Roseau was engulfed by water, and the island’s main airport was out of action for close to a month and will cost some 15 million dollars to repair. At least 31 people died in the storm.

476 readings

[WFP’ s Chief Calls for Support for Those Most Vulnerable to Climate Change](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 15 February 2016 11:24

By [Friday Phiri](#)



Mweene's iron roofed house. Credit: Friday Phiri/IPS

PEMBA, Zambia, Jan 27 2016 (IPS) - With El Nino affecting countries in southern Africa, threatening agricultural production due to a massive heat wave, the World Food Programme has urged the international community to support the upscaling of climate smart agricultural technology for resilience.

During her recent visit to Zambia, one of the region's foremost producers and exporters of maize and other crops, WFP Executive Director, Ertharin Cousin said the situation was a crisis that should not be allowed to degenerate into a disaster.

"We need to get organised and not let the situation, which is still at crisis level degenerate into a disaster. I believe there are opportunities that still exist through proven climate-smart techniques such as conservation agriculture," said Cousin enthusiastically.

She said the time has come for the world to 'walk the talk' on climate change adaptation, as agreed at the COP 21 Climate Conference in Paris, last year.

"What I have seen here in Zambia has proved what I was saying at the climate summit that 'the furthest behind are the most

vulnerable'...therefore, making them resilient should be the ultimate goal for us all. And I am talking adaptation through climate smart technologies and crop diversity," she said.

While the challenge ahead is huge, the WFP chief thinks the future should be defined by hope through what works to help smallholders be more resilient.

Highlighting the case of Bishop Mweene, a conservation farmer in Pemba district, whose maize crop survived a 22-day dry spell, Cousin believes climate smart agriculture could be a difference between success and failure in a climate changing world.

"If what we have seen at the lead farmer is anything to go by, then we have the solutions in our hands. All we need is to upscale these proven technologies to a wider community for them to reap the benefits as he is doing," Cousin told IPS.



Farmer Mweene with wife at the far left back. Credit: Friday Phiri/IPS

Farmer Mweene, 51, boasts of a modern house with iron sheets which he says has been made possible through increased productivity as a result of conservation agriculture—a climate smart agricultural technique that thrives on minimum tillage guaranteeing enough moisture for crops to survive severe dry spells.

Through the Conservation Agriculture Scaling Up (CASU) Project by FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture with financial support from the European Union, and now part of index insurance based rural resilience by WFP, Mweene has seen a positive change in his standard of living.

"Before this programme, my children were frequently sent back from

school for nonpayment of school fees, but not anymore. Through increased productivity, I earn more money and I have even managed to build a brick house with iron sheets,” said Mweene, a proud father of 23 children, most of whom have left for urban areas in search of economic opportunities.

Southern Province Agricultural Coordinator, Maxwell Choombe says the introduction of insurance for smallholders could hold the key for young people’s active participation in agriculture as a business.

“Over the years, youths see agriculture as a risky business but with insurance now, young people could be attracted into agriculture,”, said Choombe.

And Stanley Ndhlovu of WFP’s Zambia Rural Resilience Initiative (R4), agrees with this reasoning saying that the major challenge has been the higher risk associated with agriculture which is mainly anchored on rainfall, without which, failure is guaranteed.

“R4 is anchored on disaster risk. Over the years, we have realised that the risk in Zambia’s agriculture is growing especially with the weather changes and this is pushing youths away from the sector that has so much potential to lift them out of poverty,” Ndhlovu told IPS.

Ndhlovu explained that R4, which was launched last year, is about risk transfer developed, not only to mitigate against climate shocks but also help farmers adapt to the changing climate.

“Risk transfer is basically insurance in our case. We know that traditional insurance exists but is out of reach of small scale farmers because it is too expensive and most insurance players consider it too risk to support the smallholder sector. Our (WFP’s) intervention is therefore weather-based index insurance—insuring against rain and not the crop,” explained Ndhlovu.

According to Ndhlovu, the index insurance component has been developed in such a way that it uses, for now, satellite information to trigger a payout to farmers based on the rainfall received, focusing on critical periods in the rainfall calendar.

Coupled with prudent risk or credit to support investment and risk reserves or savings, WFP has prioritized weather index through the establishment of an automated weather station in the community and manual rain-gauge stations in selected areas for the farmers’ timely decision making.

Darton Nanja, the Southern Province Meteorological Officer told IPS that while national weather information dissemination remains centralized, the automated weather station is “ground-proofing of the weather index insurance for the farmers in the R4 project area and the surrounding community to receive a pay-out or not.”

With five hundred farmers already insured at a total value of over 77,000 dollars, calls for up-scaling may not be misplaced.

“For the past year, I have seen the positive effects of insurance for smallholder farmers. Apart from improved living standards, farmers now have confidence to get credit and I think this project is the best thing that could have happened to rural farmers,” said Angela Mushasho, the Agricultural Camp Extension Officer in the pilot project area.

While such projects are meant to build the medium and long term capacity of smallholders, the country’s top leadership is looking at the immediate food requirements that are likely to emanate from the poor rainfall showing being experienced.

“We are looking at possibilities of importing maize. But we are still in discussions with all concerned stakeholders, for example, replanting of early maturing varieties to salvage what we can before resorting to the last option of whether we might need to import maize,” said Republican President, Edgar Lungu.

Based on the rainfall pattern so far, the president’s emergency plan may not be far from reality considering that the Southern African country did not receive enough rainfall in the last rainy season.

The situation affected agricultural production, forcing government to provide relief food to at least 133, 000 households countrywide.

In a year when drought and the global El Niño weather event are having a severe impact particularly on smallholder farmers who account for most of the region’s agricultural production, Zambia and the entire Southern African region is bracing for tough times ahead.

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510 readings

[Energy from All Sources, a Game of Chance in Brazil](#)

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 15 February 2016 11:20

By [Mario Osava](#)



An industrial sugar and ethanol plant in Sertãozinho, in the southern Brazilian state of São Paulo. The sugar cane industry in Brazil has shrunk under the government of Dilma Rousseff, due to the gasoline subsidy, which dealt a blow to its competitor, ethanol. Credit: Mario Osava/IPS

RIO DE JANEIRO, Jan 28 2016 (IPS) - Brazil, which boasts that it has one of the cleanest energy mixes in the world, is now plagued by corruption, poor market conditions, and bad decisions – a near fatal combination.

Brazil's energy mix is made up of 42 percent renewable sources, three times the global average.

But the country also hopes to become a major oil exporter, thanks to the 2006 discovery of the “pre-salt” wells – huge reserves of crude under a thick layer of salt far below the surface, 300 km from the coast.

Megaprojects involving the construction of refineries and petrochemical plants, dozens of shipyards that mushroomed up and down the coast, and the dream of turning the new oil wealth into a better future lost their charm in the face of the corruption scandal that broke out in 2014, revealing the embezzlement of billions of dollars from the state oil giant Petrobras.

Nearly 200 people are facing charges in the scandal for paying or receiving kickbacks for inflated contracts. Around 50 of them are politicians, most of them still active members of Congress.

The heads of the country's biggest construction companies were arrested, which dealt a blow to the real estate market and major infrastructure works nationwide.

The investigations took on momentum when over 30 of those facing prosecution struck plea bargain deals, agreeing to cooperate in exchange for shorter sentences.

The scandal is one of the main elements in the economic and political crisis shaking the country, which saw an estimated drop in GDP of more than three percent in 2015, rising inflation, a dangerously high fiscal deficit, a threat of impeachment hanging over President Dilma Rousseff and chaos in parliament.

Besides the corruption scandal, Petrobras has been hit hard by the collapse of oil prices, which has threatened its investment in the pre-salt reserves, and by the losses it accumulated during years of government fuel-price controls.

The government took advantage of Petrobras' monopoly on refining to curb inflation by means of price controls, mainly for gasoline.

But the oil company scandal, which broke out after the October 2014 elections in which Rousseff was reelected, fuelled the growth of inflation, to over 10 percent today.

With Petrobras in financial crisis and selling off assets to pay down its debt, none of the four planned refineries has been completed according to plan. The only one that was finished is operating at only half of the planned capacity.

Most of the shipyards, which were to supply the oil drilling rigs, offshore platforms and tankers involved in the production of pre-salt oil, have gone under, and the government's plans to build a strong naval industry have floundered.

The priority put on oil production, to the detriment of the fight against climate change, along with subsidized gasoline prices dealt a major blow to ethanol, which was enjoying a new boom since the emergence in 2003 of the flexible fuel vehicle, specially designed to run on gasoline or ethanol or a blend of the two.

The innovative new technology revived consumer confidence in ethanol, which had been undermined in the previous decade due to supply shortages. With the flex-fuel cars, consumers no longer had to depend on one kind of fuel and could choose whichever was cheaper at any given time.

The use of ethanol, which is consumed in nearly the same quantities as gasoline in Brazil, broke the monopoly of fossil fuels, making a decisive contribution to the rise in the use of renewable energies.

But gasoline price subsidies drove many ethanol plants into bankruptcy and led to the sale of one-third of the sugarcane industry to foreign investors. Many local companies, facing financial disaster, sold their sugar mills and distilleries to transnational corporations like Bunge, Cargill, Louis Dreyfus and Tereos.

Brazil has practically given up on the idea of creating an international

market for ethanol, after initially encouraging consumption and production of the biofuel made from sugarcane. Former president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (2003-2010) was very active in this campaign, unlike his successor Rousseff.



Part of what will be the Belo Monte hydroelectric plant's turbine room in the northern Brazilian state of Pará – a mega-project which is 80 percent complete and is set to be finished in 2019. Credit: Mario Osava/IPS

Hydroelectricity

Another decisive factor in achieving a more renewables-heavy energy mix is the predominance of hydroelectricity in the generation of electric power. In recent years, wind power has grown fast, and the use of biomass from sugarcane bagasse has also expanded, although to a lesser extent.

But the construction of giant hydro-power dams in the Amazon jungle, such as Belo Monte on the Xingú River, has drawn strong opposition from indigenous communities and environmentalists, which, along with legal action by the public prosecutor's office, has brought work on Belo Monte to a halt dozens of times.

As a result, work on the dam has been delayed by over a year. One of the latest legal rulings suspended the plant's operating permit, and could block the filling of the reservoirs, which was to start in March

this year.

When the plant comes fully onstream in 2019, Belo Monte will have an installed capacity of 11,233 MW. But during the dry season, when water levels in the river are low, it will generate almost no electric power. The flow of water in the Xingú River varies drastically, and the reservoir will not store up enough water to fuel the turbines during the dry months.

The dam has come under harsh criticism, even from advocates of hydro-power, such as physicist José Goldemberg, a world-renowned expert on energy.

The controversy surrounding Belo Monte threatens the government's plans for the Tapajós River, to the west of the Xingú River – the new hydroelectric frontier in the Amazon. For the last two years, the Rousseff administration has been trying to find investors to build and operate the São Luiz del Tapajós dam, which would generate 8,040 MW of electricity.

The presence of the Munduruku indigenous community along that stretch of the river and in the area of the São Luiz dam has stood in the way of the environmental licensing process.

The diversity of sources in Brazil's energy mix, lessons learned from earlier negative experiences, and the complexity of the integrated national grid make decisions on energy almost a game of chance in this country.

Hydroelectric dams built in the Amazon rainforest in the 1980s, like Tucuruí and Balbina, caused environmental and social disasters that tarnished the reputation of hydropower. Belo Monte later threw up new hurdles to the development of this source of energy.

Another alternative source, nuclear energy, also brought negative experiences. Completion of the country's second nuclear plant, still under construction in Angra dos Reis, 170 km from Rio de Janeiro, has long been delayed.

It formed part of a series of eight nuclear power plants that the military decided to build, during the 1964-1985 dictatorship, signing an agreement in 1975 with Germany, which was to provide technology and equipment.

Economic crisis brought the programme to a halt in the 1980s. One of the plants was completed in 2000 and the other is still being built, because the equipment had already been imported over 30 years ago. The final cost overruns will be enormous.

For the government and the different sectors involved in policy-making in the energy industry, giving up hydropower is unthinkable.

But the advances made in wind power, new energy storage technologies, and especially the reduction of costs in the production

of solar power increase the risk of making large hydro-power dams, which are built to operate for over a hundred years, obsolete.

Edited by Estrella Gutiérrez/Translated by Stephanie Wildes

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[Tackling Climate Change in the Caribbean: Natural Solutions to a Human Induced Problem](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 15 February 2016 11:15

By [Jessica Faieta](#)

Jessica Faieta is United Nations Assistant Secretary General and UNDP Regional Director for [Latin America and the Caribbean](#) | [@JessicaFaieta](#) [@UNDPLAC](#)



SANCHEZ, Petite Martinique. Climate-proofing the tiny island of Petite Martinique includes a sea revetment 140 metres long to protect critical coastal infrastructure from erosion. Credit: Tecla Fontenad/IPS

UNITED NATIONS, Feb 2 2016 (IPS) - The world is still celebrating the [Paris Agreement on Climate Change](#), the main outcome of the

21st [Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change](#). Its ambitions are unprecedented: not only has the world committed to limit the increase of temperature to “well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels,” it has also agreed to pursue efforts to “limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C.”

This achievement should be celebrated, especially by [Small Island Development States \(SIDS\)](#), a 41-nation group—nearly half of them in the Caribbean—that has been advocating for increased ambition on climate change for nearly a quarter century.

SIDS are even more vulnerable to climate change impacts—and risk losing more. Global warming has very high associated damages and costs to families, communities and entire countries, including their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) according to the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#).

What does this mean for the Caribbean? Climate change is recognized as one of the most serious challenges to the Caribbean. With the likelihood that climate change will exacerbate the frequency and intensity of the yearly hurricane season, comprehensive measures are needed to protect at-risk communities.

Moreover, scenarios based on moderate curbing of greenhouse gas emissions reveal that surface temperature would increase between 1.2 and 2.3 °C across the Caribbean in this century. In turn, rainfall is expected to decrease about 5 to 6 percent. As a result, it will be the only insular region in the world to experience a decrease in water availability in the future.

The combined impact of higher temperatures and less water would likely result in longer dry periods and increased frequency of droughts, which threaten agriculture, livelihoods, sanitation and ecosystems.

Perhaps the most dangerous hazard is sea level rise. The sea level may rise up to 0.6 meters in the Caribbean by the end of the century, according to the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#). This could actually flood low-lying areas, posing huge threats, particularly to the smallest islands, and impacting human settlements and infrastructure in coastal zones. It also poses serious threats to tourism, a crucial sector for Caribbean economies: up to 60 percent of current resorts lie around the coast and these would be greatly damaged by sea level increase.

Sea level rise also risks saline water penetrating into freshwater aquifers, threatening crucial water resources for agriculture, tourism and human consumption, unless expensive treatments operations are put into place.

In light of these prospects, adapting to climate change becomes an urgent necessity for SIDS—including in the Caribbean. It is therefore not surprising that all Caribbean countries have submitted a section

on adaptation within their Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs), which are the voluntary commitments that pave the way for the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

In their INDCs, Caribbean countries overwhelmingly highlight the conservation of water resources and the protection of coastal areas as their main worries. Most of them also consider adaptation initiatives in the economic and productive sectors, mainly agriculture, fisheries, tourism and forestry.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been supporting Caribbean countries in their adaptation efforts for many years now, through environmental, energy-related and risk reduction projects, among others.

This week we launched a new partnership with the Government of Japan, the US\$15 million Japan-Caribbean Climate Change Partnership (J-CCCP), in line with the [Paris Agreement on Climate Change](#). The initiative will be implemented in eight Caribbean countries: Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, benefiting an estimated 200,000 women and men in 50 communities.

It will set out a road-map to mitigate and adapt to climate change, in line with countries' long-term strategies, helping put in practice Caribbean countries' actions and policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change. It will also boost access to sustainable energy and help reduce fossil fuel imports and dependence, setting the region on a low-emission development path, while addressing critical balance of payments constraints.

When considering adaptation measures to the different impacts of climate change there are multiple options. Some rely on infrastructure, such as dikes to control sea level rise, but this can be particularly expensive for SIDS, where the ratio of coastal area to land mass is very high.

In this context, ecosystem-based adaptation activities are much more cost-effective, and, in countries with diverse developmental priorities and where financial resources are limited, they become an attractive alternative. This means healthy, well-functioning ecosystems to boost natural resilience to the adverse impacts of climate change, reducing people's vulnerabilities as well.

UNDP, in partnership with national and local governments in the Caribbean, has been championing ecosystem-based adaptation and risk reduction with very rewarding results.

For example, the Government of Cuba partnered with [UNDP](#), scientific institutes and forestry enterprises to restore mangrove forests along 84 km of the country's southern shore to slow down saline intrusion from the sea level rise and reduce disaster risks, as the mangrove acts as a protective barrier against hurricanes.

In Grenada, in coordination with the Government and the German International Cooperation Agency, we supported the establishment of a Community Climate Change Adaptation Fund, a small grants mechanism, to provide opportunities to communities to cope with the effects of climate change and extreme weather conditions. We have engaged with local stakeholders to develop climate smart agricultural projects, and climate resilient fisheries, among other activities in the tourism and water resources sectors.

UNDP's support is directed to balance social and economic development with environmental protection, directly benefiting communities. Our approach is necessarily aligned with the recently approved [2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and its associated Sustainable Development Goals](#), delivering on protecting ecosystems and natural resources, promoting food security and sanitation, while also helping reduce poverty and promoting sustainable economic growth.

While there is significant potential for climate change adaptation in SIDS, it will require additional external resources, technologies and strengthening of local capacities. In UNDP we are ideally placed to continue working hand-in-hand with Caribbean countries as they implement their INDCs and find their own solutions to climate-change adaptation, while also sharing knowledge and experiences within the region and beyond.

326 readings

[Floods Pose Challenge for South American Integration](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 15 February 2016 11:08

By [Fabiana Frayssinet](#)



In Uruguay 22,414 people have been displaced by the floods that have affected the countries of the Mercosur trade bloc. Credit: Sistema Nacional de Emergencias (Sinae)

BUENOS AIRES, Jan 4 2016 (IPS) - The flooding that has affected four South American countries has underscored the need for an integrated approach to addressing the causes and effects of climate change.

Above and beyond joint emergency response plans, global warming poses common problems like deforestation and the management of shared rivers.

Some 180,000 people have been evacuated since the worst flooding in years hit the region over the year-end holidays.

The floods caused when the Paraná, Paraguay and Uruguay rivers overflowed their banks did not respect the borders between the nations of the Mercosur (Southern Common Market) bloc, and have brought them together in a shared environmental catastrophe.

The same scenes of flooded streets, rescue teams and evacuation centres have filled the news from the provinces of northeast Argentina, cities in northern Uruguay and southern Brazil, and riverbank communities near the capital of Paraguay.

“There is indifference towards environmental problems in the Mercosur. So much so that a Mercosur summit was held just recently, and this issue, which was a tragedy foretold, was not even addressed.” -- Enrique Viale

“It is difficult to avoid associating the severity of the floods with the modifications that have to do with climate change,” said Jorge Taiana, vice president of Parlasur, the parliamentary institution of the Mercosur bloc, which is made up of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela.

“A serious joint response by the region is absolutely essential with respect to the two major strategies for confronting climate change, mitigation and adaptation to its effects,” Taiana, a lawmaker from Argentina’s “Front for Victory”, the left-leaning faction of the Justicialista (Peronist) Party, now in the opposition, told IPS.

“There is indifference towards environmental problems in the Mercosur,” Enrique Viale, president of the Argentine Association of Environmentalist Lawyers, told IPS. “So much so that a Mercosur summit was held just recently, and this issue, which was a tragedy foretold, was not even addressed.”

A number of experts have blamed the heavy rainfall on the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO), a cyclical climate phenomenon that affects weather patterns around the world.

The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), a specialized United Nations agency, had forecast that its effects would be among the strongest seen since 1950.

On Dec. 24 the U.N. General Assembly urged member states to draw up national and regional strategies to address El Niño’s socioeconomic and environmental impacts, suggesting the implementation of early warning systems and the adoption of prevention, mitigation and damage control measures.

Viale, however, said: “The El Niño phenomenon was announced, but it isn’t the only cause.”

“The four countries (affected by the severe flooding) are the world’s biggest soy producers, along with the United States. It is not just by chance that the map of deforestation caused by soy production coincides with the map of the flooding,” he said.

The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) reported that Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina were among the 10 countries with the highest levels of deforestation in the last 25 years. Between 1990 and 2015, Argentina lost more than 7.6 million hectares of forest.

In the Misionera or Paranaense jungle, also known as the Mata Atlantica, through which the Uruguay, Paraná and Iguazú rivers run, only seven percent of the original forest cover remains in Argentina, while this ecosystem in Paraguay and Brazil has been almost completely destroyed.

Greenpeace campaign coordinator in Argentina Hernán Giardini said

in a statement that “Forests and jungles, besides concentrating considerable biodiversity, play a critical role in climate regulation, maintenance of water sources and flows and soil conservation.

“They are our natural sponge and protective umbrella. When we lose forests we become more vulnerable to heavy rains and run a serious risk of flooding,” the statement by the global environmental watchdog added.

Viale said: “This, added to direct seeding, the method used to plant transgenic soy, has turned the fields into veritable green deserts without any capacity for absorbing water.”

Soy production, which has boomed since 1990, is seen as essential to these South American economies, as soy is one of their chief export products.

As it expanded, soy also replaced other traditional crops, while pushing stock-breeding into marginal areas like jungles and forests.

Argentine environmentalist Jorge Daneri said “The expansion of the agricultural frontier, driven in particular by the expansion of genetically modified soy monoculture, the enormous deforestation of the Paranaense jungle, and the construction of dams on a giant scale by Brazil on the Paraná, Iguazú and Uruguay rivers – with many more under construction or planned – has greatly aggravated the environmental crisis throughout (South America’s) Southern Cone region.”

To address what he described as “regional ecocide,” Daneri, with the Argentine organization “M’Biguá, Ciudadanía y Justicia Ambiental” (M’Biguá, Citizenship and Environmental Justice), called for the river basin committees of the Paraná, Uruguay and Paraguay rivers to work together.

“There isn’t a single river basin committee that includes the three Argentine provinces in question and the national state, and there is only CARU (the Uruguay River Administrative Commission), which includes Argentina and Uruguay, but not Brazil,” he said.

“This is a serious problem, because of the total lack of coordination,” he said. “We see the river basin committee as the main institution that should be focused on here. It has been clearly demonstrated that Mercosur has failed to play a serious role coordinating proactive, sustainable policies.”

Daneri stressed the urgent need for “a new environmental management and zoning system, and the reestablishment of biological corridors, as well as a system to recuperate riverbank areas through reforestation using native species of trees, and to restore native forests.”

He also proposed a reorganisation of zoning plans in every province, together with the national authorities, as well as environmental

assessments of every river basin, at a regional level.

In the short term, Taiana suggested the Parlasur help coordinate contingency plans for those affected by the flooding, and in the longer term, he said local governments should study together construction projects and other initiatives financed by Mercosur.

He pointed out that the bloc has a Structural Convergence Fund to finance projects to improve infrastructure and boost the competitiveness and social development of the member countries.

“The most important aspect of these non-reimbursable funds that facilitate integration is that they acknowledge the asymmetries between member countries,” he said.

Taiana said the fund, of some 100 million dollars a year, could be invested in projects financed in border areas to mitigate or prevent flooding, like dikes or diversion channels.

“It seems to me that there are many common issues that are urgent, where the Mercosur as a whole still has a lot to do,” he said.

Daneri said “The projects needed are not cement works, they are not mega-dams or mega-dikes. It’s not about channelizing rivers. Only making efforts during an emergency, or for emergencies, is a mistake.”

“Part of meeting this challenge is working towards a transition to leave the current oversimplified model of monoculture behind and moving in the direction of agro-ecology. The causes need to be addressed,” he added.

“The causes lie in a productive model that does not depend on nature’s cycles but on the cycles of the market, which is devastating for ecosystems,” he said.

Related IPS Articles

- [Gated Communities on the Water Aggravate Flooding in Argentina](#)
- [Brazilian Dams Accused of Aggravating Floods in Bolivia](#)
- [Climate Change Threatens Flavour of Argentine Wine](#)

[BC Feedback on new Climate Plan](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Dragonslayer

Wednesday, 10 February 2016 16:21

BC is seeking some feedback on a new climate plan. You can submit your 2 cents worth at

www.interceptum.com/s/en/ClimateActionLeadership-Winter2015-16

Here is mine:

1. Before anything the government must renegotiate or withdraw from international agreements that restrict Canada from having domain over Canada. Some of the details of these agreements restrict Canada from having domain over its Carbon emissions.

2. An overall Carbon Cap must be calculated and implemented. Taxes and other forms of compensation does not address the problem. These are seen as just the cost of doing business as usual.

3. According to Mark Carney, we may need to leave over 66% of current fossil fuel extraction in the ground. If you are serious, then Caps at the source is the only practical solution. Yes, there are other places the calculation can be applied but it requires the least number of control points to effect the change when it is done near or at the source of extraction. For example, regulations on fuel emissions become unnecessary when there is a ration on the amount of fossil fuel that can be used. "Necessity is the mother of invention."

4. I understand that rationing is a hard pill to swallow but it will become easier as more clean wind, solar, geothermal, hydro power comes online. I am not suggesting reducing 60-80% extraction instantly but at a gradual rate per year that will see us leaving the correct amount in the ground within 10 yrs.

5. Other government levels need to have their regulations, for example "zoning" and "building codes" expanded and altered to encourage clean and efficient energy use.

Dragonslayer.

Last Updated on Friday, 12 February 2016 22:35

657 readings

[Two, Three... Many Flint's America's Coast-to-Coast Toxic Crisis](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 09 February 2016 08:05

By [David Rosner](#) and [Gerald Markowitz](#)

“I know if I was a parent up there, I would be beside myself if my kids’ health could be at risk,” said President Obama on a [recent trip](#) to Michigan. “Up there” was Flint, a rusting industrial city in the grip of a “water crisis” brought on by a government austerity scheme. To save a couple of million dollars, that city switched its source of water from Lake Huron to the Flint River, a long-time industrial dumping ground for the toxic industries that had once made their home along its banks. Now, the city is enveloped in a public health emergency, with elevated levels of lead in its water supply and in the blood of its children.

The price tag for replacing the lead pipes that contaminated its drinking water, thanks to the corrosive toxins found in the Flint River, is now [estimated](#) at up to \$1.5 billion. No one knows where that money will come from or when it will arrive. In the meantime, the cost to the children of Flint has been and will be incalculable. As little as a few specks of lead in the water children drink or in flakes of paint that come off the walls of old houses and are ingested can change the course of a life. The amount of lead dust that covers a thumbnail is enough to send a child into a coma or into

convulsions leading to death. It takes less than a tenth of that amount to cause IQ loss, hearing loss, or behavioral problems like attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and dyslexia. The [Centers for Disease Control](#) (CDC), the government agency responsible for tracking and protecting the nation's health, says simply, "No safe blood lead level in children has been identified."

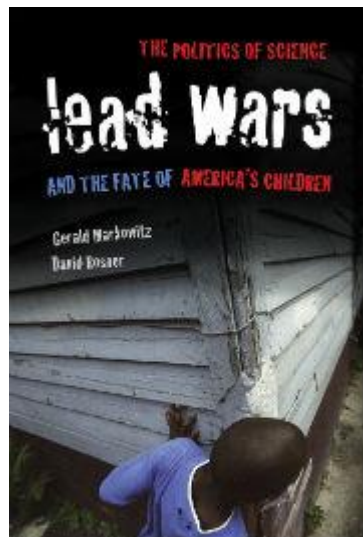
President Obama would have good reason to worry if his kids lived in Flint. But the city's children are hardly the only ones threatened by this [public health crisis](#). There's a lead crisis for children in [Baltimore,](#) [Maryland,](#) [Herculaneum, Missouri,](#) [Sebring, Ohio,](#) and even the nation's capital, [Washington, D.C.](#), and that's just to begin a list. State reports [suggest](#), for instance, that "18 cities in Pennsylvania and 11 in New Jersey may have an even higher share of children with dangerously elevated levels of lead than does Flint." Today, scientists agree that there is no safe level of lead for children and at least half of American children have some of this neurotoxin in their [blood](#). The CDC is especially concerned about the more than 500,000 American children who have substantial amounts of lead in their bodies. Over the past century, an untold number have had their IQs reduced, their school performances limited, their behaviors altered, and their neurological development [undermined](#). From coast to coast, from the Sun Belt to the Rust Belt, children have been and continue to be imperiled by a century of industrial production, commercial gluttony, and abandonment by the local, state, and federal governments that should have protected them. Unlike in Flint, the "crisis" seldom comes to public attention.

Two, Three... Many Flints

In Flint, the origins of the current crisis lay in the history of auto giant General Motors (GM) and its rise in the middle decades of the

twentieth century to the status of the world' s largest corporation. GM' s Buick plant alone once occupied "an area almost a mile and a half long and half a mile wide," according to the *Chicago Tribune*, and several Chevrolet and other GM plants literally covered the waterfront of "this automotive city." Into the Flint River went the toxic wastes of factories large and small, which once supplied batteries, paints, solders, glass, fabrics, oils, lubricating fluids, and a multitude of other materials that made up the modern car. In these plants strung out along the banks of the Flint and Saginaw rivers and their detritus lay the origins of the present public health emergency.

The crisis that attracted President Obama' s attention is certainly horrifying, but the children of Flint have been poisoned in one way or another for at least 80 years. Three generations of those children living around Chevrolet Avenue in the old industrial heart of the city experienced an environment filled with heavy metal toxins that cause neurological conditions in them and cardiovascular problems in adults.



Buy the book

As Michael Moore documented in his film Roger and Me, GM abandoned Flint in a

vain attempt to stave off financial disaster. Having sucked its people dry, the company ditched the city, leaving it to deal with a polluted hell without the means to do so. Like other industrial cities that have suffered this kind of abandonment, Flint's population is majority African American and Latino, and has a disproportionate number of families living below the poverty line. Of its 100,000 residents, 65% are African American and Latino and 42% are mired in poverty.

The president should be worried about Flint's children and local, state, and federal authorities need to fix the pipes, sewers, and water supply of the city. Technically, this is a feasible, if expensive, proposition. It's already clear, however, that the political will is just not there even for this one community. Gina McCarthy, the Environmental Protection Agency's administrator, has refused to provide Flint's residents with even a prospective timetable for replacing their pipes and making their water safe. There is, however, a far graver problem that is even less easy to fix: the mix of racism and corporate greed that have put lead and other pollutants into millions of homes in the United States. The scores of endangered kids in Flint are just the tip of a vast, toxic iceberg. Even Baltimore, which first identified its lead poisoning epidemic in the 1930s, still faces a crisis, especially in largely African American communities, when it comes to the lead paint in its older housing stock.

Just this month, Maryland's secretary of housing, community, and development, Kenneth C. Holt, dismissed the never-ending lead crisis in Baltimore by callously suggesting that it might all be a shuck. A mother, he said, might fake such poisoning by putting "a lead fishing weight in her child's mouth [and] then take the child in for testing." Such a tactic, he indicated,

without any kind of proof, was aimed at making landlords “liable for providing the child with [better] housing.” Unfortunately, the attitudes of Holt and Governor Rick Snyder of Michigan have proven all too typical of the ways in which America’s civic and state leaders have tended to ignore, dismiss, or simply deny the real suffering of children, especially those who are black and Latino, when it comes to lead and other toxic chemicals.

There is, in fact, a grim broader history of lead poisoning in America. It was probably the most widely dispersed environmental toxin that affected children in this country. In part, this was because, for decades during the middle of the twentieth century, it was marketed as an essential ingredient in industrial society, something without which none of us could get along comfortably. Those toxic pipes in Flint are hardly the only, or even the primary, source of danger to children left over from that era.

In the 1920s, tetraethyl lead was introduced as an additive for gasoline. It was lauded at the time as a “gift of God” by a representative of the Ethyl Corporation, a creation of GM, Standard Oil, and Dupont, the companies that invented, produced, and marketed the stuff. Despite warnings that this industrial toxin might pollute the planet, which it did, almost three-quarters of a century would pass before it was removed from gasoline in the United States. During that time, spewed out of the tailpipes of hundreds of millions of cars and trucks, it tainted the soil that children played in and was tracked onto floors that toddlers touched. Banned from use in the 1980s, it still lurks in the environment today.

Meanwhile, homes across the country were tainted by lead in quite a different way. Lead carbonate, a white powder, was mixed with linseed oil to create the paint that was used in the nation’s homes, hospitals, schools, and other buildings

until 1978. Though its power to harm and even kill children who sucked on lead-painted windowsills, toys, cribs, and woodwork had long been known, it was only in that year that the federal government banned its use in household paints.

Hundreds of tons of the lead in paint that covered the walls of houses, apartment buildings, and workplaces across the United States remains in place almost four decades later, especially in poorer neighborhoods where millions of African American and Latino children currently live. Right now, most middle class white families feel relatively immune from the dangers of lead, although the gentrification of old neighborhoods and the renovation of old homes can still expose their children to dangerous levels of lead dust from the old paint on those walls. However, economically and politically vulnerable black and Hispanic children, many of whom inhabit dilapidated older housing, still suffer disproportionately from the devastating effects of the toxin. This is the meaning of institutional racism in action today. As with the water flowing into homes from the pipes of Flint's water system, so the walls of its apartment complexes, not to mention those in poor neighborhoods of Detroit, Baltimore, Washington, and virtually every other older urban center in the country, continue to poison children exposed to lead-polluted dust, chips, soil, and air.

Over the course of the past century, tens of millions of children have been poisoned by lead and millions more remain in danger of it today. Add to this the risks these same children face from industrial toxins like mercury, asbestos, and polychlorinated biphenyls (better known as PCBs) and you have an ongoing recipe for a Flint-like disaster but on a national scale.

In truth, the United States has scores of "Flints" awaiting their moments. Think of

them as ticking toxic time bombs -- just an austerity scheme or some official's poor decision away from a public health disaster. Given this, it's remarkable, even in the wake of Flint, how little attention or publicity such threats receive. Not surprisingly, then, there seems to be virtually no political will to ensure that future generations of children will not suffer the same fate as those in Flint.

The Future of America's Toxic Past

A series of decisions by state and local officials turned Flint's chronic post-industrial crisis into a total public health disaster. If clueless, corrupt, or heartless government officials get all the blame for this (and blame they do deserve), the larger point will unfortunately be missed -- that there are many post-industrial Flints, many other hidden tragedies affecting America's children that await their moments in the news. Treat Flint as an anomaly and you condemn families nationwide to bear the damage to their children alone, abandoned by a society unwilling to invest in cleaning up a century of industrial pollution, or even to acknowledge the injustice involved.

Flint may be years away from a solution to its current crisis, but in a few cities elsewhere in the country there is at least a modicum of hope when it comes to developing ways to begin to address this country's poisonous past. In California, for example, 10 cities and counties, including San Francisco, San Diego, Los Angeles, and Oakland, have successfully sued and won an initial judgment against three lead pigment manufacturers for \$1.15 billion. That money will be invested in removing lead paint from the walls of homes in these cities. If this judgment is upheld on appeal, it would be an unprecedented and pathbreaking victory, since it would force a polluting industry to clean up the mess it

created and from which it profited.

There have been other partial victories, too. In Herculaneum, Missouri, for instance, where half the children within a mile of the nation's largest lead smelter suffered lead poisoning, jurors returned a \$320 million verdict against Fluor Corporation, one of the world's largest construction and engineering firms. That verdict is also on appeal, while the company has moved its smelter to Peru where whole new populations are undoubtedly being poisoned.

President Obama hit the nail on the head with his recent comments on Flint, but he also missed the larger point. There he was just a few dozen miles from that city's damaged water system when he spoke in Detroit, another symbol of corporate abandonment with its own grim toxic legacy. Thousands of homes in the Motor City, the former capital of the auto industry, are still lead paint disaster areas. Perhaps it's time to widen the canvas when it comes to the poisoning of America's children and face the terrible human toll caused by "the American century."

David Rosner and Gerald Markowitz, TomDispatch regulars, are co-authors and co-editors of seven books and 85 articles on a variety of industrial and occupational hazards, including Deceit and Denial: The Deadly Politics of Industrial Pollution and, most recently, Lead Wars: The Politics of Science and the Fate of America's Children. Rosner is a professor of sociomedical sciences and history at Columbia University and co-director of the Center for the History of Public Health at Columbia's Mailman School of Public Health. Markowitz is a professor of history at John Jay College and the Graduate Center, City University of New York. Both have been awarded a certificate of appreciation by the United States Senate through the office of Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, who has recognized the importance of their work on lead and

industrial poisoning.

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475 readings

[All-Native Basketball champs cry foul over LNG sponsors](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 08 February 2016 18:53

Reigning champs fear they could be kicked out of tournament for public anti-LNG stance

By Betsy Trumpener, [CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 05, 2016 3:15 PM PT Last Updated: Feb 05, 2016 3:44 PM PT

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/lng-has-no-place-at-native-bball-tourney-says-haida-team-1.3435783A>

champion Haida sports team is crying foul over [liquefied natural gas \(LNG\) sponsorship of the All Native Basketball Tournament](#). And the Skidegate Saints fear they'll be turfed from play for pushing their anti-LNG message.

But it's a risk Saint's point guard Desi Collinson is willing to take.

"[LNG sponsorship] is tarnishing our sacred tournament," said

Desi Collinson, a frequent tournament MVP and co-captain of the reigning four-time champion Saints.

Collinson says his team considered pulling out of the tournament entirely. But the defending champions decided to compete after consulting Haida elders.

"We're gonna make it more than a basketball tournament and spread information and educate people," Collinson told CBC.

Off the court, the Saints plan to wear anti-LNG T-shirts and hand out anti-LNG pamphlets and buttons to the hundreds of indigenous players from coastal B.C. and Alaska and the thousands of fans in the stands.

- [Full CBC coverage: B.C.LNG](#)

But tournament organizers say they'll stop that full court press.

"No one's going to be doing that kind of stuff here," countered Peter Haugen, board president for the All Native Basketball Tournament. "Someone can do whatever they want outside the building but inside the gymnasium and the arena ... we've always stopped it. We're a basketball tournament, right? We're not a political venue."

"So many teams and First Nations are against these [LNG] companies and tankers coming through our waters," says Collinson. "It takes certain people to stand up and say no,"

'LNG is going to take away from our culture'

This year, more than half the tournament's top sponsors are LNG companies, proposing [major liquified natural gas projects while investing in gas fracking in northern B.C.](#)

Some coastal First Nations are partners in LNG development or have signed benefit agreements. But B.C.'s LNG plans have also sparked opposition over concerns about [upstream gas fracking](#) and the construction of [LNG facilities in sensitive coastal habitats](#).

Skidegate Saints point guard Desi Collinson [right] protesting against oil pipelines on the basketball court, with David Suzuki, at an earlier game. (Facebook)

"I'm concerned about how these mega -projects come in to our beautiful, pristine coast. It's gonna be a takeover. I'm concerned about the coast, about my home," said Collinson. "LNG is

gonna take away from our culture: how we eat, how we harvest on the ocean."

'They don't have to worry about the bloody politics'

"All these chiefs and people elected to band council have to deal politics their whole year," said Haugen. "This is one week where they don't have to worry about the bloody politics and just enjoy the games."

Collinson disagreed, stating the tournament started as a way to get around the ban on pot-latches.

"The tournament was created basically on politics," he said "We came together to share culture and friendship."

Haugen also points out that while the Haida team may oppose LNG, the tournament is taking place on Tsimshian territory, where chiefs have approved LNG projects.

"They can say what they want on Haida territory, but this is Tsimshian territory. The Tsimshian have all signed on to LNG."

A spokesman for Pacific NorthWest LNG says his company was invited by the organizers of the Prince Rupert tournament to continue a sponsorship they've maintained since 2013.

"This year, Pacific NorthWest LNG requested that our corporate branding not be displayed on any materials associated with the tournament — despite our contribution," said company spokesman Spencer Sproule.

"We wanted the Prince Rupert All Native Basketball Tournament to be about the players, coaches and families that look forward to this tournament every year and not on the opinions of some regarding our project."

Haugen says no decisions have been made about how to deal with the Saints' political plans.

The tournament starts Sunday in Prince Rupert, B.C.

Last Updated on Tuesday, 09 February 2016 15:57

510 readings

[Alberta failing aboriginals in the oilsands area: unreleased report](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 07 February 2016 20:56

By Bob Weber THE CANADIAN PRESS

<http://www.fortmcmurraytoday.com/2016/02/02/alberta-failing-aboriginals-in-the-oilsands-area-unreleased-report>

Tuesday, February 2, 2016 2:05:46 MST PM



A dump truck works near the Syncrude oil sands extraction facility near the town of Fort McMurray, Alberta on Sunday June 1, 2014. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Jason Franson

EDMONTON -- The Alberta government's attempt to balance competing interests in the oil-sands region has failed to protect aboriginal rights, lands and health from industrial development, says an unreleased report.

Instead, the document concludes the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan, which came into force in 2012, has been used by both industry and government to erode traditional land use in favour of economic interests.

"What Alberta said it would do and what it actually did are very different things," says the review panel report, obtained by The Canadian Press.

A government-appointed panel was struck in 2014 under a provision in provincial law after six area First Nations complained that the land use plan violated their treaty rights.

The inquiry report has been complete since July, but has never been

released. Its findings are damning.

The panel agrees with the Athabasca Chipewyan that the plan doesn't protect aboriginal culture. It concurred with the Mikisew Cree that business was given priority over their constitutional rights.

The report says the Cold Lake First Nation is right that the plan creates new conservation areas without reference to traditional use. It finds justified Fort McKay's concerns that the plan has few protection measures and no thresholds for action.

It upheld the Onion Lake Cree's contention that the plan has no measures to manage traditional land use.

And it agrees with Chipewyan Prairie Dene that the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan has been turned against the groups it was meant to protect, eroding existing traditional use rights and blocking the creation of new areas for such use.

The panel discarded government arguments -- made by the previous Progressive Conservative administration -- that such issues were beyond the review's jurisdiction.

"The review panel found that the Alberta argument ... reduced the review panel's role to a point approaching absurdity," it said.

The panel made several recommendations.

It's "critical" that a health study on contaminants in the Athabasca River be conducted as soon as possible, it said. A baseline human-health study should also be conducted.

As well, Alberta should stop examining development on a project-by-project basis.

"The regulatory regime must look at the overall proliferation of resource development projects and the impact of such major developments on the people living in that area," the panel said.

The report should raise questions about the oilsands projects that have been approved since the plan came into force, said Eriel Deranger, spokeswoman for the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation.

"The government knew very well that the First Nations were in the process of challenging (the plan) and yet it was still used as a piece of policy to justify projects. It puts into question any projects now that may be given more leeway because they fall into a region designated as a resource priority zone."

Martin Olszynski, a University of Calgary professor of resource law, said the report "validates almost entirely First Nations concerns."

He said it also demonstrates critics were right that the government's

plan was poorly implemented and almost entirely opaque.

"When there are exceedances in air or whatever, it's not clear at all what's going on in government. We still don't have that transparency around how the ambient environment is being managed."

Environment Minister Shannon Phillips acknowledged the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan needs work, but said her government won't start over.

"There are a lot of babies in this particular bathwater and it is not in the public interest to completely scrap the process. What is in the public interest is to hear loud and clear what is said about the relationship with indigenous people and work together collaboratively in order to improve on those very clear shortcomings."

Phillips said there are still ways First Nations can be involved in already approved projects to mitigate their concerns. She added the government will consider the health and environmental studies called for in the report once it is tabled in cabinet.

"These are difficult files," she said.

"There's a lot of things we've inherited as a government. Are we particularly pleased at this state of affairs? No."

Last Updated on Sunday, 07 February 2016 21:04

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[Ottawa to face court challenge over Saudi arms deal](#)



[Blogs](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 06 February 2016 21:27

BY [STEVEN CHASE](#)

OTTAWA — The Globe and Mail

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/ottawa-to-face-court-challenge-over-saudi-arms-deal/article28631497/>

Friday, Feb. 05, 2016



ir strikes on Yemeni civilians has been cited as an example of the Saudis' disre
 Opponents of Canada's \$15-billion arms deal with Saudi Arabia are taking
 Ottawa to court in an attempt to block shipments of the combat vehicles, a
 move that could force the governing Liberals to explain how they justify the sale
 to a human-rights pariah under weapon-export restrictions.

Daniel Turp, a professor of international and constitutional law at the University
 of Montreal, is leading the effort, supported by students and a Montreal law firm
 with a record of class-action work and anti-tobacco litigation.

"Operation Armoured Rights"
 The implementation of a legal challenge to Canada's arms export
 Saudi Arabia's accession to the Treaty of T... on the... of Montreal... and...
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MEDIA

[PDF: Operation Armoured Rights - Open Letter](#)

He will announce the legal challenge on Saturday and intends to file it with the
 Federal Court within three weeks.

Mr. Turp and his group are calling on critics of the deal across the country to
 rally behind their challenge, which they are calling Operation Armoured Rights,
 pointing to how poorly Saudi Arabia treats its own citizens and the civilian
 carnage of the Saudi-led bombing campaign in Yemen.

There is evidence Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is out of step with the majority
 of Canadians by refusing to cancel the deal. The manufacturer, General
 Dynamics Land Systems in London, Ont., is still gathering material for
 production.

A poll by Nanos Research suggests most Canadians consider the massive
 arms sale out of line with Canada's values and believe human rights should
 trump jobs. The survey showed nearly six in 10 feel it is more important to

ensure arms go only to countries “that respect human rights” than it is to support 3,000 jobs by selling weaponized armoured vehicles to Saudi Arabia.

A spokesman for Foreign Affairs Minister Stéphane Dion declined to comment on the poll on Friday.

The Canadian government is the prime contractor in the deal to sell combat vehicles with machine guns and anti-tank cannons to the Saudi force that protects the Mideast kingdom’s monarchy from internal threats. The deal is expected to include upward of 1,000 fighting vehicles, plus service and training.

The watchdog organization Freedom House regularly ranks Saudi Arabia among the “worst of the worst” on human rights.

The Federal Court challenge will argue that the Canadian government is violating its own arms-export rules by permitting the armoured vehicles to be shipped to Saudi Arabia. It will ask the court to rescind any export permits that have been granted for the fighting vehicles and block any future ones.

Canada’s export controls place restrictions on sales to countries with a “persistent record of serious violations of the human rights of their citizens.”

The federal government is supposed to assure itself the Saudis will not turn the light-armoured vehicles (LAVs) on civilians. The rules say shipments cannot proceed “unless it can be demonstrated there is no reasonable risk that the goods might be used against the civilian population.”

Mr. Turp, a former Bloc Québécois MP who later was a Parti Québécois MNA, said he finds it hard to believe Mr. Dion, once a professor at the University of Montreal himself, really believes the Saudi deal is appropriate.

The Trudeau government has rebuffed repeated requests to spell out how it justifies export of these arms, saying this might hurt the “commercial confidentiality” of the deal.

“The idea that military equipment made in Canada could contribute to human-rights violations against civilians in Saudi Arabia and neighbouring countries is immoral. But we also believe that the authorization to export armoured vehicles to Saudi Arabia is illegal,” Mr. Turp and the legal campaign’s supporters write in an open letter.nn

Last Updated on Saturday, 06 February 2016 22:00

2683 readings

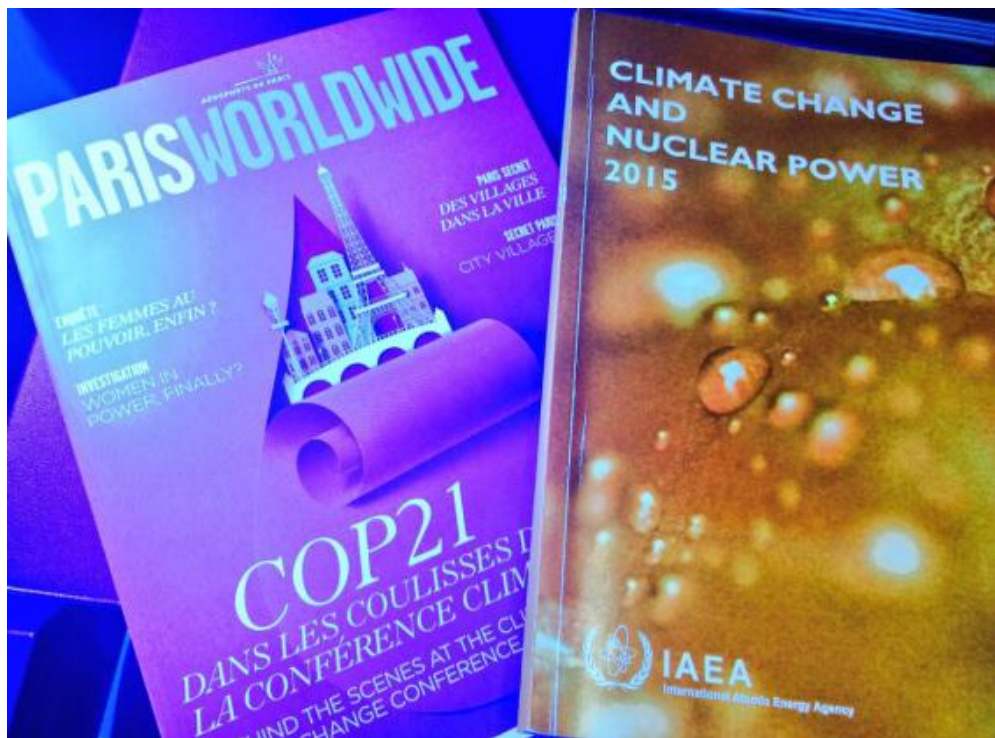
[IAEA from 1992 - 2016: SYSTEMIC CONSTRAINT; - A REGULATOR MUST NOT A PROMOTER BE.](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 05 February 2016 13:42

By Joan Russow

Global Compliance Research Project



At cop21, The IAEA was continuing the promotion of Nuclear energy:

Nuclear power can make a "significant contribution" to combating climate change - "one of the most important environmental challenges facing the world today" - while providing energy for economic growth, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The IAEA yesterday announced the publication of its report entitled *Climate Change and Nuclear Power 2015*. The annual publication, it says, "provides a comprehensive review of the potential role of nuclear power in mitigating global climate change and its contribution to other economic, energy and environmental challenges." The report also looks at the economics of nuclear energy, safety, waste management and non-proliferation.

NUCLEAR ENERGY IS NOT THE SOLUTION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

In 1992 I attended, on behalf of the Whistler Foundation For a Sustainable Environment, the United Nations Conference on Climate Change and distributed an Statement prepared by "Dr Fred Knelman, Vice President of the Whistler Foundation For a Sustainable Environment; and Dr David Krieger, President of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation.

Nobel Laureate Statement to UNCED 92

In the statement which was signed by the following Nobel Laureates; was the Call

· to establish a time-table for phasing our fossil fuel and nuclear energy and for the rapid development of solar and other forms of non-polluting energy, and for more efficient energy use;

Signed: Gerd Binnig, The XI Dalai Lama, Leo Esaki, Val L. Fitch, Herbert A. Hauptman, Dudley Herschbach, Gerhard Herzberg, David H. Hubel, Jerome Karle, Gregory S. Kavka, Klaus von Klitzing, Leon M. Lederman, Yuan T. Lee, Wassily Leontief, Bernard Lown, Mairead Corrigan Maguire, Barbara McClintock, J.E. Meade, Simon van der Meer, Bruce Merrifield, Marshall W. Nirenberg, Linus Pauling, John Polanyi, Carlo Rubbia, Abdus Salam, Claude Simon, Herbert A. Simon, George D. Snell, Roger W. Sperry, Henry Taube, Jan Tinbergen, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, George Wald, Elie Wiesel, Robert W. Wilson.

Hans Blix, the then Secretary General of IAEA, made a presentation, to the UNGA plenary, at UNCED exclaiming that `nuclear Energy is the solution to climate change. At the final plenary, boxes and boxes of IAEA nuclear promotion pamphlets were dropped off at the lobby in front of the general Assembly. They were piled up on a table and I covered each pile

with piles of Statements by the Nobel Laureates.

SYSTEMIC CONSTRAINT; - A REGULATOR MUST NOT A PROMOTER BE.

When I returned to Canada , I worked with Dr Fred Knelman on extracting systemic constraints from the IAEA Pamphlets.

IAEA SEDUCTIVE DEVICES, DOCTRINES, DOGMAS, STRATEGIES AND FALLACIES ARE FUNDAMENTAL SYSTEMIC CONSTRAINTS PREVENTING THE NECESSARY SOCIOLOGICAL CHANGE:

By Joan Russow and Fred Knelman, June 1992

iThe "blatant misrepresentation or expedient omission" device

This device involves the convenient exclusion of any part that could be detrimental to one's position.

The IAEA through expedient omission (possibly for advantageous "clarification") has left out a significant section in Agenda 21 which does not include nuclear energy in the list of "safe" technologies for the future.

To "clarify" Agenda 21, the IAEA in its UNCED document stated the following:

The UNCED Agenda 21 notes the need for a transition to environmentally sound energy systems, which will entail major changes in the patterns of energy production and consumption (IAEA Document, p.5, 1992)

In the Atmosphere chapter of Agenda 21, the following [safe] and sound technologies are advocated:

cooperate to increase the availability of capacity, capabilities and

relevant technologies ...for utilizing and producing environmentally [safe and} sound renewable energy resources, such as solar, wind, geothermal, hydropower and biomass,... Each resource should be utilized in a manner that ... minimizes environmental stress and health impacts, (Section 9. Subsection 9 g Agenda 21, 1992)

Thus, we see that in the Energy section of Agenda 21, Nuclear energy is not mentioned as being one of the [safe] or sound technology.

ii The "Co-opted terms" strategy

This strategy involves the stipulating of a new definition for a term that would jeopardize one's own argument.

In the Rio Declaration the following precautionary principle was advocated:

Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation." (Rio Declaration, 1992).

In the following statement, the IAEA redefines the important precautionary principle that was agreed to in the Rio Declaration, 1992.

The basic principles for radiation protection and safety in all applications and activities in nuclear science and technology are precautionary (IAEA Document , p. 2, authors emphasis)

The Rio principle, however, if enacted and truly adhered to, would

bring about a moratorium on new nuclear power plants while phasing out currently existing ones.

iii The "comparison of convenience" device

This device involves the narrowing down of alternatives so that whatever aspect is compared will appear favourable to the proposed alternative.

In the following statement from the IAEA document, the IAEA narrows the alternatives used for comparison to those which would appear to be favourable within the terms of reference of their comparison. Thus, for example, they compare the relatively low volume of nuclear wastes to the much larger volume of wastes from fossil fuels. However, it is the volume of wastes multiplied by their toxicity that is significant. Merely comparing volumes is a "comparison of convenience". The same false comparison is used to compare fuel requirements for the same energy output.

A nuclear plant would require 27 tonnes of slightly enriched uranium each year, which corresponds to a few truckloads. The corresponding quantity of natural uranium is 160 tonnes.

a coal fired plant would need 2.6 million tonnes of coal each year... which corresponds to the load carried by 5 trains, each transporting 1400 tones every day

an oil fired plant would require 2 million tonnes of fuel oil per year, which is about 10 supertanker loads. (IAEA document, 1992, p.12)

The nuclear establishment never fails to compare coal and nuclear as competing energy sources, always claiming the inherent superiority of nuclear . Usually this is accomplished by failing to include the entire fuel cycle over its full life of impacts, social and environmental. They conveniently exclude "safety" factors," "production of wastes," "disposability of wastes," "degree of potential for bioaccumulation," lifetimes of wastes, toxicity and proliferation problems associated with

nuclear.

Yet no bombs are built of coal, no terrorist is interested in hijacking coal or in the clandestine acquisition of coal weapons, coal plants do not have to be decommissioned and mothballed after some 30 to 50 years of operation, their hazardous wastes do not have to be guarded for 100,000 years, coal dust is easier to contain than radon and coal plants do not require liability subsidies by acts of parliament" (Knelman, 1992)

iii The "lull and lure of the technological fix" syndrome

(the "misleading assurance" device or the fallacy of "technological omnipotence")

This syndrome, device or fallacy involves the revealing of the seriousness of the problem and the offering of a "solution" which is usually worse than the problem

The proponents of a potentially dangerous act indicate that they recognize the danger and focus on one area for which they can offer a technological fix

In the following statement from the Radioactive Wastes section of Agenda 21, into which it appears that the IAEA had input, the following situation is recognized:

Annually about 200,000 m³ of low-level and intermediate-level waste and 10,000 m³ of high-level waste (as well as spent nuclear fuel destined for final disposal) is generated world wide from nuclear power production. These volumes are increasing as more nuclear power units are taken into operation, nuclear facilities are decommissioned and the use of radionuclides increases. The high level waste contains about 99 percent of the radionuclides and thus represents the largest radiological risk. (Agenda 21, Radio Active wastes, 21.1.).

In the IAEA document the authors affirm the certainty of the technological fix.

There is nevertheless a consensus among experts that safe geological disposal of high level wastes, including spent nuclear fuel, is technically feasible. (IAEA Document, p.17)

The view of experts in the field is that safe technological solutions exist for managing the waste. (IAEA Document, 1992, p. 15)

Knelman (1992) pointed out that

The assumption behind the notion of permanent disposal of High level wastes deep in a stable geological formation is false because this assumption relies on the mistaken belief that anything we do technologically can be permanent This assumption of permanence is particularly false when we are dealing with the lithosphere over some 100,000 years and when we must first disturb the geological structure by digging a very deep hole. AECL(Atomic Energy of Canada Limited) has dug a deep hole near Lac du Bonnet in Manitoba which is totally inappropriate for such so-called "permanent" disposal. For one thing you must, in all events, avoid water. Yet, The AECL hole must be soaked Walt Patterson, a nuclear critic described this AECL research as follows: A drunk has lost his keys and is discovered by a police officer crawling around a street light. When questioned, the drunk admitted that he had lost his keys in front of a dark building, a block away. When asked why the drunk was then searching around the street light, the drunk said " you see, officer, the light is better here" and as Dr. Martin Resnikoff, an expert on geological waste disposal has put it " the earth does not stand still. In other words, experts in the relevant fields do not agree. (Knelman, 1992, in progress)

iv The "rhetoric of notwithstanding clause" doctrine.

This doctrine allows for the indulging in strong statements about deep

concern and the need for significant change and then including a notwithstanding clause that negates the strong statement.

In the Rio declaration (1992) there is a strong statement about third world dumping:

States should effectively cooperate to discourage or prevent the relocation and transfer to other States of any activities and substances that cause severe environmental degradation or are found to be harmful to human health. (Principle 14 Rio Declaration, 1992)

(

There are, however, disturbing "notwithstanding clauses" that appear such as in the following statements:

Develop regulatory and non-regulatory measures and procedures aimed at preventing the export of chemicals that are banned, severely restricted, withdrawn or not approved for health or environmental reasons, *except when such export has received prior written consent from the importing country or is otherwise in accordance with the PIC procedure;* (Section 19. subsection 53 f , Agenda 21, 1992)

In the following statement in the IAEA document, the IAEA energetically adopts the spirit of the " rhetoric of notwithstanding clauses"

The IAEA in 1990 promulgated a Code of Practice on the International Trans-boundary Movement of Radioactive Waste as a basis for harmonization of national legislation and policies. The code lays down the conditions and principles for international waste transfers, such as that movement must be made in a manner consistent with the international safety standards, that there must be prior notification and consent of the sending, receiving and transit States, and that each State involved should have a regulatory authority...(IAEA Document,

v. The "flamboyant absurdity" doctrine or dogma

This doctrine or dogma carries the concerns of one's opponents to the point where the regulations governing the opponents concerns should become the standard by which other potentially lesser concerns will be addressed.

The IAEA appears to advocate that, what is considered to be the most dangerous industry, just because it is dangerous, has developed stringent standards, and that they who contribute to possibly the greatest uncontrollable hazard are the ones who should assist the community in dealing with other hazards.

The basic principles for radiation protection and safety in all applications and activities in nuclear science and technology are precautionary and are so well founded in science and so widely accepted that they are now also being regarded as a source of guidance in controlling pollutants and impacts arising from other human activities. Their wider application would undoubtedly contribute towards sustainable development. (p.2)

vi. The "justification through dire consequences of alternatives" device

This device involves the revealing of the dire consequences of the current practices and offering one own practice as the salvation for the problem

In the following statement the IAEA cites the dire consequences of the other alternatives to justify their proposed alternative:

The problem of acid rain, which is linked to emissions from the

burning of fossil fuels, has been recognized for decades..... . the primary concern about the continued and increasing use of fossil fuels is the problem of CO2 emission and the potential impact on world climate..... World conference on the Changing Atmosphere... need to reduce CO2 emission (IAEA document, p. 5)

climate change in connection with fossil fuels (p. 9)

vii. The "benevolent outcome exploitation" strategy

This strategy involves the selection of the outcome which the opposition to the proposed alternative would advocate and the subsequent attempt to demonstrate that the proposed alternative, which the opposition would condemn, would

be the best way of achieving that outcome.

In the following statements from the IAEA document, the IAEA focuses on the desired outcomes of reducing acid rain and limiting greenhouse gas to justify the selection of their proposed alternative:

Several governments have already made commitments to reduce carbon emission, while recognizing that this will be hard to achieve except through drastic policy decisions in the energy sector. (IAEA Document, 1992, p.6)

Nuclear power plants in normal operations cause very little environmental detriment and are beneficial when they replace plants which would emit CO₂, SO₂, and NO₂ (p. 12). In this respect they would help to reduce acid rain and limit greenhouse gas emissions (IAEA Document 1992 , p. 12)

To accomplish the above, IAEA and other nuclear proponents are recommending the construction of some 4000 to 5000 new commercial nuclear power plants. The combination of the multi- trillion cost and the time required for construction renders this proposal no less than

bewildering. By the 6 to 10 year period required for construction, other sources of climate-altering gases would wipe out all gains. Secondly at 1/7th to 1/10th the above cost, a much greater reduction in CO₂ and other climate-altering gases can be achieved through simple available conservation and efficiency measures.

viii. The "shelter of fragmentation" syndrome

This syndrome involves the dissociating of the problem from a more generic problem by placing the problem in its own isolated category.

In the agenda 21 document, Nuclear wastes are not included in the section of hazardous wastes because atomic wastes has its own section. Nuclear wastes thus seem to appear apart from hazardous wastes and from the strong recommendation associated with hazardous wastes such as:

Governments should intensify research and development activities on cost-effective alternatives for processes and substances that currently result in the generation of hazardous wastes that pose particular problems for environmentally sound disposal or treatment, the possibility of ultimate phase-out of those substances that present and unreasonable or otherwise unmanageable risk and are toxic, persistent and bio-accumulative to be considered as soon as practicable. Section 20 subsection 13c, Agenda 21, 1992)

ix. The "flaunting and condoning of the vicious circle principle" strategy

This strategy is best explained by the economic principle that "bad money drives out good,". that is the opportunity costs of nuclear power are unacceptable and prohibitive Thus the money spent to subsidize nuclear power is at the expense of the funds required to solve the energy problem with safe alternatives, and consequently, because the research into alternatives will not be effectively carried out, the safe alternatives will not be able to adequately replace the non-renewable forms of energy.

In the 1992 report to UNCED, following was stated:

Nuclear energy has safety risks associated with the entire uranium cycle, from mining through processing to the ultimate disposal of high-level radioactive wastes. In addition, there are safety risks associated with the reactors used to generate electricity from uranium . And the use of fossil fuel to drive conventional thermal generation produces carbon dioxide and waste heat. (Canada's National report UNCED p. 46- 47)

From a domestic consumption point of view, the least environmentally damaging energy option is energy efficiency. (Canada's National report UNCED p. 47)

Despite the above statement, the document concludes::

New, cleaner technologies such as solar energy may help, but the hard fact is that to a large extent we will have to rely on either thermal, hydro, or nuclear energy in the future. In addition, energy projects for both export and domestic supply provide jobs and economic wealth to the country, and are especially important in some regions of Canada" (p. 47. Canada's National report UNCED June, 1992, authors' emphasis)

CONCLUSION:

The " nukespeak" and the seductive devices, strategies, syndromes used by the Nuclear Industry involve the language of delusion and distortion. Hopefully, through the continued revealing and categorizing of these words of delusion we could, in some small way, counteract the impact of the not too-hidden-agenda of the IAEA, and the rest of the nuclear establishment and their government supporters.

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and the Vancouver Island Peace Society

Last Updated on Friday, 05 February 2016 13:50

584 readings

[1997 Discrimination Against Russow on Grounds of Political Opinion: Will C51 Be the Same?](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 04 February 2016 13:22

By Joan Russow PhD Global Compliance Research Project,

See update bio in Annex; What actions was I involved in to justify the government's designating me as a threat; in 2016, I have still have not found out the reason for my being placed on a threat assessment List

Excerpt from a submission to the 2005 Senate Committee on anti-terrorism Act

The intelligence community appears to be inept at assessing what constitutes real national and international threats to security. This ineptitude was confirmed recently at a colloquium, entitled the 'Challenges of Security Intelligence Review Committee SIRC'. An official from SIRC acknowledge



d the following:

In assessing the distinction between those who have a disagreement with politics and those who are deemed to be terrorists...Police agencies are not good at making that distinction and err on the side of security ".Our Intelligence community came out of a cold war culture. We are in a very different world. There is a lot of catch up. We have to have the ability to identify clearly this distinction. If we don't do this we are threatening the fabric of the civil liberties of Canadians.

The fabric of civil liberties of Canadians has definitely been threatened through the designation of citizens who have a disagreement with the

politics of the Government of Canada to be threats to Canada.

At least since 1997, I have been on an RCMP Threat Assessment Group (TAG) List. I have a doctorate, I was a former lecturer in global issues at a university, and I am a former federal leader of a registered political party in Canada. I found out about being on a Threat Assessment Group List inadvertently, during the release of documents in the APEC RCMP Public Complaints Commission inquiry. Evidence emerged during the APEC inquiry that I was put on the list as a result of a directive from the Prime Minister's Office. My picture along with eight others was placed on a RCMP Threat Assessment Group List entitled "other activists". I have enclosed a copy of the RCMP threat Assessment. Exhibit A and Exhibit B.

Under the CSIS Act, "threats to the security of Canada" means

(a) Espionage or sabotage that is against Canada or is detrimental to the interests of Canada or activities directed toward or in support of such espionage or sabotage

B) Foreign influenced activities within or relating to Canada that are detrimental to the interests of Canada are clandestine or deceptive or involve a threat to any person

c) activities within or relating to Canada directed toward or in support of the threat or use of acts of serious violence against persons or property for the purpose of achieving a political objective within Canada or a foreign state and

d) Activities directed toward undermining by covert unlawful acts or directed toward or intended ultimately to lead to the destruction or overthrow by violence of the constitutionally established system of government in Canada.

Threat to security does not include lawful advocacy, protest or dissent, unless carried on in conjunction with any of the activities referred to in paragraphs (2) TO (D). 1984 C.21, S2.

Citizens engaged in lawful advocacy, protest, or dissent have been designated as "threats". Given the definition of "threats" in the CSIS Act, the only conclusion is that citizens engaged in lawful advocacy, protest, or dissent, and designated as a threat, must have been linked to espionage, sabotage, violence against persons or property, the destruction of the constitutionally established system of government, etc. There really is no other logical conclusion.

The Solicitor General who is responsible for the RCMP and CSIS has a dual role: a role as a party member and a non-partisan role as officer

of the Crown. The importance of the non-partisan role was recently emphasized by Dir. Wesley Pue, Professor of law at UBC, in his submission to the Senate when he cautioned:

Imagine a malafide person occupying the position of minister of police because we do not have a Solicitor General, or even that notion. If that person does not like members of the NDP, they may decide to have the police investigate people because of their party stripes

Although I was not a member of the NDP at the time, I presume that his comment applied to any opposition political party.

When news that I had been placed on the RCMP Threat Assessment List was broadcast and published across the country, the Solicitor General's office feared that there might have been a challenge in parliamentary question period about the RCMP and CSIS placing the leader of a registered political party on a threat assessment list. The Solicitor General's office prepared an Aide Memoire to deflect the potential criticism, and rather than addressing the serious allegations of the violations by intelligence agencies of their own statutory law, the Solicitor General in his reply wrote: "As I have indicated, the APEC RCMP Public Complaints Commission will address all concerns raised, and we should allow them the opportunity to do their work."

I assumed from this statement that I would have my concerns addressed and be able to appear before the RCMP Public Complaints Commission, to have the opportunity to clear my name, and to prove that I am not a threat. I was subsequently not permitted to appear, even though I had been one of the original 49 complainants.

I have never engaged in any activity which could be even remotely be construed to fall into within the CSIS definition of a 'threat. I have been a strong policy critic of government practices, nationally and internationally, and could be considered to have a "difference in politics". I have spent over twenty years calling upon governments to discharge obligations incurred through international covenants, treaties and conventions, and to enact the necessary legislation to ensure compliance. I have called upon governments to act on commitments made through UN Conference Action plans, and to fulfill expectations created through UN General Assembly Resolutions and Declarations.

I have exercised my constitutional right to lawful advocacy, protest, and dissent. I have, however, not engaged in activities directed toward undermining by covert clandestine, unlawful acts, directed toward or intended ultimately to lead to the destruction or overthrow by violence of the constitutionally established system of government in Canada

Placing citizens who engage in lawful advocacy, protest or dissent on threat lists is an act of discrimination on the grounds of political and other opinion – one of the grounds that has been included in years of

international human rights instruments such as the following:

- (i) Art. 2, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948;**
- (ii) Art. 27, Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, 1949);**
- (iii) Art.1.1, International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, 1965;**
- (iv) Art. 2, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966);**
- (v) International Covenant of Social, Economic and Cultural rights 1966, in force, 1976;**
- (vi) Art. 7, International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families;**
- (vii) Art. 2, Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons 1975;**
- (vi) Art. 2, Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989;**
- (ix) Principle 1.4, Principles for the Protection of Persons with Mental Illness and the Improvement of Mental Health Care, 1991.**

I will refer here only to Article 2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Article 2. affirms that

Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to respect and to ensure to all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction the rights recognized in the present Covenant, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Although under art 2 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, there is a reference in Art. 2.

Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms:

- b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression**

This article implements the obligations in Art: 18 of (ICCPR).

- 1. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought,**

conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.

Unfortunately the ground of "political and other opinion" was not included as one of the listed grounds in article 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Although there does not appear to be a remedy in Canada for discrimination on the ground of political and other opinion, there is a remedy under Article 2 of the Optional Protocol of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Under this article, citizens who have been discriminated against, and have exhausted all domestic remedies, can file a complaint with the UN Human Rights committee responsible for the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. I have now proceeded to submit this complaint to the UN Human Rights Committee.

The listing of citizens engaged in legitimate advocacy has also violated the Charter of Rights and Freedoms; the right to security of the person; the right to mobility, and freedom of speech, and freedom of assembly. Now with facial recognition technology, there is the possibility that listed activists will not be able to enter the United States or fly over US Territory.

Since the fact that I was placed on a threat assessment list was broadcast and published across the country, I have had to live with the stigma of being designated a threat and the repercussions from this stigma –mistrust, and loss of employment and income. On a panel associated with the Arar inquiry, Warren Allman, a former Solicitor General recognized that being associated with a listed group could impact on one's ability to obtain gainful employment. This recognition would presumably also apply to being listed as a threat.

Even if proved unfounded, the taint of being designated as a threat, remains. Once a reputation has been damaged or impugned, recovery from this designation is almost impossible.

Since the lists have possibly been shared with 'friendly nations' prior to September 11, 2001 and probably, shared with 'friendly nations' after September 11, 2001 when caveats were down, I have traveled with great trepidation. I have resorted to using my maiden name when traveling internationally, but now with the institution of facial recognition technology, I presume that it will be impossible for me to travel to the US or to travel over US air space.

I had a legitimate expectation that, after being placed on a RCMP Threat Assessment Group List, I would be able to correct the presumed misinformation through provisions in the Privacy and the

Access to Information Acts. I was mistaken. In order to justify

not revealing the reason that I had been perceived to be a threat, the government exercised exemption such as “for national and international security reasons”, or “for [being] injurious to the conduct of international affairs”, or “for the defence of Canada”.

I have filed complaints with the RCMP, with CSIS, with DND, and with the review bodies such as SIRC and the RCMP Public Complaints Commission. I had presumed that I had a legitimate expectation that, after being placed on an RCMP Threat Assessment Group list, I would be able to correct the presumed misinformation if not through complaints and reviews through provisions in the privacy and the access to information acts. To justify not revealing the reason that I had been perceived to be a threat, the government exercised exemption such as for "national and international security reasons" or “for [being] injurious to the conduct of international affairs”, or “for the defence of Canada”.

After almost eight years, I still do not know the reason for my being placed on an RCMP Threat Assessment Group List. I submitted, and in some cases resubmitted, almost 60 Access to Information and Privacy requests, and subsequent requests for reviews by the Privacy and Access to Information Commissioners. These requests resulted in a series of outrageous financial demands, unacceptable delays, unjustifiable retention of data and redacted documents, along again with questionable government exemptions. In the end, the only recourse offered was to hire a lawyer, go to court, and if unsuccessful, pay court costs – an option that was not open to me, and I assume not open to many other citizens engaged in lawful advocacy, protest, and dissent.

Citizens engaged in lawful advocacy, protest, and dissent are often those who are addressing activities, by governments and corporations, which could be designated as threats to “true” security.

True security is not human security or a so-called “responsibility to protect” which has been recently used to support substantial increases in the military budget and to legitimize past, present, and future military expeditions wrapped in the guise of humanitarian interventions

True security is common security – a concept initiated by Olaf Palme, a former president of Sweden – and has been extended to embody the following objectives:

- to achieve a state of peace, and disarmament; through reallocation of military expenses

- to promote and fully guarantee respect for human rights including civil and political rights, and the right to be free from discrimination on any grounds

- to enable socially equitable and environmentally sound employment, and ensure the right to development and social justice; labour rights, social and cultural rights- right to food, right to housing, right to universally accessible not for profit health care system, and the right to education

- to ensure the preservation and protection of the environment, respect the inherent worth of nature beyond human purpose, reduce the ecological footprint ,and move away from the current model of over-consumptive development.

- to create a global structure that respects the rule of law and the International Court of Justice;

To further Common Security, the member states of the United Nations have incurred obligations through conventions, treaties and covenants, made commitments through Conference Action plans, and created expectations through UN General Assembly resolutions, and declarations. Member states of the United Nations have incurred obligations, made commitments and created expectations

The blue print for Common Security has been drawn; the issue is compliance and implementation.

The Senate Committee reviewing the Anti-terrorism Act has a real opportunity to determine what constitute real threats to common security.

ANNEX UPDATE BIO POTENTIAL ACTIONS THAT COULD HAVE LED TO DISCRIMINATION;

Joan Russow BA, M Ed (Ph.D)

PERSONAL

Widow, mother of two sons and two daughters and seven granddaughters; daughter of former Asst Auditor General of Canada and lived in New York in 1946 when my father worked at the United Nations.

GLOBAL COMPLIANCE RESEARCH PROJECT

* In 1994, founded, the Global Compliance Research Project

*Co-ordinator of the Global Compliance Research project: a project examining the interdependence of peace, environment, human rights, and socially equitable and environmentally sound development., and documenting lack of compliance.

Global Compliance research Project

The purpose of the project is

- (i) to remind governments of the years of obligations incurred , commitments made, and expectations created through the UN system.
- (ii) To inform NGOs of these obligations, commitments, and expectations, so that NGOs will not ask governments to agree to less that governments have already undertaken to do
- (iii) To use international instruments to support, policy statements, and resolutions related to common security: peace, environment, social justice and human rights

Proposed an International Court of Compliance in 1995 --a court linked with the ICJ- where citizens could take evidence of state and corporate non- compliance with international law. Initially, for UN Conference on Women, there were women from

about 60 states supporting the project.

Attended the 1995 "We the Peoples Conference", in San Francisco, on the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations and drafted a resolution which was passed by the NGOs and was sent to the UN Secretary General, Boutros Boutros Ghali who responded indicating his support.

*Attended Commission on the Status of Women in New York, between 1996 -2015, co-drafted various submissions to the CSW and the Petition on Confronting Militarism: De-legitimization of war

Attended 1999 Hague Peace Conference, along with Peace Conference organized by WWSF when I had a chance to present the Global Compliance Research Project and attend a session at the ICJ.

Since 1995, I have continued to work on Compliance and in 2015, I was asked by IPS to write an op-ed on compliance "The UN at 70: Time for Compliance"

In 2015, worked on placing the Sustainable Development Goals in the context of previous international obligations and commitments, including SDG 5, and attended the SDG Conference in New York in September.

BACKGROUND: ISSUES AND EDUCATION

-Studied Art and architecture in Rome, Seville and Paris, and one year of law in Ottawa.

BA in Art History, working on the Codex Borgia, - a pre-Columbian indigenous Manuscript from Mexico.

Master's Degree in Education University of British Columbia developed a method, "Principle based education"--Issue-principle analysis", of teaching human rights

linked with peace, social justice and environment issues. “Principle-based education within a framework of international principles drawn from international legal instruments.

Doctorate in Interdisciplinary studies, University of Victoria addressing, in dissertation, the problem of expressing and communicating complexity and on the need to move away from simplistic models imposed on thought.

For about forty years, concerned about the complexity and interdependence issues and have worked for the following objectives:

- to promote and fully guarantee respect for human rights including labour rights, civil and political rights, social and cultural rights- right to food, right to housing, right to safe drinking water, and to sewage treatment, right to health care, right to education and social justice;
- to enable socially equitable and environmentally sound employment;
- to achieve a state of peace, justice and common security;
- to create a global structure that respects the rule of law; and
- to ensure the preservation and protection of the environment, respect the inherent worth of nature beyond human purpose reduce the ecological footprint and move away from the current model of overconsumptive development.

*have lectured widely on the complexity and interdependence of the above issues, and particularly on the need for the implementation of international law nationally and locally.

Former lecturer in Global Issues in Sustainable Development at the University of Victoria, Canada, and researcher for 8 country study based in Harvard, and for North American Institute (NAMI)

1997-2001- National leader of the Green Party of Canada, ran in three elections. 1997 and 2000 (Victoria, against Hon David Anderson) and in 2000 by-election against Stockwell Day)

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE WORKING ON COMPLIANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL LAW

* Since 1995, a member of the Canadian Voice of Women for Peace

* Attended UN conferences, as a member of various accredited NGOs, the Whistler Foundation on a Sustainable Environment, Ecological Rights Association, United Nations Association, and since 1995, for the Canadian Voice of Women for Peace,

Prep Com New York for UNCED - (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED Rio, 1992); the Women's Conference (1995) - drafted an Alternative Earth Charter and worked on the NGO Earth Charter

- submitted an analysis of human rights instruments for the Vienna Conference 1993

* Attended prep coms for the UN Conference on Women: Equality

- For the UN Women's conference, received a CIDA grant to survey 50 years of

(i) obligations incurred through Conventions, treaties and covenants,

(ii) expectations created by General Assembly Resolutions and

(iii) commitments made through Conference Action plans. From these international instruments, extracted the strongest statements that governments had agreed to in the area of peace, environment social justice, labour and human rights. The statements were compiled in a 350 page "Charter of Obligations" and officially distributed to every state delegation at the Conference in Beijing.

- prepared a Charter with all the member states of the UN, with a list of human

rights agreements, peace, and environment and documented which states had signed and ratified different instruments

* Participated in Habitat II (1996). in Istanbul

-chaired the NGO committee on Urbanization, and served as an editor of NGO statements on peace, human, environment and social justice.

- prepare a 178 page document "Habitat II: moving beyond Habitat I" and circulated it to member states

-presented a statement, to the UN Committee II meeting of all the member states of the UN, calling upon governments to significantly reduce the military budget (50%) and transfer the peace dividend into socially equitable and environmentally sound development. Presented a statement at the "partnership meeting with Industry" on the need for Mandatory International Normative standards drawn from International principles to drive industry to socially equitable and environmentally sound development.

* Participated in Rio +5 prep com in New York- worked on document linking commitments from UNCED with subsequent commitments from World Conference on Human Rights, ICPD, Beijing Platform of Action, Habitat II Agenda.

* Participated in Rio +5 conference in New York - wrote and circulate a critique of Canada's environmental rhetoric and worked in various caucuses

* Participated in Beijing +5 in New York 2000 worked with various caucuses

* Participated in Habitat +5 in New York 2001, worked with various caucuses, and chaired the urbanization caucus

* Participated in WSSD - did an analysis of WSSD bracketed sections in the context of previous international obligations, commitments and expectations. and prepared a dictionary of terms examining the evolution of terms like "security" and "threat" etc.

* Attended 2003 March Commission on the Status of Women at the UN in New

York; initiated a demonstration in front of the UN “Women say No to War”

* Attended 2003 DPI conference at the UN , and made a presentation on a Panel organized by the Uniting for Peace Coalition.

* Attended 2005 Beijing +10 in New York, and worked with the Peace caucus on drafting

a statement which was presented to the UN Commission on Status of Women

Attended DPI Conference in 2007 worked on a Declaration with the Peace Caucus and Anti militarism caucus calling upon the need to include the contribution of militarism to Greenhouse gas emissions

*Attended Commission on the Status of Women in New York, between 1996 -2015, and co-drafted the Petition on Confronting Militarism: De-legitimization of war

*Attended the 2013 High level conference on Nuclear arms in New York

* Attended, as a reporter the 2009 COP Climate Change conference in Copenhagen and submitted document on Climate Change

*Attended, as a reporter for the Watershed Sentinel, the 2009 World trade Conference in Geneva

*Participated in drafting documents for the Peoples Conference on Climate Change, and attended the conference in Cochabamba, and worked on the Peoples Agreement.

*Attended, as a reporter for the Watershed Sentinel the 2010 COP 16 Conference in Cancun submitted document on Climate Change

*Attended, as a reporter for the Watershed Sentinel the 2015 COP 20 Conference in Paris, and submitted document on Climate Change

OTHER: CONFERENCES

- attended Eugene Conferences on International Environmental law, and made a presentation on NAFTA, and on Climate Change

- attended British Columbia Environmental AGMs, and gave presentations on International issues for the International Affairs Caucus

- attended IUCN AGMs and made presentations on Principle based education and worked on resolutions

- Participated in the 1998 Biodevastation ! conference on Genetically Engineered Foods and Crops in St Louis- drafted a Bio-devastation Declaration calling for the Banning of GE foods and Crops- Declaration was adopted by the plenary at Conference.

- Participated in Vandana Shiva's Biodevastation II 1999 Conference, drafted a Global resolution banning GE foods, Bio-piracy, and patenting of life forms and advocating a fair and just transition program for farmers and communities affected by the proposed ban, and a promotion of ecologically sound farming practices..

- Drafted a proposal for a UNGA resolution calling for the Banning of GE foods and crops, and circulated it at international meetings Beijing +5,

Habitat +5 and WSSD, and drafted an "Alternative Biosafety" protocol

- Attended Peace Conference in 2004 in Puebla, Mexico and worked on Puebla Declaration

- Attended Peace Conference in 2014 in The Hague and drafted statement on the ICJ and reduction of the military budget

* Launched a petition, with Nnimmo Bassey, calling for the UN General Assembly to draft a Declaration calling for the banning of genetically engineered food and crops and circulated the petition at the UN

ANTI-GLOBALIZATION ACTIVITIES

***MAI**

- April drafted a treaty proposal to counteract the MAI
- campaigned as the National leader of the Green Party against the MAI

***APEC BC 1997**

- November 1997 Revised the MAI Treaty as a Citizen's Treaty of State and Corporate Compliance: Nemesis of APEC
- November 1997 Attended sessions at the Peoples Summit at APEC
- complainant in the RCMP APEC hearing

*** WTO**

- participated in anti-WTO rally in Seattle
- updated Treaty - anti-WTO Citizen's Treaty as Public Trust Treaty
 - updated anti-WTO Treaty 2005 Anti-WTO Hong Kong treaty

* FTAA- profiled the FTAA in the November 2000 Federal Election, and held a press conference in front of the jail that was being emptied to accommodate the protesters

and spoke on behalf of the Council of Canadians at Anti- FTAA rally in Victoria

* G8 meeting in Kananaskis 2002

- updated treaty

- updated treaty for the G8 summit in Edinburgh Alternative G8 Edinburgh Declaration of Common Security

2003- 2014 Circulated a documents calling for Trade agreements to be declared null and void because they violate international peremptory norms

PAST AFFILIATION

Current:

* Member of UNESCO (Canadian division) Working Group on Science and Ethics.

Worked on a content analysis of the UNESCO 5year proposal, placing document in context of international obligations and commitments-- in preparation for the US rejoining UNESCO

*Co-ordinator of the Global Compliance Research project: a project examining the interdependence of peace, environment, human rights, and socially equitable and environmentally sound development., and documenting lack of compliance.

Global Compliance research Project

The purpose of the project is

(iv) to remind governments of the years of obligations incurred , commitments made, and expectations created through the UN system.

(v) To inform NGOs of these obligations, commitments, and expectations, so that NGOs will not ask governments to agree to less that governments have already undertaken to do

(vi) To use international instruments to support, policy statements, and resolutions related to common security: peace, environment, social justice and human rights

Proposed an International Court of Compliance in 1995 --a court linked with the ICJ- where citizens could take evidence of state and corporate non- compliance with international law. Initially, for the UN Conference on Women, there were women from about 60 states supporting the project.

*Member of the IUCN (World Conservation Union) Commission on Education and Communication

-Participated in IUCN AGM in 1994 in Argentina. Drafted with others a Resolution condemning forest practices in Canada and US - and calling for the preservation of a network of old growth forests as World Heritage sites (resolution passed with only one country abstaining Canada. Lobbied against increased corporate intrusion into IUCN

-Participated in IUCN AGM in Montreal- in 1996- continued to oppose corporate intrusion, and worked on an emergency resolution on the implementation of the International Court of Justice decision that the use of the threat to use nuclear weapons was contrary to international humanitarian law (resolution did not pass)

* Member of the Uniting for Peace Coalition which had attempted to call for an emergency UNGA resolution to prevent the US-led invasion of Iraq.

*Director, Council of Canadian (Victoria Branch) . recently drafted a resolution on Common Security (Olaf Palme's concept of redefining security in terms of peace, human rights, and social justice) - opposing current proposal for military integration with US

* Director, Victoria Peace Centre- groups that launched a court case against the circulating and berthing of nuclear powered and nuclear capable vessels in Canadian waters and Canadian ports

* UN Vienna representative for the Canadian Voice of Women for Peace (recent not yet attended meetings in Vienna)

Former

- Co- founder of the Vancouver Island Human Rights Coalition, former director, Capital Region Race Relations Association and Coalition Against Racism

- Founder and chair of the International Affairs Caucus of the British Columbia

Environmental Network

- Former Director of the United Nations Association

Present affiliations

New York Representative of the Canadian Voice of Women

Member of the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication

Last Updated on Monday, 04 April 2016 11:27

609 readings

[TPP: Lessons from New Zealand](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 03 February 2016 07:13

By [Jomo Kwame Sundaram](#)



Jomo Kwame Sundaram was an Assistant Secretary-General responsible for analysis of economic development in the United Nations system during 2005-2015, and received the 2007 Wassily Leontief Prize for Advancing the Frontiers of Economic Thought.

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia, Feb 2 2016 (IPS) - A new paper* on the implications of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement for New Zealand examines key economic issues likely to be impacted by this trade agreement. It is remarkable how little TPP brings to the table. NZ's gross domestic product will grow by 47 per cent by 2030 without the TPP, or by 47.9 per cent with the TPP. Even that small benefit is an exaggeration, as the modelling makes dubious assumptions, and the real benefits will be even smaller. If the full costs are included, net economic benefits to the NZ economy are doubtful. The gains from tariff reductions are less than a quarter of the projected benefits according to official NZ government modelling. Although most of the projected benefits result from reducing non-tariff barriers (NTBs), the projections rely on inadequate and dubious information that does not even identify the NTBs that would be reduced by the TPP!

Agriculture

The main beneficiaries in NZ will be agricultural exporters, but modest tariff reductions of 1.3 per cent on average by 2030 are small compared to ongoing commodity price and exchange rate volatility. Extensive trade barriers to agricultural exports in the Japanese, Canadian and US food markets remain, and will be locked in under TPP. TPP has also failed to tackle agricultural subsidies that are a major trade distortion. Significant tariff barriers remain in some sectors in Japan, Canada and the US likely to be 'locked in' under the TPP that are almost impossible to remove in the future. TPP's Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures limits on labelling may also restrict opportunities for food exporters to build high quality, differentiated niche market positions. TPP

has also been used to undermine negotiations in the World Trade Organization, the only forum for removing such trade distorting subsidies.

ISDS

TPP's investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) provisions and restrictions on state-owned enterprises will deter future NZ governments from regulations and policies in the public interest, for fear of litigation by corporate interests. The threat, if not actual repercussions, are good enough to 'discipline' governments by causing 'regulatory chill'. TPP is very much a charter for incumbent businesses, especially US transnational corporations. Thus, it inadvertently holds back the economic transformation the world needs. The agreement's TPP's benefits are likely to be asymmetric as it is more favourable to big US business practices and will deepen the disadvantages of small size and remoteness. Potential ISDS compensation payments or settlements could far outweigh the limited economic benefits of TPP. Even when cases are successfully defended, the legal costs will be very high.

Value-addition




TPP can both help and hinder ambitions to add value to raw materials and commodities, and to progress up value chains. However, it is likely to reinforce NZ's position as a commodity producer and thus hinder progress up the value chain where greater economic prosperity lies. More analysis based on the actual agreement is required to ascertain the conditions for and likelihood of such progress. TPP will limit government's ability to innovate and address national challenges and is likely to worsen rapidly escalating problems such as environmental degradation and climate change.

Furthermore, TPP is projected to reduce employment and increase income inequality in NZ. In its analysis, the government has not considered the likely costs, which are probably going to be very significant, and may well outweigh economic benefits.

TPP thus falls well short of being "a trade agreement for the 21st century", as its cheerleaders claim. A more comprehensive, balanced and objective cost-benefit analysis on the basis of the October 2015 deal should be completed before ratifying the TPP.

**The report is available at: <https://tpplegal.files.wordpress.com/2015/12/ep5-economics.pdf>*

435 readings

[The European Parliament opposed the import of three genetically modified \(GM\) soybeans](#)   

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 03 February 2016 07:06



3 FEBRUARY 2016

The European Parliament opposed the import of three genetically modified (GM) soybeans into the European Union today. It said the Commission's proposed authorisation of GM soybeans for use as food and feed was "not consistent with Union law" that aims at a high level of health and environmental protection.

It is the third time in a few months that the European Parliament clashes with the Commission over its policy on genetically modified organisms. In October last year, MEPs rejected a flawed Commission proposal that would give national governments a fake right to ban GMOs approved for import. They called on the Commission to develop a new proposal.

In December, the Parliament also rejected the import of Monsanto's GM maize NK603 × T25 and called for a moratorium on GMO authorisations until new rules are introduced.

Friends of the Earth Europe, Greenpeace, Slow Food and IFOAM EU have welcomed the Parliament's stand against the Commission.

Mute Schimpf, food campaigner at Friends of the Earth Europe, said: *"Today's vote shows that GM-crops are unwanted by both people and the politicians they elect, and that the authorisation system for them is unfit for purpose. The European Commission must respect the decision-making power of the Parliament."*

Franziska Achterberg, EU food policy director at Greenpeace, said: *"The Parliament's message is loud and clear: the Commission cannot carry on taking decisions on GM crops by itself, without the backing of EU governments, parliament and citizens. The Commission needs to rethink the GMO approval*

system. *Until it does, no new GM crops should be approved.*"

Eric Gall, policy manager at IFOAM EU, said: *"Importing these GM soybeans could expose consumers and farm animals in the EU to adverse effects from the herbicides they have been sprayed with and, to date, the effects of the herbicide plus GMO combination has not been assessed. Neither have the herbicide cocktails proposed. No herbicide-tolerant GMOs should be authorized until this has been done."*

Ursula Hudson, president of Slow Food Germany, stated: *"No more than 13 out of 28 EU Member States voted in favour of allowing the import of these GM soybeans into the EU, whilst an equal number has voted against. Yet, the Commission authorizes them. We urgently need a new authorization mechanism as well as clear labeling for citizens to make informed choices."*

The three GM soybeans are engineered to tolerate spraying with glyphosate or a combination of glyphosate with other herbicides. Residues of these herbicides are likely to be found on imported grains. The WHO has classified glyphosate as a probable carcinogen. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has not assessed the risks associated with its use on GM crops, nor the effects of combinations of glyphosate with other herbicides. These combinations give rise to serious health concerns and EU law requires their evaluation.

The Parliament's objection is not binding for the Commission.

Last Updated on Wednesday, 03 February 2016 07:12

458 readings

[Pandora's box: how GM mosquitos could have caused Brazil's microcephaly disaster](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 03 February 2016 05:10

By Oliver Tickell

1st February 2016



Aedes Aegypti mosquito feeding on human blood. This is the species that transmits Zika, and that was genetically engineered by Oxitec using the piggyBac transposon. Photo: James Gathany via jentavery on Flickr (CC BY).

These 'promiscuous' transposons have found special favour with genetic engineers, whose goal is to create 'universal' systems for transferring genes into any and every species on earth. Almost none of the geneticists has considered the hazards involved. In Brazil's microcephaly epidemic, one vital question remains unanswered: how did the Zika virus suddenly learn how to disrupt the development of human embryos? The answer may lie in a sequence of 'jumping DNA' used to engineer the virus's mosquito vector - and released into the wild four years ago in the precise area of Brazil where the microcephaly crisis is most acute.

Since August 2015, a large number of babies in Northeast Brazil have been born with very small heads, a condition known as microcephaly, and with other serious malformations. 4,180 suspected cases have been reported.

Epidemiologists have found a convincing correlation between the incidence of the natal deformities and maternal infections with the Zika virus, first discovered in Uganda's Zika Valley in 1947, which normally produces non-serious illness.

The correlation has been evidenced through the geographical distribution of Zika infections and the wave of deformities. Zika virus has also been detected in the amniotic fluids and other tissues of the affected babies and their mothers.

This latter finding was recently reported by AS Oliveira Melo et al in a scientific paper published in the journal *Ultrasound in Obstetrics & Gynecology*, which noted evidence of intra-uterine infection. They also warn:

"As with other intrauterine infections, it is possible that the reported cases of microcephaly represent only the more severely affected children and that newborns with less severe disease, affecting not only the brain but also other organs, have not yet been diagnosed."

The Brazilian Health Minister, Marcelo Castro, says he has "100%

certainty" that there is a link between Zika and microcephaly. His view is supported by the medical community worldwide, including by the US Center for Disease Control.

Oliveira Melo et al draw attention to a mystery that lies at the heart of the affair: *"It is difficult to explain why there have been no fetal cases of Zika virus infection reported until now but this may be due to the under-reporting of cases, possible early acquisition of immunity in endemic areas or due to the rarity of the disease until now.*

"As genomic changes in the virus have been reported, the possibility of a new, more virulent, strain needs to be considered. Until more cases are diagnosed and histopathological proof is obtained, the possibility of other etiologies cannot be ruled out."

And this is the key question: how - if indeed Zika really is the problem, as appears likely - did this relatively innocuous virus acquire the ability to produce these terrible malformations in unborn human babies?

Oxitec's GM mosquitoes

An [excellent article by Claire Bernish](#) published last week on *AntiMedia* draws attention to an interesting aspect of the matter which has escaped mainstream media attention: the correlation between the incidence of Zika and the area of release of genetically modified *Aedes aegypti* mosquitos engineered for male sterility (see [maps, above right](#)).

The purpose of the release was to see if it controlled population of the mosquitoes, which are the vector of Dengue fever, a potentially lethal disease. The same species also transmits the Zika virus.

The releases took in 2011 and 2012 in the Itaberaba suburb of the city of Juazeiro, Bahia, Northeast Brazil, about 500 km west of the coastal city of Recife. The experiment was [written up in July 2015](#) in the journal *PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases* in a paper titled 'Suppression of a Field Population of *Aedes aegypti* in Brazil by Sustained Release of Transgenic Male Mosquitoes' by [Danilo O. Carvalho et al.](#)

An initial 'rangefinder' of 30,000 GM mosquitoes per week took place between 19th May and 29th June 2011, followed by a much larger release of 540,000 per week in early 2012, ending on 11th February.

At the end of it the scientists claimed *"effective control of a wild population of Ae. aegypti by sustained releases of OX513A male Ae. aegypti. We diminished Ae. aegypti population by 95% (95% CI: 92.2%-97.5%) based on adult trap data and 78% (95% CI: 70.5%-84.8%) based on ovitrap indices compared to the adjacent no-release control area."*

So what's to worry about?

The idea of the Oxitec mosquitoes is simple enough: the males produce non-viable offspring which all die. So the GM mosquitoes are 'self-extinguishing' and the altered genes cannot survive in the wild

population. All very clever, and nothing to worry about!

But in fact, it's not so simple. In 2010 geneticist Ricarda Steinbrecher [wrote to the biosafety regulator in Malaysia](#) - also considering a release of the Oxitec mosquitoes - with a number of safety concerns, pointing out the [2007 finding by Phuc et al](#) that 3-4% of the first generation mosquitos actually survive.

The genetic engineering method employed by Oxitec allows the popular antibiotic tetracycline to be used to repress the lethality during breeding. But as a side-effect, the lethality is also reduced by the presence of tetracycline in the environment; and as Bernish points out, Brazil is among the world's biggest users of anti-microbials including tetracycline in its commercial farming sector:

"As a study by the American Society of Agronomy, et. al., [explained](#), 'It is estimated that approximately 75% of antibiotics are not absorbed by animals and are excreted in waste.' One of the antibiotics (or antimicrobials) specifically named in that report for its environmental persistence is tetracycline.

In fact, as a confidential [internal Oxitec document](#) divulged in 2012, that survival rate could be as high as 15% - even with low levels of tetracycline present. 'Even small amounts of tetracycline can repress' the engineered lethality. Indeed, that 15% survival rate was described by Oxitec."

She then quotes the leaked Oxitec paper: *"After a lot of testing and comparing experimental design, it was found that [researchers] had used a cat food to feed the [OX513A] larvae and this cat food contained chicken. It is known that tetracycline is routinely used to prevent infections in chickens, especially in the cheap, mass produced, chicken used for animal food. The chicken is heat-treated before being used, but this does not remove all the tetracycline. This meant that a small amount of tetracycline was being added from the food to the larvae and repressing the [designed] lethal system."*

So in other words, there is every possibility for Oxitec's modified genes to persist in wild populations of *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes, especially in the environmental presence of tetracycline which is widely present in sewage, septic tanks, contaminated water sources and farm runoff.

'Promiscuous' jumping genes

On the face of it, there is no obvious way in which the spread of Oxitec's GM mosquitos into the wild could have anything to do with Brazil's wave of microcephaly. Is there?

Actually, yes. The problem may arise from the use of the 'transposon' ('jumping' sequence of DNA used in the genetic engineering process to introduce the new genes into the target organism). There are several such DNA sequences in use, and one of the most popular is known as known as piggyBac.

As a [2001 review article](#) by Dr Mae Wan Ho shows, piggyBac is

notoriously active, inserting itself into genes way beyond its intended target: *"These 'promiscuous' transposons have found special favour with genetic engineers, whose goal is to create 'universal' systems for transferring genes into any and every species on earth. Almost none of the geneticists has considered the hazards involved ...*

"It would seem obvious that integrated transposon vectors may easily jump out again, to another site in the same genome, or to the genome of unrelated species. There are already signs of that in the transposon, piggyBac, used in the GM bollworms to be released by the USDA this summer.

The piggyBac transposon was discovered in cell cultures of the moth Trichopulsia, the cabbage looper, where it caused high rates of mutations in the baculovirus infecting the cells by jumping into its genes ... This transposon was later found to be active in a wide range of species, including the fruitfly Drosophila, the mosquito transmitting yellow fever, Aedes aegypti, the medfly, Ceratitis capitata, and the original host, the cabbage looper.

"The piggyBac vector gave high frequencies of transpositions, 37 times higher than mariner and nearly four times higher than Hirmar."

In a [later 2014 report](#) Dr Mae Wan Ho returned to the theme with additional detail and fresh scientific evidence (please refer to her original article for references): *"The piggyBac transposon was discovered in cell cultures of the moth Trichopulsia, the cabbage looper, where it caused high rates of mutations in the baculovirus infecting the cells by jumping into its genes ...*

"There is also evidence that the disabled piggyBac vector carrying the transgene, even when stripped down to the bare minimum of the border repeats, was nevertheless able to replicate and spread, because the transposase enzyme enabling the piggyBac inserts to move can be provided by transposons present in all genomes.

"The main reason initially for using transposons as vectors in insect control was precisely because they can spread the transgenes rapidly by 'non-Mendelian' means within a population, i.e., by replicating copies and jumping into genomes, thereby 'driving' the trait through the insect population. However, the scientists involved neglected the fact that the transposons could also jump into the genomes of the mammalian hosts including human beings ...

"In spite of instability and resulting genotoxicity, the piggyBac transposon has been used extensively also in human gene therapy. Several human cell lines have been transformed, even primary human T cells using piggyBac. These findings leave us little doubt that the transposon-borne transgenes in the transgenic mosquito can transfer horizontally to human cells. The piggyBac transposon was found to induce genome wide insertion mutations disrupting many gene functions."

Has the GM nightmare finally come true?

So down to the key question: was the Oxitec's GM Aedes

aegypti male-sterile mosquito released in Juazeiro engineered with the piggyBac transposon? Yes, it was. And that creates a highly significant possibility: that Oxitec's release of its GM mosquitos led directly to the development of Brazil's microcephaly epidemic through the following mechanism:

1. Many of the millions of Oxitec GM mosquitos released in Juazeiro in 2011/2012 survive, assisted, but not dependent on, the presence of tetracycline in the environment.
2. These mosquitos interbreed with with the wild population and their novel genes become widespread.
3. The promiscuous piggyBac transposon now present in the local *Aedes aegypti* population takes the opportunity to jump into the Zika virus, probably on numerous occasions.
4. In the process certain mutated strains of Zika acquire a selective advantage, making them more virulent and giving them an enhanced ability to enter and disrupt human DNA.
5. One way in which this manifests is by disrupting a key stage in the development of human embryos in the womb, causing microcephaly and the other reported deformations. Note that as Melo Oliveira et al warn, there are almost certainly other manifestations that have not yet been detected.
6. It may be that the piggyBac transposon has itself entered the DNA of babies exposed *in utero* to the modified Zika virus. Indeed, this may form part of the mechanism by which embryonic development is disrupted.

In the latter case, one implication is that the action of the gene could be blocked by giving pregnant women tetracycline in order to block its activity. The chances of success are probably low, but it has to be worth trying.

No further releases of GM insects!

While I am certainly not claiming that this is what actually took place, it is at least a credible hypothesis, and moreover a highly testable one. Nothing would be easier for genetic engineers than to test amniotic fluids, babies' blood, wild *Aedes* mosquitos and the Zika virus itself for the presence of the piggyBac transposon, using well established and highly sensitive PCR (polymerase chain reaction) techniques.

If this proves to be the case, those urging caution on the release of GMOs generally, and transgenic insects bearing promiscuous transposons in particular, will have been proved right on all counts.

But most important, such experiments, and any deployment of similar GM insects, must be immediately halted until the possibilities outlined above can be safely ruled out. There are plans, for example, to release similarly modified *Anopheles* mosquitos as an anti-malarial measure.

There are also calls for even more of the Oxitec *Aedes*

aegypti mosquitos to be released in order to halt the transmission of the Zika virus. If that were to take place, it could give rise to numerous new mutations of the virus with the potential to cause even more damage to the human genome, that we can, at this stage, only guess at.

Oliver Tickell *edits The Ecologist.*

395 readings

[Geothermal industry reaches out to out-of-work oil drillers](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 03 February 2016 05:04

BY [TYLER HAMILTON](#)

POSTED FEBRUARY 19, 2015

Lower oil prices means the oil patch's pain is a geothermal company's gain. Will the Alberta government take note?



With demand for drilling rigs and oil sands workers on the decline, opportunity awaits in Canada's nascent geothermal industry.

The job losses related to \$55-a-barrel oil could be as high as 23,000 this year

as Alberta's oil patch adjusts to new market realities.

That was the recent warning from the Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors, which predicted that the number of active drilling rigs in service will fall to an [average of 203 a day in 2015 from 370 a day last year](#) – a 41 per cent drop.

“If there are not as many drilling rigs working, there will not be as many rig workers on the job,” said association president Mark Scholz. “This will have significant adverse effects on indirect employment throughout the economy, well beyond just rig workers.”

That's bad news for Alberta – and bad news for the country more broadly – but a silver lining is in there somewhere, at least as far as Canada's nascent geothermal industry is concerned.

Next Monday, the Canadian Geothermal Energy Association (CanGEA) will be holding a [technology transfer workshop](#) aimed directly at oil and gas contractors looking for ways to adapt their technologies and approaches to geothermal development.

The event will be held at the Calgary Petroleum Club, and while it was planned before the oil-price collapse, CanGEA chair Alison Thompson said the timing is fortuitous.

“These drilling rig operators are selling their services right now at half the price,” said Thompson. “So this is a prime opportunity for us to be more cost-competitive, but to also get out-of-work people back to work.”

When times are good in the oil patch, it's tough to find drillers, let alone one whose services are reasonably priced. Thompson said it's understandable that engineers are drawn first to projects where the cost structure and profitability is highest and services are in such strong demand. This, unfortunately, has made it difficult for the fledgling Canadian geothermal industry to attract and afford skilled workers.

In Alberta, the cost of hiring a drilling contractor in an overheated oil market can represent up to 30 per cent of the cost of a typical geothermal power project. Under current market dynamics, however, “our whole capital expenditure has just come down by 15 per cent,” Thompson said.

“It's just such a wonderful opportunity to have some cost decreases in our own industry,” she said. “Now, when they find themselves out of work, we're welcoming them with open arms.”

Canada cool on Geopower

Canada is the only country along the hot-earth zone known as the Pacific Ring of Fire that doesn't have commercial geothermal power facilities, though the potential is unquestionably there. CanGEA estimates the country could conservatively develop [5,000 megawatts of baseload geothermal power](#) by 2025 with a bit of political will and creative financing.

Beyond that low-hanging fruit, geothermal could play a much more active

part in Canada's electricity mix, particularly in British Columbia and Alberta.

There is about 12,000 megawatts of installed geothermal power capacity globally and another 12,000 megawatts in the development pipeline, amounting to nearly 700 projects in 76 countries, according to the [U.S. Geothermal Energy Association](#).

The United States is the top producer with 3,500 megawatts of installed capacity, representing 30 per cent of the global total.

"The rest of the world has moved on, it's not up for discussion anymore. They're doing it," said Thompson, who believes provinces such as Alberta are missing out on a huge opportunity to diversify their power mix and economy.

She's dismissive of a recent Alberta Department of Energy study asserting that the lack of commercialization of geothermal power in Canada eliminates it from consideration, despite the department's recognition that geothermal generation potential in the province exceeds total provincial electricity demand.

"The study treats geothermal energy as a far-off, yet promising energy source, when in fact, the first geothermal power plants were developed nearly 100 years ago," according to a CanGEA report released in February that questions Alberta's reliance on natural gas as a replacement for coal-fired generation.

The report recommends that the Alberta and federal governments support geothermal power demonstration projects, as well as accelerate the phasing out of the Canadian Exploration Expense, the Canadian Development Expense and other tax incentives enjoyed by the fossil fuel industry. The added tax revenue from such a move should be redirected to support geothermal power and other renewable projects.

"The Alberta Green Energy Fund should also remain true to its intended purpose, and direct more funding away from the fossil-fuel sector, and towards renewable energy project," the report states.

Other recommendations include development of a geothermal permitting process, creation of a drilling fund to help finance geothermal well drilling, and a tax change that would allow geothermal developers to write off dry wells – an incentive currently enjoyed by the oil industry.

"It's not a level playing field right now, and the public wouldn't know that," said Thompson.

She pointed to oil giants in other countries that are taking advantage of their skills base by applying it to geothermal development. Chevron, for example, has become one of the largest geothermal power producers in the world. "They drill their geothermal wells in half the time as the rest of the industry," Thompson said. "Their learning curve is just different, so we want to emulate that here in Canada."

Norway's Statoil, meanwhile, is conducting deep-drilling projects in Iceland

for geothermal – another example of tech transfer from the oil industry.

Even with these companies, however, competing with the profitability of oil is challenging. Last year, top brass at Chevron pull the plug on the company's plan to expand its geothermal presence in Europe, despite the fact that such projects are returning profit margins of up to 20 per cent.

The Chevron executives, according to a [BloombergBusiness report](#), said the money that was to fuel the European geothermal expansion was needed for oil and gas projects.

Thompson is hoping that the fall in oil prices will cause many in the oil industry to reconsider the geothermal opportunity and the need for diversification into renewables.

And it seems some Alberta authorities are beginning to listen. Richard Dixon, chief of strategic foresight at the Alberta Energy Regulator, recently reached out to *Corporate Knights* requesting information about geothermal research conducted in Canada.

Thompson said the regulator has been reaching out to others in the industry as well, including herself.

Whether it leads to anything concrete is unclear, but Thompson said something has to give. "You're not going to change anything by thinking about a solution through the lens of what you've already done."

Last Updated on Wednesday, 03 February 2016 05:06

285 readings

[Opinion: Site C: Too risky to rely on one river system for B.C.'s hydro needs](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 03 February 2016 04:54

BY BEN PARFITT, SPECIAL TO THE VANCOUVER SUN JANUARY 28, 2016

<http://www.vancouversun.com/technology/opinion+site+risky+>



Peace River just below the W.A.C. Bennett dam.

Photograph by: Derrick Penner , Vancouver Sun
In the face of a prolonged drought, water levels at Lake Mead, the giant reservoir that straddles the Nevada and Arizona borders, are lower than at any point since the Hoover Dam was built in the 1930s.

For residents in California, Nevada, Arizona and northern Mexico, a crisis looms. What alternative drinking water sources are there for millions of people? How many farms may fail? What will replace the “reliable” hydroelectric power that the Hoover and other dams once produced?

You might not expect it, but even here in rainy B.C., we may soon face similar questions.

As BC Hydro continues preparations for Site C — a third major dam on the Peace River and the single-most-expensive mega-project in the province’s history — there are cautionary lessons for us in events south of the border.

The idea that we would put all our eggs in one renewable energy basket at a time when climate change is upon us is, to put it mildly, troubling.

Recently, in the journal *Nature Climate Change*, scientists warned that up to three-

quarters of the world's hydroelectric plants could be vulnerable to reduced water supplies and therefore less power output. That's what droughts do.

In June, the Hoover Dam's power generators were, in industry parlance, "derated." There simply wasn't the water to spin the dam's turbines full out, so their rated output dropped by nearly one-quarter. It could fall further still.

To suggest that couldn't happen here is hubris.

Should we bet the farm not once but three times on one river system to supply us with the bulk of our projected electricity needs, when at least some of the power supply from those dams could be threatened by future climatic events?

Recently, B.C.'s Minister of Energy and Mines Bill Bennett said Site C "is the best way to acquire new electricity at the lowest price," that construction delays will cost ratepayers, and that civil disobedience or not, the project must proceed.

These are curious claims, considering that all Hydro customers are on the hook for construction costs, costs that could easily go well beyond the currently estimated and astronomical pricetag, given overruns at other major hydroelectric projects around the world.

Not only that, but by BC Hydro's own admission, we don't currently need Site C's power, and won't for decades. Only in the increasingly unlikely event that a liquefied natural gas industry emerges does the scenario change.

Even more troubling than all of the above, Site C's cheerleaders may be seriously overstating the economic rationale for the project.

In May, highly respected U.S. energy economist Robert McCullough released a report commissioned by the Peace Valley Landowners Association that raised numerous questions about the economic case for Site C.

"Using industry standard assumptions, Site C is more than three times as costly as the least expensive option," McCullough said. "Site C fares poorly when compared to co-generation, wind, landfill and coal gasification."

The Peace River region has great wind power and geothermal potential. Across North America in recent years, wind power projects backed up with firm power supplies have come in at an average of half the cost of the power that would be provided by Site C, McCullough said.

Another disquieting conclusion gleaned from McCullough's work is that because

power from a completed Site C dam wouldn't be needed for some time, BC Hydro would likely have to sell significant power at a loss. Simply delaying dam construction by two years could save hydro ratepayers \$200 million.

Such analysis strongly suggests that at the very least we ought to subject the Site C project to a proper independent review.

Bill Bennett and the B.C. government, however, refuse to do so. They have declined to refer it to the province's independent watchdog, the B.C. Utilities Commission, as recommended by a federal-provincial panel that reviewed the Site C project. They also plan to exclude two transmission line extensions close to Site C from BCUC review, even though those projects will add hundreds of millions of dollars to the debt that all hydro users must repay.

In the face of clear evidence that hydroelectric dams are vulnerable to climate change and with all the economic risks that such vulnerabilities imply, why are we triple betting our renewable energy future on a third dam on the Peace River?

It's time for a reputable, independent body to address the question; if not an inquiry by the BCUC in a quasi-judicial capacity, then B.C.'s Auditor General. The public deserves answers — well before dam construction begins.

Ben Parfitt is a resource policy analyst with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

Last Updated on Wednesday, 03 February 2016 04:59

580 readings

[COP21: A LACK OF GLOBAL VISION AND FULL OF SYSTEMIC CONSTRAINTS](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 30 January 2016 13:15

ALSO IN ANNEX SUBMISSION TO THE CLIMATE CHANGE PLAN FOR BRITISH COLUMBIA

by Joan Russow, Global Compliance Research Project



The Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon, urged the states to negotiate with a global vision, not a with a specific national vision

In the COP21 Preamble was the following:

“climate change represents an urgent and potentially irreversible threat to human society and the planet”

yet was there ‘a global vision and was the urgency addressed in COP 21

There were systemic constraints preventing the global urgency of climate change:

1. The two degree fallacy - "At 2 degrees the poor the disenfranchised and the vulnerable would not survive, at 1.5, they might" (COP15, IPCC PRESS CONFERENCE)
2. Some states are more equal than others, and that the forests that are left are to offset our emissions

3. Expedient omission; global carbon budget. historical and per capita emissions, exempted military emissions, fossil fuel subsidies, extended negative investment absence of negative screens with false solutions such as nuclear, biofuel, geo engineering or genetic engineering

4. The shortness of institutional memory and the undermining of legal obligations from articles 2 3 and 4 of the 1992 legally binding UNFCCC... or the shifting baseline syndrome;

5. Non-binding “contributions” with wandering base dates, percentages and targets

6. A solution should never be equally bad or worse than the problem it is intended to solve

7. The lowest common denominator; the tyranny of consensus

8 The best is the enemy of the good

the compromisers credo

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 PRINCIPLES IN THE UNFCCC

NOT WHAT FABIOUS PROPOSED “COMPROMISE DOES REQUIRE US TO FORGET THE IDEAL SOLUTION FOR EVERYONE. THAT IS THE WORK WE HAVE NOW.. WE ARE CLOSE TO THE FINISHING LINE AND WE MUST FIND COMMON GROUND. IN OTHER WORDS, TIME TO COME TO AN AGREEMENT”

ANNEX

'SUBMISSION TO BC CLIMATE PLAN

BY JOAN RUSSOW PHD

-

1230 St Patrick Street

Victoria, BC

V8S4Y4

In the 2014 IPCC Report, the urgency of addressing climate change was reaffirmed;

The world is not ready for the impacts of climate change, including more extreme weather and the likelihood that populated parts of the planet could be rendered uninhabitable. The report argues that world leaders have only a few years left to reduce carbon emissions enough to avoid catastrophic warming, which would produce significant sea level rise and large-scale shifts in temperatures that would dramatically disrupt human life and natural ecosystems.

At COP21 Ban Ki-Moon urged States to negotiate with a global vision not from specific national interests”.

A global vision is not just ‘recalling”(Paris Agreement) but abiding by articles 2, 3, 4 in the legally binding 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This Convention which has been ratified by all member states of the United.

The 1992 UNFCCC was a global vision. For the complete document see

http://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/background_publications_htmlpdf/application/pdf/conveng.pdf

What COP21 should have been was a new global vision with legally binding actions to finally implement the legally binding commitments and and adhere to the principles. In the UNFCCC In article 2 under the legally binding UNFCCC is the obligation :

....stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system

In COP21, there is the following;

2(a) 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 a .8 DEGREE RISE IN TEMPERATURE THERE IS ALREADY DESTABILIZATION 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 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 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.

THE “CONTRIBUTION” MUST BE A COMMITMENT:

Real commitment 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, 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, De-carbonization with 100% ecologically sound renewable energy,

CURRENT BC PROPOSAL SHOWS LACK OF VISION, AND DISREGARD FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATION

- End old technology that impacts on food security and First Nations Rights (Site C- AND LNG)

-Investment should be spent on geothermal, solar and wind

Sincerely,

Joan Russow

Last Updated on Saturday, 13 February 2016 18:32

702 readings

[Kinder Morgan protesters take over Burnaby bridge](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 21 January 2016 11:50

By [Elizabeth McSheffrey](#) in [News, Energy](#) | January 19th 2016

Their voices rang loudly and clearly on a grey afternoon in Burnaby, B.C.



Grand Chief Stewart Phillip addresses a crowd outside the NEB hearing for Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline expansion in Burnaby, B.C. Photo by Elizabeth McSheffrey on Tues. Jan. 19, 2016.

"NEB is a sham!" shouted protesters, swarming the outer lanes of the busy Willingdon overpass at lunch hour on Tuesday. "Trudeau, we said no!" "Kinder Morgan, make my day, take your pipeline, go away!"

Their cries were enhanced with fog horns, drums, whistles and songs, and did not stop until all had reach the doors of the Delta Burnaby Hotel and Conference Centre, where the National Energy Board (NEB) reviewed Kinder Morgan's controversial [Trans Mountain pipeline expansion](#) in a formal hearing. They wore face paint, feathers, traditional Indigenous blankets, and expressions ranging from exhilaration to contempt. They vowed not to stop until their case was won.

"This project does not benefit us, not only as citizens but as human beings," said Carleen Thomas of the Sacred Trust Initiative for the Tsleil-Waututh Nation. "The scope is so narrow. How can a regulatory process not consider the impacts of climate change?"

The Trans Mountain expansion, if approved, would add 980 kilometres of new pipeline to a system that already transports 300,000 barrels per day of crude oil and refined petroleum from

Alberta to refineries and marketing terminals in Vancouver and Washington State. It has been hotly-debated since its proposal and is the current subject of a federal court case launched by the Tsleil-Waututh Nation.

Calls for its rejection are not only based on environmental concerns, said activists, but issues of Indigenous consent, a negative financial impact on municipalities, and a "fraudulent" federal review process.

"We're here to change the fundamentally flawed NEB process," said Grand Chief Stewart Phillip of the [Union of BC Indian Chiefs](#). "The outstanding question of today is, Prime Minister Trudeau, where are you?" he asked.

During the election campaign, the Liberal party [promised](#) to review and overhaul Canada's environmental assessment process, including the NEB. It also vowed to consider upstream impacts and greenhouse gas emissions resulting from projects, not only for new projects, but existing ones as well.

If the Trudeau government doesn't step in, said Stewart, it will have profoundly disappointed those who put their faith in his leadership on Oct. 19, 2015.

"We expect him to follow through on those commitments," he told a roaring crowd. "They gave us hope after 10 years of the long dark night of the Harper regime."

A broken system; an Indigenous issue

According to NEB regulations, only interveners and accredited media are permitted in the hearing room, while the proceedings will be broadcast online for the public. The procedure is evidence that the system is dysfunctional, according to the City of Burnaby, one of many Vancouver-area municipalities that has vehemently opposed the project.

"This should have been stopped a long time ago when it was said

that the hearing is a sham, doesn't represent Canadians, and is not transparent," said Burnaby Councillor Sav Dhaliwal. "A public hearing minus the public! What kind of public hearing is that?"

"I'm so tired of the shit," agreed Musqueam activist Audrey Siegl. "What is being pushed on us — not only is it wrong, it's amoral."

She took the idea even further, and likened the public's absence in the hearing room to the disappearance of Canada's natural resources, the disappearance of Indigenous girls and women, and the struggle of her people to survive under the current governmental system:

"Our existence on our own land as First Nations people is an inconvenience to this government because we remind them that they failed in their mission to eradicate us."

A victory in rejecting the Kinder Morgan pipeline is a victory for all, she told protesters, calling on the public to keep up its energy, remain strong, and fight in solidarity to bury the pipeline expansion proposal. Speaking after Siegl, Chief Aaron Sam of the Lower Nicola Indian Band withdrew his nation as an intervener in the NEB hearings in protest of the system.

The NEB hearings will continue until Jan. 20 before moving onto to Calgary, Alta. The Trans Mountain expansion is a \$5.4 billion project expected to triple the pipeline's carrying capacity, generate at least 4,500 construction jobs at peak employment, and \$23.7 billion in additional taxes and royalties for provincial and federal governments.

Musqueam activist Audrey Siegl gathers support during an anti-Kinder Morgan pipeline in Burnaby, B.C. on Tues. Jan. 19, 2015. Photo by Elizabeth McSheffrey.

Ph



Photos from the protest

Protesters marched right to the doors of the Delta Burnaby Hotel and Conference Centre, where the NEB Trans Mountain hearing took place. Photo by Elizabeth McSheffrey on Tues. Jan. 19, 2016.



An Indigenous woman sings in a drumming circle outside the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain expansion hearing in Burnaby, B.C. Photo by Elizabeth McSheffrey on Tues. Jan. 19, 2016.

Demonstrators fought not only to cancel the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion, but to overhaul the NEB system as well. Photo by Elizabeth McSheffrey on Tues. Jan. 19, 2016.

"Whose Coast? Our coast" chanted protesters during the first day of NEB hearings on Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline expansion. Photo by Elizabeth McSheffrey on Tues. Jan. 19, 2016.

480 readings

[Independent economists: TPP will kill 450,000 US jobs; 75,000 Japanese jobs, 58,000 Canadian jobs](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 21 January 2016 11:40

By [CORY DOCTOROW](#)

<http://boingboing.net/2016/01/20/independent-economists-tpp-wi.html#more-444398>



Proponents of the secretly negotiated Trans Pacific Partnership -- which lets companies force governments to get rid of their labor, environmental and safety rules in confidential tribunals -- say it's all worth it because it will deliver growth and jobs to the stagnant economies of the rich world.

[Independent analysis from the World Bank](#) put paid to the idea that TPP states would experience any

growth, but didn't address the question of jobs.

But [a new working paper](#) from Jerome Capaldo and Alex Izurieta, economists from Tufts University's Global Development and Environment Institute and Jomo Kwame Sundaram -- formerly the United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development takes a critical, independent look at the economic modeling performed by the TPP's proponents and finds it based on a set of nonsensical, nonstandard assumptions about how economies perform.

Table 5: TPP scenario (changes compared to baseline projections, 2015-2025)

	Net Exports	GDP Growth		Employment	Real Exchange Rate
	10-year Change	Av. Annual Change	10-year Change	10-year Change	Av. Annual Change
<i>Units</i>	% of GDP	%	%	Thousands	%
TPP, developed economies		-0.04	-0.34	-625	-0.83
United States	0.20	-0.06	-0.54	-448	-0.65
Canada	-0.58	0.03	0.28	-58	-1.09
Japan	1.54	-0.01	-0.12	-74	-1.28
Australia	0.71	0.10	0.87	-39	-1.44
New Zealand	2.13	0.09	0.77	-6	-1.23
TPP, developing economies		0.22	2.03	-147	-1.22
East Asia: Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam	1.69	0.24	2.18	-55	-1.08
Latin America: Chile and Peru	1.18	0.31	2.84	-14	-1.55
Mexico	0.20	0.11	0.98	-78	-1.14
Total TPP				-771	
Non-TPP, Developed economies		-0.43	-3.77	-879	0.55
Non-TPP, Developing		-0.60	-5.24	-4,450	0.44

The researchers revisited the pro-TPP research using a "realistic" set of modeling assumptions,

based on the widely accepted United Nations Global Policy Model (GPM). When they re-run the numbers on the TPP's impact on jobs, they come back with a stark finding: developed nations that sign TPP can expect to hemorrhage jobs by the tens of thousands -- and poor countries will gain few, if any jobs from those losses.

TPP would generate net losses of GDP in the United States and Japan. For the United States, they project that GDP would be 0.54 percent lower than it would be without TPP, 10 years after the treaty enters into force. Japan's GDP is projected to decrease 0.12 percent.

Economic gains would be negligible for other participating countries - less than one percent over ten years for developed countries and less than three percent for developing ones. These projections are similar to previous findings that TPP gains would be small for many countries.

TPP would lead to employment losses in all countries, with a total of 771,000 lost jobs. The United States would be the hardest hit, with a loss of 448,000 jobs. Developing economies participating in the agreement would also suffer employment losses, as higher competitive pressures force them to curtail labor incomes and increase production for export.

TPP would lead to higher inequality, as measured by changes in the labor share of national income. The authors foresee competitive pressures on labor income combining with employment losses to push

labor shares lower, redistributing income from labor to capital in all countries. In the United States, this would exacerbate a multi-decade downward trend.

TPP would lead to losses in GDP and employment in non-TPP countries. In large part, the loss in GDP (3.77 percent) and employment (879,000) among non-TPP developed countries would be driven by losses in Europe, while developing country losses in GDP (5.24%) and employment (4.45 million) reflect projected losses in China and India.

[Trading Down: Unemployment, Inequality and Other Risks of the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement](#)

[Jeronim Capaldo, Alex Izurieta, Jomo Kwame Sundaram/GDAE Working Paper]

['More Realistic' Modelling Of TPP's Effects Predicts 450,000 US Jobs Lost, Contraction Of Economy](#) [Glyn Moody/Techdirt]

663 readings

[Subject: Site C: It's time for Ottawa to intervene](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 19 January 2016 21:18

From: Ruth Ann Darnell, PVEA Coordinator

Peace Valley Environment Association

PO Box 6062
Fort St. John, BC V1J 4H6
Email: peacevalleyenv@gmail.com

Keep up-to-date with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or through our informative [website](#).

[View this email online](#)

Dear Ruth Ann,

Thank you for speaking out against the Site C dam. British Columbia's plan to turn one of the last protected areas of the Peace River Valley in northeastern BC into a gigantic hydro-electric reservoir is an unacceptable violation of Indigenous peoples human rights.

Thanks to everyone who took action we've been able to send more than [15,000 electronic signatures to BC Premier Clark](#) urging a halt to the destructive Site C dam, as well as thousands more letters on December 10th for our annual Write for Rights letter-writing marathon.

These actions are part of a growing national movement calling for the rights of First Nations in the Peace Valley to be respected and their voices listened to.

But even as momentum grows, the struggle has become increasingly urgent.

Despite the fact that fundamental concerns about the Treaty rights of First Nations in the Peace Valley are still before the courts, BC Hydro has plunged ahead with clear-cutting the Valley floor.

The before-and-after photos above show some of the destruction that has already taken place. It will get much worse if the dam proceeds, as it would flood more than 80km of the Peace River Valley, including pristine old growth forest and fertile farmlands.

A small group of community members – the Treaty 8 Stewards of the Land – have been able to bring the logging to at least a temporary halt by setting up a camp at an historic site in the path of the destruction. But in doing so they are risking arrest.

Here's what one of the Stewards of the Land, artist Helen Knott, [said in a public statement that we've posted to our website](#): *"Do I want to be arrested? No, I am here peacefully doing what I believe is right and needed but this land is a part of who I am and I will take a stand for it."*

It's not too late to stop Site C, but we need your help. The

Stewards of the Land, Amnesty International and many others are calling on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to intervene in this crucial case.

[>> Will you take action again by calling on Prime Minister Trudeau to stop Site C?](#)

When Prime Minister Trudeau was elected, he promised that his government's highest priority would be to forge a new relationship with Indigenous peoples based on respect for the rights protected in the Treaties, the Canadian Constitution and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

What Prime Minister Trudeau's government does next about Site C will be a crucial test of his promise to respect the Treaties.

The Site C dam is a provincial project but there are also federal permits needed for construction to continue. The federal government has the power to halt construction. And it urgently needs to do so.

[That's why we've updated our action.](#) Now, in addition to continuing to collect signatures on a petition to Premier Clark, each time the petition is signed a message will be sent directly to the Prime Minister.

[We urge you to send a message to Prime Minister Trudeau: It's time for the federal government to do the right thing.](#)

Please also share the updated action with your friends and colleagues! It's important for the government to see that Canadians across the country want action NOW.

What's at stake?

- Respect for Treaty rights, the protection of Indigenous rights in the Canadian Constitution, and international human rights law
- One of the last places where members of the West Moberly, Prophet River and other First Nations in northeastern BC can still practice their culture and way of life
- A unique ecosystem and the many cultural sites that mark 10,000 years of human history in the Peace Valley
- Justice and fairness

Read what the global head of Amnesty International had to say about Site C in [an open letter to Prime Minister Trudeau](#):

"Recognizing and upholding the human rights of Indigenous peoples in the Peace Valley also has a global importance. Around the world, Indigenous peoples are subjected to extreme impoverishment and widespread violation of their human rights. It is crucial that all levels of government in Canada set positive examples that can help elevate the situation of Indigenous peoples – and not lower the bar by knowingly violating establishing international and domestic norms and standards for the protection of Indigenous rights."

Thank you again for taking action for the human rights of Indigenous peoples in British Columbia.

Sincerely,

Craig Benjamin

Campaigner, Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples
Amnesty International Canada

P.S. [Thank you for sending a message to Prime Minister Trudeau](#) to remind his government that respecting the Treaties means stopping Site C.

PHOTO CREDITS

Top: Children dancing in Peace Valley by Little Anuk Photography
Second: Before and after clear-cut in Peace Valley by Garth Lenz

Last Updated on Wednesday, 20 January 2016 23:10

519 readings

[Treaty 8 Stewards of the Land set out conditions to protect lands](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 19 January 2016 21:02

Peaceful camp occupancy continues at Site C dam construction site

ROCKY MOUNTAIN FORT CAMP, BC, Treaty 8 Territory, CNW/ - First Nation members today called on the Canadian and British Columbian governments to embrace a three-point plan that will protect lands at imminent threat of destruction as preparatory work continues to build the

Site C dam.

"As *Treaty 8 Stewards of the Land*, we have been camped out at Rocky Mountain Fort for many days in accordance with our belief that the Site C dam project represents a direct, and unnecessary threat to the traditional lands of Treaty 8 peoples," said Yvonne Tupper. "We call on Prime Minister Trudeau and Premier Christy Clark to work with us to ensure that these lands are protected by temporarily suspending approvals to log forests, build roads, and clear further lands in preparation for dam construction."

The three-point plan calls for:

- A temporary suspension of all construction and land-clearing operations related to the Site C dam project until court challenges initiated by First Nations and local landowners who are opposed to the project are finally determined.
- The federal government to temporarily suspend all federal Site C dam project approvals and the issuance of any future permits pending an expedited, open and transparent federal review of the infringement of Constitutionally protected Treaty 8 rights by the Site C dam.
- The provincial government to temporarily suspend all construction work at the Site C dam site pending an independent review by the BC Utilities Commission of the Site C dam project, with full procedural safeguards, as recommended by the federal/provincial Joint Review Panel and many others.

Today's release of the three-point protection plan marks the 20th day that *Treaty 8 First Nation Stewards of Land*, joined by local landowners and supporters from across British Columbia, have been camped at the historic Rocky Mountain Fort site. The camp stands a short distance from where the Moberly River meets the Peace River, just up-river from the proposed Site C dam site. The dam, if built, would flood 107 kilometres of river valley lands along the Peace River and its tributaries and lead for example to the permanent loss of numerous First Nation burial grounds, other culturally and historically important sites, and valuable farmland.

Historically and still today, the Peace River has been the entranceway to vast bountiful lands and waters, as well as being the foothold that has welcomed and provided for many different groups of people and enterprises.

There are two significant events that explain why we are united and with peaceful intent to protect and care for the Peace River Valley. First, along these waters and islands of the Peace River, battling Beaver (also known as the Dane-zaa) and Cree agreed to a truce so that their future generations could co-exist and be sustained by the land and water in perpetuity.

Secondly, the signing of the Treaty in the Peace River Valley between First Nations and the Crown promised that we would live a peaceful shared co-existence. Also, First Nations were guaranteed to be able to always pursue their usual vocations prior to entering into Treaty and without forced interference.

There are other examples of peaceful relationships with First Nations: explorers were guided into new places; fur traders were taught ways to survive and prospered; gold seekers passed through freely; and, pioneer families established farming homesteads.

These longstanding relationships and the solemn promises of Treaty are what guide us and it is in that spirit that we are here today at the Rocky Mountain Fort Camp and its surroundings on the south banks of the Peace River Valley. We, the *Treaty 8 Stewards of the Land* and our supporters, are direct descendants of the people who were the first inhabitants, Treaty signatories, and later, settlers of the Peace River Valley.

We are reasonable, responsible, and law abiding citizens. We are mothers, youth, Elders, farmers, bushmen, business owners, teachers and artists. Our support is not only local but nation-wide. We are respectful and have no intent to be involved in any occurrences that would be unsafe or harmful to either humans and property.

"We continue to be involved in the peaceful, lawful exercise of our Treaty Rights to protect the land and highlight our concerns about the irreversible, negative impacts that this project will have on the Peace River Valley and on the exercise of our constitutionally protected Treaty 8 rights," said Art Napoleon.

"We want a binding commitment from the federal and provincial governments that they will honor, respect and take into proper consideration the findings and recommendations emanating from the above three action items. Once the three actions are completed, then the governments can decide whether or not to lift the suspension on Site C's construction or to make the suspension permanent," said Helen Knott.

The Treaty 8 Stewards of the Land contacted internationally respected energy expert Robert McCullough to ask whether or not a temporary suspension of construction of the Site C Dam would be costly to BC taxpayers and hydro ratepayers.

Robert McCullough replied,

"The short answer is no. The federal/provincial Site C Joint Review Panel found that Site C is being built before it is needed and so the relatively high cost Site C power will be exported at a loss for the first four years of operation. BC Hydro is likely to lose 50 cents on every dollar of Site C power exported during the first four years of operation. This amounts to a loss of hundreds of millions of dollars, which is likely to more than offset the costs associated with temporarily suspending Site C Construction.

Ironically, BC Hydro is concerned about delay while regional bulk power electric prices are falling to their lowest levels in history. The U.S. Energy Information Administration annual on-peak average price for our region has fallen to just 41% of its levels since 2007. Current prices -- and forward prices through 2025 -- are approximately half the price of Site C."

This information demonstrates the economic folly of Site C. Clearly the *Treaty 8 Stewards of the Land* and their supporters are acting in the best interests of all British Columbians.

SOURCE Treaty 8 Stewards of the Land

For further information: Helen Knott, Treaty 8 Steward of the Land at (250) 280-2277; Art Napoleon, Treaty 8 Steward of the Land at (250) 818-5626; Yvonne Tupper, Treaty 8 Steward of the Land at (250) 874 0079; On Cost of Delay: Robert McCullough, McCullough Research, at (503) 784-3758

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581 readings

[CORRUPTION US STYLE: the silent curse at the UN](#)

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 17 January 2016 16:08

FROM THE PEJNEWS ARCHIVE

by joan russow PhD

Global Compliance Research Project

March 8 2003

Before leaving the United Nations on March 8 2003, I circulated 400 copies of the following:

CORRUPTION US STYLE: the silent curse at the UN

Although it is common knowledge at the UN that the US bribes, intimidates , threatens, cajoles coerces other states particularly the non-permanent member states of the UN Security Council , there is reluctance to refer to the US actions as corruption. The US has been ready to condemn other states as being corrupt but rarely is prepared to recognize the hypocrisy of its failing to designate its own actions as corrupt. When I raised the issue at a press scrum at the UN when I asked the Ambassador from Pakistan to comment on the fact that the US is cajoling, intimidating, and offering financial incentives to other members of the UN Security Council. I was approached by the media handler, and asked if I was with the media, and reprimanded by members of the media. I then have asked the accredited media at the UN why they do not raise the issue of corruption, and have found that there is great reluctance to raising the issue. The answer probably lies in the fact admitted by some members of the media that raising such issues might jeopardize their accreditation as media.

The US has established a code which has been scripted: 1. If the Security Council is not united the UN will become irrelevant (ie. if the Security Council does not endorse the US proposal) 2. "Serious consequences" is UN code for Military invasion has been argued by Powell. (However, under the Convention on the Law of Treaties all terms in international documents must be interpreted in their ordinary language usage". Most other UN Security Council members did not understand "serious consequences" as being equivalent to military invasion 3. there is some progress with the inspections but not sufficient 4. Iraq must demonstrate full, unconditional, immediate and active cooperation .. 4. Inspection cannot go on forever there must be a deadline - currently proposed by the US/GB resolution as March 17 5. If Iraq has not complied with 4, then "all necessary means could be used to force them to disarm" or "remain seized of the matter"

At the UN, prior to the Blix El Abrade reports on March 7, buzzing around the UN was concern about how Guinea, as the new President of the Security Council had been "leaned" on "pressured" . Also if one compares the statement made by Angola after the first Blix report and the statement made yesterday one can see that even Angola which had spoken out so strongly about the devastation of war is not speaking in US code. When one asks around the UN about the change of heart of Angola, the answer inevitably is the US negotiations around the oil industry. Similarly, Cameroon which previously had been opposed to war, appears to be evoking the US code.

In an proposal for impeachment in 1991, the corrupt actions by Bush the First at the UN Security Council were used as one of the grounds for impeachment. Currently there is another proposal to impeach Bush the Second. For all the reasons advocated in the current proposal, definitely corruption is an integral part of case against Bush the Second.

Joan Russow (PhD)

Global Compliance Research Institute

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[A growing tide in Europe says again: "GMOs, no thank you!"](#)

[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 15 January 2016 16:18

A growing tide in Europe says again: "GMOs, no thank you!"

Blogpost by Timothy Eden - 16 November, 2015 at 16:45 [1 comment](#)

Despite years of pressure and efforts by the European Union political elite in favour of genetically engineered (GE) crops, European citizens (all of you) and national governments from a broad range of political backgrounds have won a major victory: [17 European countries and 4 European regions have chosen to ban GE crops](#). For those in the rest of the world who are fighting large-scale industrial and chemical agriculture – and the GE crops that abet it – this victory gives hope. Now they see hope for equitable and sustainable solutions such as [ecological farming](#).

#EuropeSaysNO

- GM crop opt-out notified
- No opt-out notified
- Non-EU country



17 countries and 4 regions opt out of EU GM crop approvals

These 17 European countries and 4 regions have now clearly decided with legal determination that no GE crops will be planted in the foreseeable future in their territories. Together these countries comprise over two-thirds of the arable land of Europe and represent 65% of EU population. This decisive majority demonstrates how public opposition to GE foods is a growing tide in Europe and around the world.

There are many reasons for Europe and the world to remain sceptical about GE crops as outlined in our most recent report: [Twenty Years of Failure: Why GM crops have failed to deliver on their promises.](#)

The European opposition to GE crops is a huge victory over the corporate control of our food production. It is the explicit and strong reaffirmation of the right for people everywhere in the world to choose the food they want to eat and the type of agriculture they want to encourage. In essence, it is about ecological farming, food sovereignty and healthy and nutritious food.

Greenpeace believes in a system of farming based on science, innovation, knowledge and biodiversity. We call this [eco farming](#). Eco farming allows us to confront modern challenges, such as

climate change, while preserving environmental integrity and protecting health.



GE is the wrong approach to food and agriculture because it encourages monocultures, intensification, and chemicals-use while undermining biodiversity. GE also shifts the power away from small and medium-size farmers to the major corporations and their patented genetic materials. These are all elements of the broken food system we fight against. A new farming system with people and farmers at its heart is the way to go.

Timothy Eden is a Greenpeace Volunteer.

992 readings

[Revolving Doors: Monsanto and the Regulators](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 15 January 2016 15:47

by Jennifer Ferrara

<http://www.psrast.org/ecologmons.htm>

***The Ecologist* September October 1998 (This edition was trashed by the printing office after threats from Monsanto) {footnotes are missing}**

Traditionally, key figures at the FDA in particular have either held important positions at Monsanto, or are destined to do so in the future. Is it surprising therefore that Monsanto gets clearance for its often dangerous products?

Though the evolution of genetic engineering from a laboratory science to a method of creating commercial products happened very fast - within a decade - the US government saw the commercialization of biotechnology coming and deliberately chose a path that has amounted to nonregulation. Genetic engineering broke through natural barriers of reproduction and sped up plant and animal breeding processes, but agribusiness corporations were wary that burdensome regulations would hinder new discoveries and therefore the commercial development of the technology. The federal government took up industry's cause. Instead of establishing strict, precautionary regulations that gave priority to public and environmental health, the government patched together an inadequate regulatory system that relied on risk assessment, industry science, and corporate volunteerism.

The US was in the heat of a high-tech economic race with Japan, and, as far as agriculture was concerned, lawmakers saw genetic engineering as the new technology that would allow the US to maintain its position as the world's agricultural "leader". The federal government would erect no law that might reduce America's competitiveness in the future world market for bio-engineered products.

The first government body to establish guidelines for biotechnology research was the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in 1976.[1] Since the NIH is an advisory and not a regulatory body, it could formulate guidelines, but it had no power to enforce them. From the beginning, the NIH guidelines relied on the scientific community's and industry's self-regulation, starting a trend that continues today. As corporations became more involved in genetic engineering, NIH guidelines made accommodations for field tests and mass production of genetically engineered organisms. In 1977 and 1978, 16 bills to regulate genetic research were introduced in the US Congress. None was passed, and the NIH guidelines - which dealt primarily with medical and pharmaceutical research and did not take a precautionary approach - remained the sole regulatory mechanism for biotechnology research.

In the early 1980s, agribusiness corporations were developing genetically engineered plants, animal drugs, and livestock, but no system was in place to regulate the development, sale, or use of these products.[2] This was the era

of the deregulatory Reagan/Bush administration, which developed the framework by which bio-engineered products, including food, are "regulated" today. Industrial profit, not public safety, was the administration's top priority. Government officials in the Office of Management and Budget, the Departments of State and Commerce, and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy wanted to ensure that the administration did not do anything to "stifle" the dev[3] The Bush-era President's Council on Competitiveness, chaired by Vice-President Dan Quayle, joined the biotechnology industry in opposing strong regulations and close oversight by federal agencies.[4]

The result was a 1986 "biotechnology regulatory framework".[5] The policy was founded on the corporate-generated assertion that bioengineering was just an extension of traditional plant and animal breeding, and that bio-engineered products did not differ fundamentally from non-engineered organisms.[6] The administration determined that existing federal agencies could regulate bio-engineered products sufficiently and gave them overlapping regulatory authority.[7] For instance, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) would regulate bio-engineered organisms in food and drugs. The United States Department of Agriculture would regulate genetically engineered crop plants and animals. The Environmental Protection Agency would regulate genetically engineered organisms released into the environment for pest control. And the NIH would look at organisms that could affect public health. In determining that existing agencies could do the job of regulating bioengineered products, the administration avoided passing new, more stringent federal laws or establishing a new regulatory agency devoted to the task.

The policy left gaping communication gaps between agencies, plenty of regulatory ground uncovered, and confusion over who would regulate what.[8,9] But most importantly, the regulations were founded on the false premise that bio-engineered organisms used for food and agricultural products are no different from non-engineered, conventional products.¹⁰ In fact, to produce genetically engineered foods, researchers take genes from food or non-food organisms and add them to another organism to alter its genetic makeup in ways not possible through sexual reproduction. The process deletes essential proteins or adds entirely new ones, and can modify genetic characteristics in entirely unexpected ways. As long as the new genes come from an approved food source, the government treats new or altered genes in bio-engineered foods as natural, not novel, additives. So in most cases regulators are not required to take a precautionary approach when evaluating new genetically engineered food products; products are considered safe until proven otherwise.

As late as 1994, it appeared that the federal government was still playing catch-up in establishing working biotechnology safety regulations. The Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), which monitors the biotechnology industry and the federal regulatory system, was pointing out big holes in the so-called framework." "Fundamentally, it does not contain sufficient

statutory authority to oversee all of the products and activities entailed in genetic engineering," wrote UCS in February 1994. "Where authority does exist, there are problems with implementing regulations and policies." For example, a 1992 FDA policy exempted corporations from having to test bio-engineered food for safety and get FDA approval before the foods are put on the market.² Unless the corporation determined that "sufficient safety questions exist",³ corporations could undergo voluntary, private "consultations" with the agency before marketing their product.⁴

It is not unusual for agribusiness corporations like Monsanto to manipulate the limited safety regulations that exist. To establish safety standards for new products, federal agencies rely on studies performed by the very corporations that are trying to get their products on the market. Studies to determine the long-term health consequences of new products are not always required. Over the years, many corporations have submitted fraudulent test results showing that their products are safe, or they have simply withheld information or studies indicating otherwise. Because the federal government protects corporate safety studies as trade secrets, they are not available for public scrutiny. By sheltering corporations in this way, federal agencies hold corporations' pursuit of profits above the public's right to good health and a safe environment.

The Regulatory Irony

Laws governing biotechnology continue to favour agribusiness and biotechnology corporations, but as the industry has developed, the corporate push for specific types of regulations has taken ironic twists. The initial lack of a cautious regulatory approach enabled small biotechnology companies to develop and market new bio-engineered products at a rapid pace. In the meantime, larger agribusiness corporations like Monsanto and Ciba-Geigy were buying up these small companies while developing their own expansive in-house biotechnology research and marketing operations. During this time, Monsanto, Ciba-Geigy, and several other agribusiness corporations came virtually to dominate the world market for bio-engineered food products, strengthening their hold over much of the world's food supply.

From their position at the top, Monsanto and other corporations have actually favoured some seemingly tight regulations, but, it turns out, only when the regulations serve corporate marketing purposes. Regulations that require corporations to submit a plethora of costly scientific data to regulatory agencies, for example, discourage competition from smaller biotechnology and seed companies while giving the public the illusion that new biotechnology products undergo rigorous safety evaluations and are therefore safe.

In 1995, for example, Monsanto lobbied against a provision in the EPA funding bill that would have prevented the EPA from regulating agricultural

plants bio-engineered to contain the toxic bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt). Genetically engineered foods had just hit the market, and Monsanto was fully aware that almost any EPA regulations for Bt plants would publicly sanction the genetically engineered products and defuse resistance from public interest environmental groups. Furthermore, corporations could only get their Bt products to market if they had extensive money and resources to jump through all the regulatory hoops. Big corporations alone can meet data requirements and, once in the system, manipulate and pass the EPA's safety evaluation process. With the competition out of the way, the market is theirs.

FDA Scandals and Revolving Doors

To better understand how genetically engineered foods and the associated safety hazards were unleashed onto the American public, take a look at the story of the first mass-marketed bio-engineered food product, the Monsanto corporation's recombinant bovine growth hormone (rBGH). rBGH has been linked to cancer in humans and serious health problems in cows, including udder infections and reproductive problems. rBGH's development and approval was rife with scandal and protest. But the right combination of government backing, corporate science, and heavily-funded corporate public relations schemes paved the way for the first major release of a genetically engineered food into the nation's food supply.

The roles played by the FDA and the Monsanto corporation in the development, safety evaluation, approval, and marketing of rBGH led to the exposure of the American public to the multiple hazards of bioengineered foods. These organizations hid important information about safety concerns, masked disturbing conflicts of interest, and stifled those who were asking the "wrong" questions and telling the truth about rBGH.

The FDA declared rBGH-milk safe for human consumption before important information about how rBGH-milk might affect human health was even available.⁶ When critical information about how rBGH raised the levels of insulin-like growth factor, IGF-1, in milk⁷ and the possible link between IGF-1 and human cancer began to emerge,⁸ [See Kingsnorth in this issue] the FDA was already apparently in too deep to change its mind or ask more questions about the drug's effect on human health. Instead, the agency relied almost exclusively on data generated by the Monsanto corporation and highly criticized by independent scientists to justify a decision it had made years ago. Many independent scientists have called for more extensive, long-term studies, which have never been done.

In 1991, a researcher at the University of Vermont (UVM), where Monsanto was spending nearly half a million dollars to fund test trials of rBGH, leaked information about severe health problems affecting rBGH-treated cows, including mastitis and deformed births.¹ The scientist heading the research

had already made numerous public statements to state lawmakers and the press and released a preliminary report indicating that rBGH-treated cows suffered no abnormal rates of health problems compared with untreated cows.²² The US General Accounting Office (GAO) investigated. During the investigation, the FDA stalled in providing the GAO with original Monsanto test data.²³ and the GAO was unable to obtain critical data from UVM and Monsanto²⁴ The GAO terminated its investigation, concerned that Monsanto had had time to manipulate the questionable data and that any further investigation would be fruitless. In an effort to dissipate public concern, UVM scientists finally released information showing rBGH's negative effect on cow health, years after the findings had been made."

Even FDA insiders have criticized the agency for its slack review of the drug, but the FDA has dismissed these concerns and fired at least one official who blew the whistle on the organization's corrupt drug approval process. Veterinarian Dr. Richard Burroughs reviewed animal drug applications at the FDA's Center for Veterinary Sciences from 1979 until he was ; fired in 1989.²⁶ In 1985, Burroughs headed the FDA's review of rBGH and remained directly involved in the review process for almost five years. Burroughs wrote the original protocols for animal safety studies and reviewed the data that rBGH developers, including Monsanto, submitted as they carried out safety studies.

A 1991 article in *Eating Well* magazine quotes Burroughs describing a change in the FDA beginning in the mid-1980s. "There seemed to be a trend in the place toward approval at any price. It went from a university-like setting where there was independent scientific review to an atmosphere of "approve, approve, approve."²⁷ This is the atmosphere in which the FDA carried out its review of rBGH. According to Burroughs, the FDA was totally unprepared to review rBGH, the first bioengineered animal drug to go through the FDA's approval process; rBGH was out of the scope of most FDA employees' knowledge. But rather than admit incompetence, the FDA "decided to cover up inappropriate studies and decisions," and agency officials "suppressed and manipulated data to cover up their own ignorance and incompetence."²⁸

Burroughs himself was faced with corporate representatives who wanted the agency to ease strict safety testing protocols, and he saw corporations drop sick cows from rBGH test trials and manipulate data in other ways to make health and safety problems disappear. According to Burroughs, the raw, untouched data stashed away behind the agency's doors and protected as trade secrets would show otherwise.

Burroughs challenged the agency's lenience and its changing role from guardian of public health to protector of corporate profits. He criticized the FDA and its handling of rBGH in statements to Congressional investigators, in testimony to state legislatures, and to the press.²⁹ Inside the FDA, he rejected a number of corporate-sponsored safety studies as insufficient and was prevented by his superiors from investigating data

submitted by industry revealing possible health problems caused by rBGH. Though Burroughs had a record at the FDA showing eight straight years of good performance, he began receiving poor performance reports, for which he claims he was set up. Finally, in November 1989, he was fired for "incompetence"

Not only did the FDA fail to act upon evidence that rBGH was not safe, the agency actually promoted the Monsanto corporation's product before and after the drug's approval. In doing so, the FDA took on the impossible double role of regulator and promoter of bioengineered foods. Dr. Michael Hansen of Consumers Union notes that the FDA acted as an rBGH advocate by issuing news releases promoting rBGH, making public statements praising the drug, and writing promotional pieces about rBGH in the agency's publication, FDA Consume;:

This dual role also manifested itself in other ways. In an apparent attempt to quell public controversy over rBGH, for example, two FDA researchers published industry and "independent" data in the journal Science in 1990 to show that rBGH was safe for consumers.) Gerald Guest, the director for FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine told Science, "We'd like to get our side of the story out, to show why we're comfortable with the safety. We'd like for people to know that it's a thoughtful process. and we want it to be open and credible

Guest was apparently doing a lot of wishful thinking. Professor Samuel Epstein criticized the FDA for acting "as a booster or advocate for an animal drug that hasn't yet been approved." Epstein and others faulted the FDA for including only pieces of unpublished studies about rBGH in the Science article. but not making the full studies available for independent review.³⁴

The FDA's pro-rBGH activities make more sense in light of conflicts of interest between the FDA and the Monsanto corporation." Michael R. Taylor, the FDA's deputy commissioner for policy, wrote the FDA's rBGH labelling guidelines. The guidelines, announced in February 1994, virtually prohibited dairy corporations from making any real distinction between products produced with and without rBGH." To keep rBGH-milk from being "stigmatized" in the marketplace, the FDA announced that labels on non-rBGH products must state that there is no difference between rBGH and the naturally occurring hormone. In March 1994,

Taylor was publicly exposed as a former lawyer for the Monsanto corporation for seven years. While working for Monsanto, Taylor had prepared a memo for the company as to whether or not it would be constitutional for states to erect labelling laws concerning rBGH dairy products. In other words. Taylor helped Monsanto figure out whether or not the corporation could sue states or companies that wanted to tell the public that their products were free of Monsanto's drug.

Taylor wasn't the only FDA official involved in rBGI-1 policy who had

worked for Monsanto. Margaret Miller, deputy director of the FDA's Office of New Animal Drugs was a former Monsanto research scientist who had worked on Monsanto's rBGH safety studies up until 1989. Suzanne Sechen was a primary reviewer for rBGH in the Office of New Animal Drugs between 1988 and 1990. Before coming to the FDA, she had done research for several Monsanto-funded rBGH studies as a graduate student at Cornell University. Her professor was one of Monsanto's university consultants and a known rBGH promoter. Remarkably, the GAO determined in a 1994 investigation that these officials' former association with the Monsanto corporation did not pose a conflict of interest. But for those concerned about the health and environmental hazards of genetic engineering, the revolving door between the biotechnology industry and federal regulating agencies is a serious cause for concern.

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Travel to Peace Valley Camp to
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[C](#)

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Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 12 January 2016 09:47

Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs

January 12, 2016

David Suzuki and Grand Chief Phillip Travel to Peace Valley Camp to support Treaty 8 Opposition to Site C

(Treaty 8 Territory/Rocky Mountain Fort Camp, B.C. – January 12, 2016) The historic Rocky Mountain Fort Camp in the Peace Valley, populated by Treaty 8 *Stewards of the Land* and local landowners opposing BC Hydro's Site C dam, received a high profile visit today from Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, and well known environmentalist David Suzuki, who have joined together in their support of Treaty 8 First Nations opposition to the proposed Site C.

"It is infuriating and deeply frustrating that we continue to be confronted with this provocative and aggressive approach from BC Hydro and the Province of British Columbia when Treaty 8's court proceedings have not even been completed and the Site C project has not been properly reviewed by the BC Utilities Commission," said Grand Chief Stewart Phillip. "It is absolutely unacceptable that BC Hydro is relentlessly clear-cutting forests right now to prepare for the flooding of the Peace River Valley, which will destroy archaeological sites and eradicate prime farmland. The proposed Site C project will irreparably harm and adversely impact the environment and the Treaty 8 First Nations and all residents whose lives are entwined with the health of the land and waters."

BC Hydro is moving ahead with plans to clear-cut forests around the Rocky Mountain Fort site on the west side of the Moberly River in preparation for building the \$9 billion mega-dam. Site C dam would flood 107- kilometres of the scenic Peace River and its tributaries, including the traditional hunting and fishing grounds of Treaty 8 First Nations.

"I thought we had stopped this mega-dam project 30 years ago," said author and broadcaster David Suzuki. "It makes no sense that now, when there are more reasons than ever to change course, the B.C. Government is forging ahead. I applaud the camp for taking a stand against an unnecessary and destructive project that will devastate a region already inundated by hydro-electric, oil and gas and industrial developments. Promises by government to uphold and respect treaty rights ring hollow when construction is given the green light before three on-going First Nations court cases against the dam are even finished. BC Hydro must stop its work immediately and allow the court cases to be decided." The Rocky Mountain Fort Camp is on the traditional territory of the Treaty 8 First Nations. In addition to its significance to Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, the camp is the gateway to the rest of the threatened Peace Valley. BC Hydro has served notice that the camp must be dismantled.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip and David Suzuki will be at the camp from 9a.m to 1 p.m. PT and are available for interviews after 1:30 p.m. PT

Media inquiries: Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President, Union of BC Indian Chiefs Phone: [\(250\) 490-5314](tel:(250)490-5314) Don Bain, Executive Director, Union of BC Indian Chiefs Phone: [\(604\) 831-9709](tel:(604)831-9709)

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[Venezuela Passes Law Banning GMOs, by Popular Demand](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 04 January 2016 23:19

JANUARY 1, 2016

WILLIAM CAMACARO - FREDERICK B. MILLS - CHRISTINA M. SCHIAVONI

Farmer, Cooperativa Aracal in the State of Yaracuy. Credit: Fred Mills

The National Assembly of Venezuela, in its final session before a neoliberal dominated opposition takes the helm of legislative power on January 5, passed one of the most progressive seed laws in the world on December 23, 2015; it was promptly signed into law by President Nicolas Maduro. On December 29, during his television show, “[In Contact with Maduro, number 52](#),” Maduro [said](#) that the new seed law provides the conditions to produce food “under an agro-ecological model that respects the pacha mama (mother earth) and the right of our children to grow up healthy, eating healthy.” The law is a victory for the international movements for agroecology and food sovereignty because it bans transgenic (GMO) seed while protecting local seed from privatization. The law is also a product of direct participatory democracy –the people as legislator– in Venezuela, because it was hammered out through a deliberative partnership between members of the country’s National Assembly and a broad-based grassroots coalition of eco-socialist, peasant, and agroecological oriented organizations and institutions. This essay provides an overview of the phenomenon of people as legislator, a summary of the new Seed Law, and an appendix with an unofficial translation of some of the articles of the law.

The People as Legislator of Seed Policy

The Legal Basis

The Seed Law is a glowing example of the legal personality of popular power (poder popular) at work in Venezuela, the people as legislator. As Article 5 of the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela indicates, “Sovereignty resides intransferable in the people, who exercise it directly as provided for in this Constitution and in the law, and indirectly, through suffrage” An example of the direct legislative powers of citizens is found in Article 204, no. 7 of the Constitution which specifically names citizens as potential legislators, should they organize a petition of at least one percent of the registered voters (see also Article 205). There are also numerous references to the legislative power of communal structures in the organic Laws of Popular Power (Poder Popular) passed in 2009 and 2010.

Venezuela’s seed policy had been based on an earlier 2002 Seed Law that was passed in a highly polarized political environment, just months after a short-lived coup against then President Hugo Chavez and just weeks prior to an opposition-led strike and sabotage of the oil industry. That law was superseded in April of 2004, when after halting a project to plant Monsanto’s transgenic soybeans on 500,000 acres of land, then [President Hugo Chavez declared](#), “The people of the United States, of Latin America, and the world, need to follow the example of Venezuela free of transgenics.” This declaration constituted a virtual ban of transgenics. It was also consistent with the government’s emphasis on endogenous development. Endogenous development, as [Christina Schiavoni and William Camacaro describe it](#), means development from within:

“[Endogenous development] implies first looking inside, not outside, to meet the country’s needs, building upon Venezuela’s own unique assets. This means valuing the agricultural knowledge and experience of women, Indigenous, Afro-descendants, and other typically marginalized campesino (peasant farming) populations as fundamental to Venezuela’s food sovereignty. This also means preserving Venezuela’s native seeds, traditional farming methods, and culinary practices.”

Such endogenous development received further support when in June 2012, Chavez made the Country Plan (2013 – 2019) his presidential campaign platform. The Plan, which is now the law of the land, includes among its five major objectives, “the construction of an eco-socialist economic model of production based on a harmonic relationship between humans and nature that guarantees the rational and optimal use of natural resources, respecting the processes and cycles of nature.” The Plan also prioritizes the expansion of agricultural production, but only in a way that advances the goal of food sovereignty (1.4) and accelerates democratic access to the necessary resources for sustainable agricultural production (1.4.2).

Chronology of the People as Legislator of Seed Policy

The blog of Eco-Socialist Space of Popular Power (CDR-SUR) provides a detailed chronology of the popular struggle for input and impact on the new Seed Law. In "[The Process of the Collective Construction of the New Seed Law in Venezuela](#)," CDR-SUR indicates that the people as legislator of seed policy first emerged in response to a notice by the legislative branch of government in mid-2012 that the National Assembly would be considering a substantial revision of the 2002 Seed Law. Since a transgenic and big agribusiness lobby had been at work trying to influence seed policy, it was also time for eco-socialists and other ecological movements to weigh in on the issue.

In response to the Assembly's notice, several hundred social and ecological organizations organized the "International Meeting of Guardians of Seeds" in Monte Carmelo (October 26 – 29, 2012), in the State of Lara, in order to draft measures for consideration by the National Assembly that would unequivocally ban transgenic seed and protect Indigenous, Afro-descendant and peasant seed from privatization. More than 1000 persons, 116 organizations, and 162 institutions participated in the grassroots (popular) deliberations (CDR-SUR).

While the idea of the people as legislator is grounded in the Constitution and the organic laws of popular power, it took some public pressure on the National Assembly and government ministries (called Ministries of Popular Power!) for this legislative voice to be heard and taken into account. In March of 2013, while the relevant legislative committees and government ministries were holding hearings on the Seed Law Project, the "Venezuela Free of Transgenics Campaign" (VFTC) lobbied unsuccessfully for inclusion in the initial phase of debate. The ecological movement, undeterred, organized the Venezuela Free of Transgenics Open Seminar at the Bolivarian University of Venezuela in March of 2013 which sponsored periodic forums on the debate over seed policy.

On May 25, 2013, the VFTC collected signatures at a national mobilization held in the Plaza de Los Museos in Caracas, to petition the National Assembly to include the coalition's voice as a legislative partner in the Seed Law deliberations (CDR-SUR). The next day, according to CDR-SUR, Alfredo Ureña, a deputy of the National Assembly and president of the Permanent Subcommittee on Agro-Food Development, formulated an action plan to ensure that the Seed Law would be anti-transgenic.

In June of 2013, the VFTC stepped up its organizing and education efforts. These efforts included, as part of the Fourth Venezuelan Congress on Biological Diversity (June 28), a workshop on the "collective construction of a Seed Law proposal" (CDR-SUR). This collective effort produced documents directly relevant to the legislative deliberations on the Seed Law.

On October 21, 2013, as documented by William Camacaro and Frederick B.

Mills in [Venezuela and the Battle against Transgenic Seeds](#) (December 6, 2013), the VFTC mobilized in front of the National Assembly to prevent the advance of a Seed Law proposal because it contained stealth provisions that would have opened the door to transgenic seed and possibly allow the privatization of locally shared “free” seeds. This was a critical turning point in the eco-socialist struggle to influence the nation’s seed policy. As CDR-SUR points out, on October 22, in a meeting between the VFTC and legislators involved in drafting the Seed Law, it was agreed that there would be popular participation in the construction of the Seed Law, referred to as the Popular Constituent Debate on the New Seed Law.

According to CDR-SUR, “The Popular Constituent Debate convened on the 28 and 29 of October in Monte Carmelo, Sanare in the State of Lara on the occasion of the Day of Peasant Seed (Semilla Campesina).” It was here that a consensus was hammered out by a large variety of agroecological organizations on the basic objectives of the Seed Law.

As a follow up to this conference in Monte Carmelo, “the second round of discussion [by 135 peasant collectives and educators] took place in the City of Naguanagua in the State of Carabobo from November 1 to 3, 2013” (CDR-SUR). The focus of this round was in large part to determine the procedures of popular debate to ensure that the final product was indeed a result of collective deliberation in concert with key legislators of the National Assembly. These procedures were to ensure the practice of inclusion, public dissemination of information, and the constitutionally grounded praxis of the people as legislator.

The third round of discussion was held at the Latin American Institute of Agroecology Paulo Freire (IALA) in Barinas state on November 22, 2013. During this round the Popular Constituent Debate constructed a proposed preamble, objectives, and structure for the proposed law. It was agreed that the Popular Constituent Debate would meet two more times in the states of Aragua and Merida.

After the last round of Popular Constituent Debate on the New Seed Law, the members of the Popular Movement for the New Seed Law and the National Assembly set up a work group to construct the consensus draft of the law and it is this version that entered into the first of the two required discussions by the National Assembly. On October 14, 2014 the proposed Seed Law was approved by the first discussion, one of two discussions normally required prior to the passage of a proposed bill.

During 2015, workshops were set up to review the proposed seed law before the final discussion; these workshops included members of the National Assembly, the Venezuela Free of Transgenics Campaign, and several government ministries. Through the workshops, several additional mechanisms were built into the law. These included a means for popular control over seeds by means of the recognition of the Popular Council for the Storage and Protection of Local, Peasant, Indigenous, and Afro-descendant

Seed, as well as a recognition of the government's role in licensing free seed and thereby protecting it from patents or other forms of privatization.

In "[Venezuela to Consider Ban on Transgenic Seed](#)" (June 8, 2015), Camacaro and Mills discuss the consensus reached by the collective efforts of the agroecological movement with regard to seed policy. In short, the popular version of the Seed Law proposal (June 2015) was constructed over a two year period of collective deliberation by a broad coalition of agroecological oriented organizations and movements. On December 26, 2015, [The Popular Movement for the New Seed Law](#) issued a celebratory statement declaring:

"This 22 of December, with the approval of the new Seed Law by the National Assembly, we close the legislative cycle of popular constituent debate and collective deliberation that we initiated more than two years ago. The product of our struggle is a law that has no precedent anywhere in the world in terms of both its emancipatory content and the way it has been made possible by the protagonistic participation of the People as Legislator."

The Seed Law was also endorsed, "after ample discussion," by the Presidential Council of Communes. [A statement issued by the Council on June 3 reads:](#)

"From the diverse voices of the Presidential Council of Popular Government of the Communes, the comuneros (members of communes) of the country solicit the prompt approval, in the second discussion [by the National Assembly], of the Seed Law . . . The Seed Law, constructed collectively from the grassroots, is anti-transgenic and makes us advance significantly towards the recovery and consolidation of local, peasant, Indigenous and Afro-descendant seeds. Moreover we are speaking about a proposed Seed Law, profoundly anti-imperialist and ecosocialist, that incarnates the legacy of the Leader of the Bolivarian Revolution, Hugo Chavez, at a moment in which the transnationals of agribusiness aim at privatizing seed and life."The people as legislator, then, consisting of both the nationwide agroecological movements as well as the highest level of communal representation, made full use of their constitutionally grounded constituent power to partner with the liberal democratic state to forge the nation's seed policy.

Summary of the Seed Law

The new Seed Law is inspired by the eco-socialist movement in Venezuela and the worldwide peasant movement [La Via Campesina](#) and is informed by the Indigenous philosophy of *vivir bien* (living well). As President of Bolivia, Evo Morales Ayma explains:

"*Vivir Bien* well is to live in equality and justice. It is where there is no exploited and no exploiters, where there are no excluded and no persons who exclude others, where there are no marginalized persons and no persons who marginalize others. *Vivir Bien* is to live in community, in collectivity, in

reciprocity, in solidarity, and, most important, in complementarity.” (note 2)

The Seed Law contributes to *vivir bien* and advances eco-socialist principles by promoting small- and medium-scale farming using agroecological methods rather than monoculture that depends heavily on environmentally harmful chemical interventions. Moreover, it prioritizes the collective interest in the farming community’s control of the means of production, distribution and consumption of food. This law bans transgenic seeds and thereby avoids the political capture of seed policy by the corporate interests of transnational big agriculture while promoting and protecting the heirloom seeds and farming methods of Venezuela’s Indigenous, peasant, and Afro-descendant communities. Traditional seeds (*semillas campesinas*) will be immune to patents and privatization and come under the control of the communities that share them. The seed is considered a living thing, and as such is not only an object at hand for use in agriculture, but a subject that is entitled to certain rights and protections. These rights, combined with the philosophy of *vivir bien* and eco-socialist principles, form the ethical and legal basis for the development of food sovereignty and food security and of resistance to transnational corporate capture of the nation’s agricultural policy.

The law is consistent with Article 127 of the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela: “The genome of living things cannot be patented, and the law that refers to bio-ethical principles regulates the matter.” It is also consistent with the Country Plan 2013 -2019 that declares one of the “great historic objectives” to “construct an eco-socialist economic model of production, based on the harmonious relation between man and nature, that guarantees the use and rational and optimal utilization of vital natural resources.” (p. 19-20).

In closing, with the passage of the Seed Law, history is being made in Venezuela. Not only is the law extraordinary in and of itself, both for its content and the for the highly participatory way in which it was developed, but the fact that it was passed at this very moment, in the face of adverse circumstances both globally and nationally, is all the more extraordinary. Globally, national seed legislation is increasingly being co-opted by corporate agribusiness interests, with many governments turning a blind eye, or worse, actively colluding in the process, as has been powerfully [documented by GRAIN and La Via Campesina](#). Nationally, Venezuela’s food system has been under attack by, among other things, an “[economic war](#)” being waged by some elements of the opposition, resulting in food shortages that played a definitive role in influencing the recent elections. The economic war has shown that, despite [important advancements made toward food sovereignty](#), i.e., toward greater national and local popular control over the food system, since the inception of Venezuela’s Bolivarian Revolution, much work remains to be done to achieve a food system that is truly equitable, sustainable, and under the firm control of the people, in partnership with the government. The people, however, are clearly determined, and they are not going to sit back passively

and wait for this to happen, as we have seen with the major popular organizing and mobilizing efforts that ultimately led to the successful passage of the Seed Law.

The passage of the Seed Law thus marks a major step forward for food sovereignty in Venezuela, as well as a victory for the global food sovereignty movement, and a warning sign to corporate agribusiness. However, as they say in Venezuela, “la lucha sigue” – the struggle continues – and indeed the passage of the Seed Law is one step, albeit an important step, in a much longer process. As the popular movements who worked on the Law’s passage are already emphasizing, now is the time to disseminate it, defend it against likely backlash, and push forward its full implementation. While the Venezuelan people will remain the protagonists in this process, they are calling for international solidarity to defend what might arguably be the world’s most revolutionary seed law.

APPENDIX: Highlights of Several Articles of the Seed Law (unofficial translations)

Article 1 of the law summarizes its main features:

“The present Law has as its objective to preserve, protect, and guarantee the production, propagation, conservation, and free circulation and use of seed, as well as the promotion, research, distribution, and commercialization of the same, based on a socialist agroecological vision, with the aim of consolidating our food security and sovereignty, prohibiting the release, the use, the propagation, and the entrance into the country and the national production of transgenic seeds as well as the patents and right of the breeder over the seed, in a manner that is sovereign, democratic, participatory, co-responsible and in solidarity, making special emphasis on the valorization of the Indigenous, afro-descendent, peasant and local seed, that benefits biodiversity and helps to preserve life on the planet in conformity with what is established in the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.”

Article 2 lays out the goals of the law:

1. Promote the transition from conventional systems of production based on monoculture and the use of agrochemicals with agro-industrial and/or corporate seed for conventional use, to an agroecological system and the preservation of the environment in the short, medium and long term, based on agro-biodiversity.
2. Promote the production of seeds that are necessary to guarantee national production, with the goal of avoiding importation and achieving national sovereignty.
3. Promote the transition to communal and eco-socialist agriculture, in order to protect agro-biodiversity by means of the production of local, peasant,

Indigenous, and Afro-descendant seed.

4. Revalorize and re-legitimize the local, traditional, and ancestral knowledge wisdom, beliefs and practices of the peasant, Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and other communities.

5. Prohibit the privatization of seed.

6. Orient the organization and planning of public policy in function of the different scales of production, distinguishing the policies intended for family agriculture or polyculture in small-scale production from the policies intended for big producers.

Article 3. Seed is recognized as a living thing and a constituent part of Mother Earth and for this reason it is considered an object as well as the subject of right and the application of norms pertaining to the preservation of life on the Planet and the conservation of biological diversity.

Article 4. The local peasant, Indigenous, and Afro-descendant seed is declared a common good of public, cultural as well as natural material and immaterial interest of the peoples; this seed is considered a contribution of our communities to the improvement of vegetable varieties and their propagation and preservation for a sustainable form of agriculture that constitutes the basis of our food and our culture.

Article 5. The production, importation, commercialization, distribution, release, use, propagation and entrance into the country of transgenic seed is prohibited. The National System of Seeds will develop and guarantee the technical, organizational, and institutional capacity to prevent, identify, detect, correct, return, and to sanction the violations of this prohibition.

One of the principle values of the law, expressed in Article 8, is that it “promotes, in a spirit of solidarity, the free exchange of seed and opposes the conversion of seed into intellectual or patented property or any other form of privatization.”

With regard to popular power (grassroots democracy), Article 9 provides that a Popular Council will be responsible for the storage, protection and regulation of Indigenous, Afro-descendant and peasant seed “with an emphasis on the exchange and local distribution of seed to guarantee our food sovereignty and the construction of an eco-socialist model of economic production.

Article 11 of the law also creates a National Seed Commission constituted by officials from several ministries related to agriculture, as well as representatives from both the Presidential Councils that deal with seed policy and the Popular Council for the storage and protection of local, Indigenous, peasant and Afro-descendant seed. This Commission will be responsible for planning and promoting seed policy as well as facilitating research,

development, production and commercialization of seed.

Article 14 creates the National Institute for Seed (INASEM) which will be responsible for providing the material resources and administration necessary for implementing much of the policy developed by the Seed Plan, such as operating labs, offering technical assistance and issuing licenses for the disposition of certain categories of seed. This institute will also include spokespersons from the Presidential Council concerned with seed policy, but is largely a governmental body.

Notes:

1. In the section on chronology, the authors are indebted to the content of a chronology of the struggle produced by the [CDR-SUR](#) (Espacio Ecosocialista Del Poder Popular, Nov. 6, 2015). We have translated parts of that document into English. All shortcomings are, of course, our own.

2. Entrevista al President Evo Morales Ayma, con motivo de la aprobacion en la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas de la Declaracion de las Naciones Unidas sobre los derechos de los pueblos indigenas, La Paz, 24 septiembre, 2007 in Vivir Bien: Mensajes y documentos sobre el Vivir Bien, 1995-2010, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia.)

3. All translations of government documents are unofficial.

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[America the Possible: A Manifesto, Part 1 &2](#)

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 27 February 2016 15:44

America the Possible: A Manifesto, Part 1 &2

by JAMES GUSTAVE SPETH

<https://orionmagazine.org/article/america-the-possible-a-manifesto-part-ii/>



Illustration: Gary Waters

*Part one of two. [Part two was published in
the May/June 2012 issue.](#)*

LIKE YOU AND OTHER AMERICANS, I love my country, its wonderful people, its boundless energy, its creativity in so many fields, its natural beauty, its many gifts to the world, and the freedom it has given us to express ourselves. So we should all be angry, profoundly angry, when we consider what has happened to our country and what

that neglect could mean for our children and grandchildren.

How can we gauge what has happened to America in the past few decades and where we stand today? One way is to look at how America now compares with other countries in key areas. The group of twenty advanced democracies—the major countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), including the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Japan, the Nordic countries, Canada, and others—can be thought of as our peer nations. Here's what we see when we look at these countries. To our great shame, America now has

- *the highest poverty rate, both generally and for children;*
- *the greatest inequality of incomes;*
- *the lowest social mobility;*
- *the lowest score on the UN' s index of “material well-being of children” ;*
- *the worst score on the UN' s Gender Inequality Index;*
- *the highest expenditure on health care as a percentage of GDP, yet all this money accompanied by the highest infant mortality rate, the highest prevalence of mental health problems, the highest obesity rate, the highest percentage of people going without health care due to cost, the highest consumption of antidepressants per capita, and the shortest life expectancy at birth;*
- *the next-to-lowest score for student performance in math and middling performance in science and reading;*
- *the highest homicide rate;*
- *the largest prison population in absolute terms and per capita;*
- *the highest carbon dioxide emissions and the highest water consumption per capita;*
- *the lowest score on Yale' s Environmental Performance Index (except for Belgium) and the largest ecological footprint per capita (except for Denmark);*
- *the lowest spending on international*

development and humanitarian assistance as a percentage of national income (except for Japan and Italy);

- the highest military spending both in total and as a percentage of GDP; and*
- the largest international arms sales.*

Our politicians are constantly invoking America's superiority and exceptionalism. True, the data is piling up to confirm that we're Number One, but in exactly the way we don't want to be—at the bottom.

These deplorable consequences are not just the result of economic and technological forces over which we have no control. They are the results of conscious political decisions made over several decades by both Democrats and Republicans who have had priorities other than strengthening the well-being of American society and our environment. Many countries, obviously, took a different path—one that was open to us as well.

I wish that were all the bad news. Unfortunately, international comparisons only give us a glimpse of what we now face. They miss many of the most important challenges, including in the critical areas of social conditions, national security, and politics. I will spare you the litany of environmental bad news; most of you have already heard it.

When it comes to social conditions, it's important to recognize that nearly 50 million Americans now live in poverty—one in six. If you're in poverty in America, you're living on less than \$400 per week for a family of four. Poverty is the bleeding edge of a more pervasive American shortcoming—massive economic insecurity. About half of American families now live paycheck to paycheck, are financially fragile, and earn less than needed to cover basic living expenses, let alone save for the future.

Back in 1928, right before the Great Depression, the richest 1 percent of Americans received 24 percent of the country's total income. Starting with the New Deal, public policy favored greater equality and a strong middle class, so that by 1976, the share of the richest 1 percent of households had dropped to 9 percent. But then the great re-redistribution began in the 1980s, so that by 2007, right before the Great Recession, the richest 1 percent had regained its 1928 position—with 24 percent of income.

As for national security, the U.S. now spends almost as much on the military as the rest of the world combined. If one totals military and other U.S. security spending, the total easily climbs to over \$1 trillion

annually, about two-thirds of all discretionary federal spending. In what has been called a key feature of the American Empire, America now garrisons the world. Although the Pentagon officially reports that we maintain a mere 660 military bases in 38 countries, if one adds the unreported bases in Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, and elsewhere, there are likely as many as 1,000 U.S. military sites around the world. By 2010, we had covert operations deployed in an estimated 40 percent of the world's 192 nations. On the home front, in 2010, the Washington Post reported that the top-secret world the government created in response to 9/11 now contains some 1,300 government entities and 1,900 private companies all working on programs related to counterterrorism, homeland security, and intelligence in some 10,000 locations across the United States.

When you've got an armful of hammers, every problem looks like a nail, and the U.S. has tended to seek military solutions to problems that might be addressed otherwise. The costs have been phenomenally high. When all told, our wars since 9/11 will cost us over \$4 trillion and more than 8,000 American lives, with another 99,000 U.S. troops already wounded in action or evacuated for serious illness.

Another sorrow is the huge, draining psychological burden that U.S. actions have on its citizens. We see our own military, the CIA, and U.S. contractors engaged in torture and prisoner abuse, large killings of innocent civilians, murders and the taking of body parts as souvenirs, renditions, drone assassinations, military detention without trial, collaboration with unsavory regimes, and more.

Meanwhile, outside our borders, a world of wounds has festered without much help, and often with harm, from the United States. We are neglecting so many problems—from world poverty, underdevelopment, and climate change to emerging shortages of food and water and energy, biological impoverishment, and transnational organized crime.

The following are among the many treaties ratified by all nations, except for a few rogue states—and the United States: the Convention of the Rights of the Child, the Convention Against All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Land Mine Convention, the International Criminal Court convention, the Biodiversity Convention, the Law of the Sea, the Kyoto Protocol of the Climate Convention, and the Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. The U.S. is the main reason we do not now have a World Environment Organization.

In these respects and in many others, the U.S. posture in the world reflects a radical imbalance: a hugely disproportionate focus on the

military and on economic issues and a tragic neglect of some of the most serious challenges we and the world now confront.

These many challenges require farsighted, strong, and effective government leadership and action. Inevitably, then, the path to responding to these challenges leads to the political arena, where a vital, muscular democracy steered by an informed and engaged citizenry is needed. That's the democracy we need, but, unfortunately, it is not the democracy we have. Right now, Washington isn't even trying to seriously address most of these challenges. Neglect, stalemate, and denial rule the day. It is estimated that American politics is more polarized today than at any time since Reconstruction. Polarization, of course, is father to gridlock. Gridlock and stalemate are the last thing our country needs now.

The American political system is in deep trouble for another reason—it is moving from democracy to plutocracy and corporatocracy, supported by the ascendancy of market fundamentalism and a strident antiregulation, antigovernment, antitax ideology. The hard truth is that our political system today is simply incapable of meeting the great challenges described here. What we have is third-rate governance at a time when the challenges we face require first-rate governance.

America thus confronts a daunting array of challenges in the maintenance of our people's well-being, in the conduct of our international affairs, in the management of our planet's natural assets, and in the workings of our politics. Taken together, these challenges place in grave peril much that we hold dear.

The America we must seek for our children and grandchildren is not the America we have today. If we are going to change things for the better, we must first understand the forces that led us to this sea of troubles. When big problems emerge across the entire spectrum of national life, it cannot be due to small reasons. We have encompassing problems because of fundamental flaws in our economic and political system. By understanding these flaws, we can end them and move forward in a very different direction.

I THINK AMERICA GOT OFF COURSE for two primary reasons. In recent decades we failed to build consistently on the foundations laid by the New Deal, by Franklin Roosevelt's Four Freedoms and his Second Bill of Rights, and Eleanor Roosevelt's Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Instead, we unleashed a virulent, fast-growing strain of corporate-consumerist capitalism. "Ours is the Ruthless Economy," say Paul Samuelson and William Nordhaus in their influential textbook, *Macroeconomics*. And indeed it is. In its

ruthlessness at home and abroad, it

creates a world of wounds. As it strengthens and grows, those wounds deepen and multiply.

Such an economy begs for restraint and guidance in the public interest—control that can only be provided by government. Yet, at this point, the captains of our economic life and those who have benefited disproportionately from it have largely taken over our political life. Corporations, long identified as our principal economic actors, are now also our principal *political* actors. The result is a combined economic and political system—the operating system upon which our society runs—of great power and voraciousness, pursuing its own economic interests without serious concern for the values of fairness, justice, or sustainability that democratic government might have provided.

Our political economy has evolved and gathered force in parallel with the course of the Cold War and the growth of the American Security State. The Cold War and the rise of the American Empire have powerfully affected the nature of the political-economic system—strengthening the already existing prioritization of economic growth, giving rise to the military-industrial complex, and draining time, attention, and money away from domestic needs and emerging international challenges. This diversion of attention and resources continues with our response to international terrorism.

So what are this operating system's key features, which have been given such free rein by these developments? First, ours is an economy that prioritizes economic growth above all else. We think of growth as an unalloyed good, but this growth fetish is a big source of our problems. We've had plenty of growth in recent decades—growth while wages stagnated, jobs fled our borders, life satisfaction flat-lined, social capital eroded, poverty and inequality mounted, and the environment declined. Today, U.S. GDP has regained its prerecession level, but 15 percent of American workers still can't find full-time jobs.

Another key feature of today's dysfunctional operating system is how powerfully the profit motive affects corporate behavior. Today's corporations have been called "externalizing machines," so committed are they to keeping the real costs of their activities off their books. Profit can be increased by keeping wages low and real social, environmental, and economic costs externalized—borne by society at large and not by the firm. One can get some measure of these external costs from a recent analysis of three thousand of the world's biggest companies. It concluded that paying for their external environmental costs would erase at least a third of their profits. Profits can also be increased through subsidies, tax breaks, regulatory loopholes, and

other gifts from government. Together, these external costs and subsidies lead to dishonest prices, which in turn lead consumers to spur on businesses that do serious damage to people and planet.

Given such emphasis on inexorable growth and profit, the constant spread of the market into new areas can be very costly environmentally and socially. As Karl Polanyi described in his 1944 book, *The Great Transformation*, “To allow the market mechanism to be sole director of the fate of human beings and their natural environment . . . would result in the demolition of society. . . . Nature would be reduced to its elements, neighborhoods and landscapes defiled, rivers polluted, military safety jeopardized, the power to produce food and raw materials destroyed.” With its emphasis on privatization, commercialization, and commodification, American capitalism has carried this demolition forward with a vengeance.

But the system that drives the capitalism we have today includes other elements. The corporation—the most important institution and agent of modern capitalism—has become both enormous and hugely powerful. Of the hundred largest economies in the world, fifty-three are corporations. Of the three hundred largest corporations in the world, a third are U.S. companies. American business wields great political and economic power and has routinely used that power to restrain ameliorative governmental action. Our corporations have driven the rise of transnational capital as the basis for economic globalization, along with all the challenges that equation introduces.

Then, there is what our society has become. Dominant American values today are strongly materialistic, anthropocentric, and contempocentric. Today’s consumerism and materialism place high priority on meeting human needs through the ever-increasing purchasing of goods and services. We say the best things in life are free, but not many of us act that way. Instead we’ve embraced an endless cycle of work and spend. The anthropocentric view that nature belongs to us, rather than we to nature, facilitates the exploitation of the natural world. And the habit of focusing on the present and discounting the future leads us away from a thoughtful appraisal of the long-term consequences of the world we are making.

Next, there is what our government and politics have become. Growth serves the interests of government by boosting politicians’ approval ratings, keeping difficult social justice and other issues on the back burner, and generating larger revenues without raising tax rates. Government in America doesn’t own much of the economy, so it must feed its growth habit by providing what corporations need to keep growing. Meanwhile, Washington today is hobbled by partisanship, corrupted by money, and typically at the service of economic interests. It is focused on the short horizons of election cycles and guided by a

pathetic level of public discourse on important issues. Finally, our government seeks to enhance and project national power, both hard and soft, in part through economic strength and growth and in part through sustaining a vast military deployment.

And there is what our system of money and finance has become. We think of money as the cash in our pockets or the bank, but, in truth, virtually all the money in circulation today is created by the banking system when loans are made. If everyone paid off all their debts, there would be hardly any money. Money is a system of power, and Wall Street wields that power. Today, among other things, the big banks are financing the destruction of the planet's climate. In 2010, Citi raised more than \$34 billion for the coal and oil industries. Within Citi's portfolio is \$1 billion raised for the proposed pipeline intended to carry tar sands oil from Alberta to Gulf Coast refineries. Since January 2010, ten big banks have supported mountaintop removal coal mining to the tune of more than \$2.5 billion.

These features aptly characterize key dimensions of today's operating system—the political economy of today's American capitalism. It's important to see these features as a system, linked and mutually reinforcing. Taken together, they have given rise to an economic reality that is both colossal and largely out of control. An unquestioning society-wide commitment to economic growth at any cost; powerful corporate and banking interests whose overriding objective is to grow by generating profit, including profit from avoiding social and environmental costs; a government beholden to corporate interests and thus not strongly inclined to curb corporate abuses; and a rampant consumerism spurred endlessly on by sophisticated advertising—all these combine to deliver an ever-growing economy insensitive to the needs of people, place, and planet.

The prioritization of economic growth is among the roots of our problems. Today's reigning policy orientation holds that the path to greater well-being is to grow and expand the economy. Productivity, profits, the stock market, and consumption must all go up. This growth imperative trumps all else. Growth is measured by tallying GDP at the national level, and sales and profits at the company level. The pursuit of GDP and profit can be said to be the overwhelming priorities of national economic and political life.

Economic growth may be the world's secular religion, but for much of the world it is a god that is failing—under-performing for most of the world's people and, for those in affluent societies, now creating more problems than it is solving. The never-ending drive to grow the overall U.S. economy undermines families and communities; it is leading us to environmental calamity; it fuels a ruthless international search for energy and other resources; it fails at generating the needed jobs; and

it rests on a manufactured consumerism that is not meeting our deepest human needs.

Americans are substituting growth and consumption for dealing with the real issues—for doing the things that would make us, and the country, better off. Psychologists have pointed out, for example, that while economic output per person in the United States has risen sharply in recent decades, there has been no increase in life satisfaction, and levels of distrust and depression have increased substantially. We have entered the realm of what ecological economist Herman Daly calls “uneconomic growth.” Environmentally, we see a world in which growth has brought us to a situation where more of the same will quite literally ruin the planet. Politically, the growth imperative is a big part of how we the people are controlled: the necessity for growth gives the real power to those who have the finance and technology to deliver it.

IT IS UP TO US AS CITIZENS to inject values of justice, fairness, and sustainability into this system, and government is the primary vehicle we have for accomplishing this. Typically, we attempt to do so by working within the system to promote needed reforms. We work the media and other channels to raise public awareness of our issue, and try to shift public understanding and discourse in our favor. We lobby Congress, the current administration, and government agencies with well-crafted and sensible proposals. When necessary, we go to court. With modest resources, we devote what we can to the electoral process and to candidates for public office. And we hope somehow that lightning will strike and events will move in our favor.

But it is now abundantly clear that these reformist approaches are not succeeding. The titanic forces unleashed by the American brand of capitalism are too powerful. The ceaseless drive for profits, growth, and power and other system imperatives keep the problem spigot fully open. Reform rarely deals with the root causes—the underlying drivers. The forces that gave rise to these problems in the first place continue to war against progress. And our enfeebled political life, more and more in the hands of powerful corporations and individuals of great wealth, is no match for these forces.

Pursuing reform within the system can help, but what is now desperately needed is transformative change in the system itself. To deal successfully with all the challenges America now faces, we must therefore complement reform with at least equal efforts aimed at transformative change to create a new operating system that routinely delivers good results for people and planet.

At the core of this new operating system must be a sustaining economy based on new economic thinking and driven forward by a

new politics. The purpose and goal of a sustaining economy is to provide broadly shared prosperity that meets human needs while preserving the earth's ecological integrity and resilience—in short, a flourishing people and a flourishing nature. That is the paradigm shift we must now seek.

I believe this paradigm shift in the nature and operation of America's political economy can be best approached through a series of interacting, mutually reinforcing transformations—transformations that attack and undermine the key motivational structures of the current system, transformations that replace these old structures with new arrangements needed for a sustaining economy and a successful democracy.

The following transformations hold the key to moving to a new political economy. Consider each as a transition from today to tomorrow.

- *Economic growth: from growth fetish to post-growth society, from mere GDP growth to growth in human welfare and democratically determined priorities.*
- *The market: from near laissez-faire to powerful market governance in the public interest.*
- *The corporation: from shareholder primacy to stakeholder primacy, from one ownership and motivation model to new business models and the democratization of capital.*
- *Money and finance: from Wall Street to Main Street, from money created through bank debt to money created by government.*
- *Social conditions: from economic insecurity to security, from vast inequities to fundamental fairness.*
- *Indicators: from GDP (“grossly distorted picture”) to accurate measures of social and environmental health and quality of life.*
- *Consumerism: from consumerism and affluenza to sufficiency and mindful consumption, from more to enough.*
- *Communities: from runaway enterprise and throwaway communities to vital local*

economies, from social rootlessness to rootedness and solidarity.

• Dominant cultural values: from having to being, from getting to giving, from richer to better, from separate to connected, from apart from nature to part of nature, from transcendent to interdependent, from today to tomorrow.

• Politics: from weak democracy to strong, from creeping corporatocracy and plutocracy to true popular sovereignty.

• Foreign policy and the military: from American exceptionalism to America as a normal nation, from hard power to soft, from military prowess to real security.

We know that systemic, transformative change along these dimensions will require a great struggle, and it will not come quickly. The new values, priorities, policies, and institutions that would constitute a new political economy capable of regularly delivering good results are not at hand and won't be for many years. The truth is we are still in the design stage of building a new operating system. That system won't be yesterday's socialism, by the way, but it won't be today's American capitalism either.

It follows that effectively addressing the many serious challenges America faces will take a lot more time than we would like. Meanwhile, America's decline will persist—"decline" here not referring to losing world power relative to China and other countries, but to decline in human and natural conditions. That is a very depressing conclusion, but we must face it. More importantly, we must use it as a framework for understanding what we must now do. Indeed, there can be a very bright light at the end of this gloomy tunnel. There is the great gift of plausible hope that we can find our way forward.

In this period of decline, the imperatives we face as citizens are threefold: to slow and then halt the descent, minimizing human suffering and planetary damage along the way and preventing a collapse, the emergence of a fortress world, or any of the other dark scenarios plotted for us in science fiction and increasingly in serious analysis; to minimize the time at the bottom and start the climb upward toward a new operating system; and to complete, inhabit, and flourish in the diversity of alternative social arrangements, each far

superior to ones we will have left behind.

But if we are failing at modest, incremental reform, how can we hope to achieve deeper, trans-formative change? The decline now occurring will progressively delegitimize the current order. Who wants an operating system that is capable of generating and perpetuating such suffering and destruction? One good thing about the decline of today's political economy is that it opens the door to something much better. People will eventually rise up, raise a loud shout, and demand major changes. This is already happening with some people in some places. It will grow to become a national and global movement for transformation, demanding a better world.

As the old system enters its death throes, we are already seeing the proliferation of innovative models of "local living" economies, sustainable communities, and transition towns, as well as innovative business models, including social enterprises and for-benefit and worker-owned businesses that prioritize community and environment over profit and growth. Initiatives that may seem small or local can be starter wedges that lead to larger changes. These initiatives provide inspirational models for how things might work in a new political economy devoted to sustaining human and natural communities. Such initiatives are growing rapidly in America.

While the struggle to build a new system goes forward, we must do everything we can to make the old system perform. For example, if we do not act now on climate change, both nationally and internationally, the consequences will become so severe that the dark visions of those predicting calamity will become all too real. The situation we face in regard to climate disruption is already very grave. Should we fail to act now on the climate front, the world will likely become so nasty and brutish that the possibility of rebirth, of achieving something new and beautiful, will simply vanish, and we will be left with nothing but the burden of climate chaos and societies' endless responses to it. Coping with the wreckage of a planetary civilization run amok would be a full-time job. On this issue and others, then, reform and transform are not alternatives but complementary and mutually reinforcing strategies.

Important here is a "theory of change." The theory adopts the view that people act out of both fear and love—to avoid disaster and to realize a dream or positive vision. The theory affirms the centrality of hope and hope's victory over despair. It locates the plausibility of hope in knowledge—knowing that many people will eventually rise up and fight for the things that they love; knowing that history's constant is change, including deep, systemic change; and knowing that we understand enough to begin the journey, to strike out in the right directions, even if the journey's end is a place we have never been. The theory embraces the seminal role of crises in waking us from the

slumber of routine and in shining the spotlight on the failings of the current order of things. It puts great stock in transformative leadership that can point beyond the crisis to something better. The theory adopts the view that systemic change must be both bottom-up and top-down—driven by communities, businesses, and citizens deciding on their own to build the future locally as well as to develop the political muscle to adopt system-changing policies at the national and international levels. And it sees a powerful citizens' movement as a necessary spur to action at all levels.

So imagine: As conditions in our country continue to decline across a wide front, or at best fester as they are, ever-larger numbers of Americans lose faith in the current system and its ability to deliver on the values it proclaims. The system steadily loses support, leading to a crisis of legitimacy. Meanwhile, traditional crises, both in the economy and in the environment, grow more numerous and fearsome. In response, progressives of all stripes coalesce, find their voice and their strength, and pioneer the development of a powerful set of new ideas and policy proposals confirming that the path to a better world does indeed exist. Demonstrations and protests multiply, and a powerful movement for pro-democracy reform and transformative change is born. At the local level, people and groups plant the seeds of change through a host of innovative initiatives that provide inspirational models of how things might work in a new political economy devoted to sustaining human and natural communities. Sensing the direction in which things are moving, our wiser and more responsible leaders, political and otherwise, rise to the occasion, support the growing movement for change, and frame a compelling story or narrative that makes sense of it all and provides a positive vision of a better America. It is a moment of democratic possibility.

In the end it all comes down to the American people and the strong possibility that we still have it in us to use our freedom and our democracy in powerful ways to create something fine, a reborn America, for our children and grandchildren. We can realize a new American Dream if enough of us join together in the fight for it. This new dream envisions an America where the pursuit of happiness is sought not in more getting and spending, but in the growth of human solidarity, real democracy, and devotion to the public good; where the average American is empowered to achieve his or her human potential; where the benefits of economic activity are widely and equitably shared; where the environment is sustained for current and future generations; and where the virtues of simple living, community self-reliance, good fellowship, and respect for nature predominate. These American traditions may not prevail today, but they are not dead. They await us, and indeed they are today being awakened across this great land. New ways of living and working, sharing and caring

are emerging across America. They beckon us with a new American Dream, one rebuilt from the best of the old, drawing on the best of who we were and are and can be.

America the Possible: A Manifesto, Part II

by JAMES GUSTAVE SPETH



Photograph | Peter Bedhnorz | Corbis

Part one of this article.

WE NEED A COMPELLING VISION for a new future, a vision of a better country — America the Possible — that is still within our power to reach. The deep, transformative changes sketched in the first half of this manifesto provide a path to America the Possible. But that path is only brought to life when we can combine this vision with the conviction that we will pull together to build the necessary political muscle for real change. This article addresses both the envisioning of an attractive future for America and the politics needed to realize it. A future worth having awaits us, if we are willing to struggle and sacrifice for it. It won't come easy, but little that is worth having ever does.

By 2050, America the Possible will have marshaled the economic and political resources to successfully address the long list of challenges, including basic social justice, real global security, environmental sustainability, true popular sovereignty, and economic democracy. As a result, family incomes in America will be far more equal, similar to the situation in the Nordic countries and Japan today. Large-scale poverty and income insecurity will be things of the past. Good jobs will be guaranteed to all those who want to work. Our health-care and educational systems will be among the best in the world, as will our standing in child welfare and equality of women. Racial and ethnic disparities will be largely eliminated. Social bonds will be strong. The overlapping webs of encounter and participation that were once hallmarks of America, “a nation of joiners,” will have been rebuilt, community life will be vibrant, and community development efforts plentiful. Trust in each other, and even in government, will be high.

Today's big social problems — guns and homicides, drugs and incarceration, white-collar crime and Wall Street hijinks — will have come down to acceptable levels. Big national challenges like the national debt, illegal immigration, the future of social security, oil imports and the shift to sustainable energy, and environmental and consumer protection will have been successfully addressed. U.S. emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases will have been reduced to a tiny fraction compared to today.

Internationally, the United States will assume the role of a normal nation. Military spending will be reduced to a level close to Europe's today; military interventions will be rare and arms sales small. The resources thus freed up will be deployed to join with other nations in addressing climate change and other global environmental threats, nuclear proliferation, world poverty and underdevelopment, and other global challenges. The U.S. will be a leader in strengthening the

institutions of global governance and international regulation, and we will be a member in good standing of the long list of treaties and other international agreements in which we do not now participate.

Politically, implementation of prodemocracy reforms will have saved our politics from corporate control and the power of money, and these reforms will have brought us to an unprecedented level of true popular sovereignty. Moreover, government in America will again be respected for its competence and efficiency. And, yes, taxes will be higher, especially for those with resources.

Overall, the economy will be governed to ensure broadly shared prosperity and to preserve the integrity and biological richness of the natural world. It will simply be assumed that the priority of economic activity is to sustain human and natural communities. Investment will concentrate in areas with high social and environmental returns even where not justified by financial returns, and it will be guided by democratically determined priorities at the national and local levels. Corporations will be under effective public control, and new patterns of business ownership and management — involving workers, communities, and other stakeholders — will be the norm. Consumerism will be replaced by the search for meaning and fulfillment in nonmaterial ways, and progress will be measured by new indicators of well-being other than GDP.

This recitation seems idealistic today, but the truth is we know how to do these things. Our libraries are full of plausible, affordable policy options, budget proposals, and institutional innovations that could realize these and other important objectives. And today's world is full of useful models we can adapt to our circumstances.

NEW VALUES

Many thoughtful Americans have concluded that addressing our many challenges will require the rise of a new consciousness, with different values becoming dominant in American culture. For some, it is a spiritual awakening — a transformation of the human heart. For others it is a more intellectual process of coming to see the world anew and deeply embracing the emerging ethic of the environment and the old ethic of what it means to love thy neighbor as thyself. But for all, the possibility of a sustainable and just future will require major cultural change and a reorientation regarding what society values and prizes most highly.

In America the Possible, our dominant culture will have shifted, from today to tomorrow, in the following ways:

- *from seeing humanity as something apart*

from nature, transcending and dominating it, to seeing ourselves as part of nature, offspring of its evolutionary process, close kin to wild things, and wholly dependent on its vitality and the finite services it provides;

- *from seeing nature in strictly utilitarian terms — humanity's resource to exploit as it sees fit for economic and other purposes — to seeing the natural world as having intrinsic value independent of people and having rights that create the duty of ecological stewardship;*

- *from discounting the future, focusing severely on the near term, to taking the long view and recognizing duties to future generations;*

- *from today's hyperindividualism and narcissism, and the resulting social isolation, to a powerful sense of community and social solidarity reaching from the local to the cosmopolitan;*

- *from the glorification of violence, the acceptance of war, and the spreading of hate and invidious divisions to the total abhorrence of these things;*

- *from materialism and consumerism to the prioritization of personal and family relationships, learning, experiencing nature, spirituality, service, and living within limits;*

- *from tolerating gross economic, social, and political inequality to demanding a high measure of equality in all these spheres.*

We actually know important things about how values and culture can be changed. One sure path to cultural change is, unfortunately, the cataclysmic event — the crisis — that profoundly challenges prevailing values and delegitimizes the status quo. The Great Depression is the classic example. I think we can be confident that we

haven't seen the end of major crises.

Two other key factors in cultural change are leadership and social narrative. Leaders have enormous potential to change minds, and in the process they can change the course of history. And there is some evidence that Americans are ready for another story. Large majorities of Americans, when polled, express disenchantment with today's lifestyles and offer support for values similar to those urged here.

Another way in which values are changed is through social movements. Social movements are about consciousness raising, and, if successful, they can help usher in a new consciousness — perhaps we are seeing its birth today. When it comes to issues of social justice, peace, and environment, the potential of faith communities is vast as well. Spiritual awakening to new values and new consciousness can also derive from literature, philosophy, and science. Consider, for example, the long tradition of “reverence for life” stretching back over twenty-two hundred years to Emperor Ashoka of India and carried forward by Albert Schweitzer, Aldo Leopold, Thomas Berry, E. O. Wilson, Terry Tempest Williams, and others.

Education, of course, can also contribute enormously to cultural change. Here one should include education in the largest sense, embracing not only formal education but also day-to-day and experiential education as well as the fast-developing field of social marketing. Social marketing has had notable successes in moving people away from bad behaviors such as smoking and drunk driving, and its approaches could be applied to larger cultural change as well.

A major and very hopeful path lies in seeding the landscape with innovative, instructive models. In the United States today, there is a proliferation of innovative models of community revitalization and business enterprise. Local currencies, slow money, state Genuine Progress Indicators, locavorism — these are bringing the future into the present in very concrete ways. These actual models will grow in importance as communities search for visions of how the future should look, and they can change minds — seeing is believing. Cultural transformation won't be easy, but it's not impossible either.

AVERTING DISASTER

High on any list of our duties to future generations must be the imperative to keep open for them as many options and choices as possible. That is our generation's gift of freedom. Here, the first order of business is to preserve the possibility of a bright future by preventing any of today's looming disasters from spinning out of control or otherwise becoming so overwhelming that they monopolize resources of time, energy, and money, thus foreclosing

other options. My list of biggest threats includes the following:

- *severe disruption of global climate*
- *widespread exhaustion, erosion, and toxification of the planet's natural resources and life-support systems*
- *militarism and permanent war*
- *nuclear disaster*
- *major economic or financial collapse, possibly linked to failing energy supply and soaring prices*
- *runaway terrorism and resulting loss of civil liberties*
- *pandemics and antibiotic resistance*
- *social and cultural decay, including the rise of criminality*
- *hollowing out of democracy and the dominance of corporatocracy and plutocracy*
- *something weird from the lab (nanotech? robotics? genetic engineering? a new weapon system? indefinite life extension?)*

Much ink has been spilled warning us about these threats, and we must take them very seriously. In America the Possible, these warnings have been taken seriously and the threats avoided. We can already see the problems leading to all of the threats listed, but we are not yet fated to experience their worst.

THE VIRTUES OF NECESSITY

Even with disaster averted, there are still powerful constraints and limits on future options. And there are the lessons from positive psychology about what contributes to happy, fulfilling lives. In fact, three sets of developments are coming together and are pushing us to nothing less than a new way of living: the imperative to protect the climate and the earth's living systems; the need to adjust to the rise of scarcities in energy and other resources; and the desire to shift national priorities to things that truly improve social well-being and happiness.

If we manage these factors well, the result could be a blessing in disguise, leading us to a new and better place — and a higher quality of life both individually and socially. Life in America the Possible will tend strongly in these directions:

RELOCALIZATION. Economic and social life will be rooted in the community and the region. More production will be local and regional, with shorter, less complex supply chains, especially for food. Business enterprises will be more rooted and committed to the long-term well-being of employees and their communities, and they will be supported by local currencies and local financial institutions. People will live closer to work, walk more, and travel less. Energy production will be distributed and decentralized, and predominantly renewable. Socially, community bonds will be strong; relationships with neighbors will be unpretentious and important; civic associations and community service groups plentiful; levels of trust and support for teachers and caregivers high. Personal security, tolerance of difference, and empathy will be high, and violence, fear, and hate low. Politically, local governance will stress participatory, direct, and deliberative democracy. Citizens will be seized with the responsibility to sustainably manage and extend the commons — the valuable assets that belong to everyone — through community land trusts at the local level, for example, and an atmospheric trust at the national level.

NEW BUSINESS MODELS. Locally-owned businesses, including worker-owned, customer-owned, and community-owned firms will be prominent, as will hybrid business models such as profit-nonprofit and public-private hybrids. Cooperation will replace or moderate competition. Business incubators will help entrepreneurs with arranging finance, technical assistance, and other support. Enterprises of all types will stress environmental and social responsibility.

PLENITUDE. Consumerism, where people find meaning and acceptance through what they consume, will be supplanted by the search for abundance in things that truly matter and that bring happiness and joy — family, friends, the natural world, meaningful work. Status and recognition will go to those who earn trust and provide needed services. Individuals and communities will enjoy a strong rebirth of reskilling, crafts, and self-provisioning. Overconsumption will be replaced by new investment in civic culture, natural amenities, ecological restoration, education, and community development.

MORE TIME; SLOWER LIVES. Formal work hours will be cut back, freeing up time for family, friends, hobbies, continuing education, skills development, caregiving, volunteering, sports, outdoor recreation, exploring nature, and participating in the arts. Life will be slower, less frenetic; frugality and thrift prized and wastefulness shunned; ostentatious displays of conspicuous consumption avoided; mindfulness and living simply prized.

NEW GOODS AND SERVICES. Products will be more durable and versatile and easy to repair, with components that can be reused or recycled. Production systems will be designed to mimic biological ones, with waste eliminated or turned into useful inputs elsewhere. The provision of services will replace the purchase of many goods; sharing, collaborative consumption, lending, and leasing will be commonplace.

RESONANCE WITH NATURE. Environmental protection regulations will be tough and demanding, and energy used with maximum efficiency. Zero discharge of traditional pollutants, toxics, and greenhouse gases will be the norm. Directly or indirectly, prices will reflect the true environmental costs. Schools will stress environmental education and pursue “no child left inside” programs. Natural areas and zones of high ecological significance will be protected. Green chemistry will replace the use of toxics and hazardous substances. Organic farming will eliminate pesticide and herbicide use. Environmental restoration and cleanup programs will be major focuses of community concern. There will be a palpable sense that economic and social activity is nested in the natural world and that we are close kin to wild things.

MORE EQUALITY. Because large inequalities are at the root of so many social and environmental problems, measures to ensure greater equality — not only of opportunity but also of outcomes — will be in place. Because life is simpler, more frugal, more caring, and less grasping, and people will be less status conscious and possessive, there will be more to go around and a high degree of economic equality. Special programs will ensure that seniors have income protections and opportunities to pursue their passions in second and third careers.

CHILDREN CENTERED, NOT GROWTH CENTERED. Overall economic growth will not be seen as a priority, and GDP will be seen as a misleading measure of well-being and progress. Instead, indicators of community wealth creation — including measures of social and natural capital — will be closely watched, and special attention will be given to children and young people — their education and their right to loving care, shelter, good nutrition, health care, a toxic-free environment, and freedom from violence.

HUMAN SCALE AND RESILIENT. The economy and the enterprises within it will not be too big to understand, appreciate, and manage successfully. A key motivation will be to maintain resilience — the capacity to absorb disturbance and outside shocks without disastrous consequences. We can think of today’s American economy as a giant, unitary system — highly complex and thoroughly integrated and interdependent, so that the failure of one component such as banking

causes a cascade of failures throughout the system. The economy in America the Possible is, by contrast, diverse and decentralized, a collection of more self-reliant but interacting units that provide redundancy and resilience.

GLOCALISM. Despite the many ways life will be more local, and the resulting temptation toward parochialism and provincialism, Americans will feel a sense of belonging and citizenship at larger levels of social and political organization, and will support global-level governance in the numerous areas where it is needed, such as environmental issues.

DEMOCRACY REBORN

It is simply unimaginable that American politics as we know it today will deliver the transformative changes needed. Political reform and building a new and powerful progressive movement in America must be priority number one. Above all else, we must build a new democratic reality — a government truly of, by, and for the people.

A foundation of democracy is the principle that all citizens should have a right to participate as equals in the actual process of governing. All should have a right to vote, to have access to relevant information, to speak up, associate with others, and participate. Votes should count equally, the majority should prevail, subject to respect for basic rights, and the issues taken up should be the important ones society faces. These are ideals by which America's current situation as well as our political reform agenda should be judged. Viewed this way, we are coming up far short on democracy and political equality. What we are seeing instead is the steady emergence of plutocracy and corporatocracy.

That the list of most-needed reforms to our political system is so long is testimony to how flawed the current system actually is.

- We need to both expand and protect the process of voting. Voter registration should be the default position: upon reaching the age of eighteen, citizens would be automatically registered, as is common in advanced democracies. Once registered, voting can be made easier in a number of ways: early voting should be extended; election day should be made a national holiday; ballots should be made simpler and voting less confusing; and campaigns to discourage and suppress voting through intimidating and deceptive practices should be prohibited and penalized. A national elections commission should be charged with providing for election administration and monitoring by impartial and well-trained election officials; for certification and testing of voting machines; for voter-verified paper trails to serve as the official ballots for recounts and audits; and generally for the

integrity and accuracy of the voting process.

- We need a constitutional amendment to provide for direct popular election of the president. As long as that remains a bridge too far, state legislatures should agree to assign all of a state's electoral votes to the candidate winning the national popular vote for president, but only if and when enough states make the commitment to total at least 270 electoral votes (the number needed to win in the Electoral College). Thus far nine states — including California, Hawai'i, Illinois, Maryland, New Jersey, Washington, and Massachusetts — with half the electoral votes needed to win, have made such pledges. Another way to bring more democracy to presidential elections would be to increase House membership by 50 percent, a good idea in its own right.

- Reform of our current system of primary elections is also in order. There are many possibilities here, but a key goal is to broaden participation in primaries beyond each party's core. One way to do that is to have structured open primaries — where registered independents can vote in either party's primary.

- The partisan gerrymandering of congressional districts should be stopped. District lines should be drawn by independent, nonpartisan commissions.

- We need to break the two-party duopoly. To do that, we need a process for voting that will encourage third parties without making them spoilers, will ensure that every vote counts in the end result and is not wasted, and will ensure that winners have the support of the majority of voters. This would be accomplished by instant-runoff voting (IRV), the process by which voters rank the candidates in order of preference. Low-scoring candidates — often third-party ones — are eliminated in the vote counting, and their voters' second choices are added to those that remain until one candidate has a majority. Even more attractive, fusion voting allows a minority party to list as its candidate on the ballot the candidate of another party. Fusion thus allows third parties to bargain with the two major parties for the best representation they can get.

- The Senate needs a host of reforms, including abolishing the current practice of filibusters. Given the way filibusters are now managed, senators representing a mere 11 percent of the U.S. population can exercise effective control over legislation, at least in theory. And there is another, but difficult, way to bring more democracy to the Senate: with congressional approval, large states could decide to subdivide into two or more smaller ones.

- The most important prodemocracy reform is to undermine the

power of money in our elections and in lobbying. The emphasis of campaign finance reform should be on encouraging small donor contributions and public funding of elections — the democratization of campaign finance itself. The Fair Elections Now Act, introduced in Congress in April 2011, embodies this approach for congressional elections and has many supporters in the House and Senate. Several states have already pursued the approach with success. Candidates who participated in “clean” or “fair” state election programs similar to Fair Elections Now hold about 85 percent of the legislative seats in Maine and around 75 percent in Connecticut.

- The most important pro-democracy reform is to undermine the power of money in our elections and in lobbying. The emphasis of campaign finance reform should be on encouraging small donor contributions and public funding of elections — the democratization of campaign finance itself. The Fair Elections Now Act, introduced in Congress in April 2011, embodies this approach for congressional elections and has many supporters in the House and Senate. Several states have already pursued the approach with success. Candidates who participated in “clean” or “fair” state election programs similar to Fair Elections Now hold about 85 percent of the legislative seats in Maine and around 75 percent in Connecticut.

- Major efforts should be pursued to address the many problems created by the Supreme Court’s decision in *Citizens United*, which opened the floodgates to unrestricted campaign spending by corporations and unions. Amending the Constitution should be a priority, in the process depriving corporations of constitutional personhood. Or Congress could regulate the impact of the Supreme Court’s decision, as Democrats tried unsuccessfully to do in 2010 with the Disclose Act proposal. At least it would have required disclosure of the source of campaign spending. There are two other attractive ideas for regulation. One would require that corporate boards, or even the shareholders themselves, approve all campaign spending initiatives. A second regulation would greatly strengthen the requirement that these corporate contributions be truly independent — that is, not coordinated in any way with the candidate being supported. And, of course, the court could simply reverse itself, for example, if a new justice were appointed to replace one of the five in the majority.

- Candidate access to the media should be enhanced, and the power of money reduced, by ensuring that all carriers and service providers offer full access to political speech at rates offered to the most favored commercial customers and by requiring that broadcasters provide candidates with a minimum amount of free airtime as a condition of receiving their federal licenses.

- Much needs to be done to tighten regulation of lobbying. There should be a ban on registered lobbyists engaging in campaign fundraising — no contributions to campaigns from lobbyists, no lobbyist bundling of multiple contributions, and no other form of lobbyist fundraising for federal candidates. Connecticut enacted such a ban on “pay to play” in 2005. “Strategic consulting” for congressional offices should be classified as lobbying. Congressional staff should be further professionalized, enlarged, and better paid in order to reduce the current dependence on lobbyists’ information and analysis. The offices serving Congress, such as the Congressional Research Service and the Government Accountability Office, should be strengthened for these same reasons. Appropriate restrictions should be placed on the lobbying activities of large government contractors, and stricter revolving door provisions should be adopted. As an extension of federal laws regulating lobbying and requiring disclosure of lobbying expenditures, organizations should be required to disclose expenditures pursuant to major-issue campaigns aimed at affecting federal legislation, just as narrowly defined “lobbying” expenses are now disclosed. Also, all sponsors and direct or indirect funders of public-issue ads should be required to be identified in those ads along with an announcement like those in today’s campaign ads approving and taking responsibility for the contents.

Beyond these changes in the rules of American politics, other changes are needed to strengthen both journalism and government transparency, to restore disinterest to the courts, to rebuild large membership institutions like labor unions that can magnify the strength of the otherwise isolated voter, and to rebuild competency in our oft-maligned and now depleted civil services.

We won’t get far in addressing the challenges we now face unless we are a competent nation with a competent government. And this competence in turn requires, above all, education and public integrity. Education is essential not just for building the skills needed in today’s high-tech economy, but also for building a capacious understanding of the world in which we live. Public integrity includes not just integrity at the personal level, but also the capacity to elevate the public good over private gain.

A UNIFIED MOVEMENT

When one considers all the ways in which our politics begs for change and reform, it is easy to see why so little of what is needed is actually accomplished. A prodemocracy agenda like the one described here must move to top priority. Such an agenda should be a priority for all progressive communities, and should draw support from Americans across the political spectrum.

Let us never forget that faith in democracy and fighting for it are acts of affirmation. In democracy, we affirm that we trust our fellow citizens — that we count on each other. Whether we win or lose the coming struggle for democracy in America, we claim that high ground.

But to drive real change in politics and in public policy, we need to build a powerful, unified progressive movement. Few of the measures our country needs are likely to get very far without a vigorous social and political movement that we don't now have. In today's America, progressive ideas are unlikely to be turned into action unless they are promoted by powerful citizen demand.

Successful movements for serious change are launched in protest against key features of the established order. They are nurtured on outrage at the severe injustices being perpetrated, the core values being threatened, or the undesirable future that is unfolding. And they demand real change. Here one is reminded of Frederick Douglass's famous 1857 statement about the challenge to slavery: "If there is no struggle there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom and yet deprecate agitation are men who want crops without plowing up the ground; they want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. This struggle may be a moral one, or it may be a physical one, and it may be both moral and physical, but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will." If progressives hope to succeed, then the movement must capture the spirit of Frederick Douglass.

What must now be built with urgency is a unified progressive community. The silos separating the various progressive communities must be breached. To succeed, there must be a fusion of progressive causes, the forging of a common agenda, and the building of a mighty force on the ground, at the grass roots. Progressives of all stripes must come together to build a true community of outlook, interest, and engagement, as well as the organizational infrastructure to strengthen the progressive movement on an ongoing basis.

Our best hope for real change is a movement created by a fusion of people concerned about environment, social justice, true democracy, and peace into one powerful progressive force. We have to recognize that we are all communities of a shared fate. In particular, progressives must focus on electoral politics far, far more than they have in the past. The 2008 Obama campaign shows what can be done. For the progressive movement to secure a powerful place in American politics, it will require major efforts at grassroots organizing, strengthening groups working at the state and

community levels, reaching out to broaden membership and participation, and developing motivational messages and moral appeals. It will also require building partylike organizations, creating political action committees (PACs), and fielding candidates.

Regarding the language we use and the messages we seek to convey, I can see clearly now that we environmentalists have been too wonkish and too focused on technical fixes. We have not developed well the capacity to speak in a language that goes straight to the American heart, resonates with both core moral values and common aspirations, and projects a positive and compelling vision. Throughout my forty-odd years in the environmental community, public discourse on environment has been dominated by lawyers, scientists, and economists — people like me. Now we need to hear a lot more from the preachers, the poets, the psychologists, and the philosophers. And our message must be one that is founded on hope and honest possibility.

Former House Speaker Tip O’Neill famously said, “All politics is local,” and a progressive movement must stress building locally, from the bottom up. We all live local lives, and if more and more people are to become engaged politically, engaging them locally is imperative. When we add that most of the promising things happening in America today are happening at the community level, the case is compelling for linking progressive initiatives at the local level to building a national progressive movement — community action melded to a national strategy.

Movements gather strength when people realize that they are being victimized and that there are many others in the same boat, and it helps when they are able to identify and point to those responsible — the villains of the story. Many on the right work hard and with consummate cynicism to raise the specter of “class warfare” when, for example, efforts are launched to tax the rich a bit more. With admirable candor, businessman Warren Buffett, an advocate for fairer taxes and one of the wealthiest men in America, has said, “There’s class warfare, all right, but it’s my class, the rich class, that’s making war, and we’re winning.” In 1936, Harold Lasswell wrote *Politics: Who Gets What, When, and How*. He declared that “the study of politics is the study of influence and the influential . . . the influential are those who get the most of what there is to get. . . . Those who get the most are elite; the rest are mass.” Today, the elite have gotten about all there is to get, and the great mass of people have gotten the shaft.

An invigorated American progressive movement must also embrace the accumulated knowledge that generations of thoughtful scholars have made possible. With the right seemingly disavowing good

science at every turn, it is doubly important that progressives draw heavily on the contributions of our impressive scientific community. Nothing against faith, but the scientific content of public policy issues is increasing steadily, and progressives won't be leading in the right directions without such an embrace. And while progressives should both appeal to moral values and kick up a ruckus, it remains important to ground appeals and campaigns on solid analysis, accurate history, and facts. They go together well. As Stephen Colbert has quipped, "The facts have a well-known liberal bias."

In the end, the most meaningful changes will almost certainly require a large-scale rebirth of marches, protests, demonstrations, direct action, and nonviolent civil disobedience. Protests are important to dramatize issues, show the depth of concern, attract public and media attention, build sympathetic support, raise public consciousness, and put issues on the agenda. No one who followed events in Egypt or the Wisconsin State House, or who remembers the civil rights and anti-war protests of the 1960s and 1970s, can doubt their importance. Author and social critic Chris Hedges urges that "civil disobedience, which will entail hardship and suffering, which will be long and difficult, which at its core means self-sacrifice, is the only mechanism left." Those words ring true to those who have worked for decades to elicit a meaningful response to the existential threat of climate change and who find, after all the effort, only ashes.

There are ongoing historical trends that require the development of the progressive movement sought here. The widespread persistence of relative poverty at home and absolute poverty abroad; the growth of economic inequality now matching that of 1928; the rapid exhaustion of the planet's renewable and nonrenewable resources; the impossibility of continuous exponential growth on a finite planet; the destruction of the climate regime that has existed throughout human civilization; the drift to militarism and endless war — these warn us that business as usual is not an option.

America the Possible awaits us, if we are prepared to struggle — to put it all on the line. If the future is to be one we wish for our grandchildren, we had better get started building this progressive movement without delay. Given the deplorable conditions on so many fronts, the day will surely come when large numbers of Americans will conclude, with Howard Beale's character in *Network*, "I'm as mad as hell and I'm not going to take this anymore!" The progressive movement must not only be ready for that day, it must also hasten its arrival.

James Gustave Speth is a professor at Vermont Law School and a Distinguished Senior Fellow at Demos, a nonpartisan public policy research and advocacy organization. A former dean of the Yale

School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, he also co-founded the Natural Resources Defense Council, was founder and president of the World Resources Institute, and served as administrator of the United Nations Development Programme. He is the author of six books, including the award-winning *The Bridge at the Edge of the World: Capitalism, the Environment,*

and *Crossing from Crisis to Sustainability* and *Red Sky at Morning: America and the Crisis of the Global Environment*.

Last Updated on Saturday, 27 February 2016 15:51

616 readings

[David Suzuki, Grand Chief Stewart Phillip lend support to Site C protesters](#)



By [Yuliya Talmazan](#) Online News Producer Global News



WATCH: Environmentalist David Suzuki and Grand Chief Stewart Phillip join a protest to stop the Site C dam project. John Hua reports, and Keith Baldrey looks at the debate raging in the B.C. Legislature.

A A

A prominent scientist and First Nations leader are lending their support to protesters opposing the construction of the Site C dam near Fort St. John.

Environmentalist David Suzuki and Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, held a press conference this morning in support of a camp of protesters at the Rocky Mountain Fort on the Peace River, who have been blocking construction since the beginning of this year.

“The hydro power of Site C is not for families or communities here in B.C.,” said Phillip. “It is for proposed mining projects in northern B.C. and for customers in California. The actions of BC Hydro in court today is to purposefully target, censor, intimidate and silence the peaceful camp of Treaty 8 members and landowners at Rocky Mountain Fort Camp.”

The Union of BC Indian Chiefs says it continues to denounce what it calls BC Hydro’s “deliberately provocative and thuggish efforts” to fast track construction on the proposed Site C project.

Phillip called the Site C proposal Premier Christy Clark’s “make-work project in the demise of her LNG pipe dream” and an archaic notion that he stands in vehement opposition to.

“This is a complete abuse of power, democratic process, and treaty and legal rights of all the parties involved,” said Phillip.

He says he is humbled by the courage of the Rocky Mountain Fort protesters, who, he says, have been harassed and intimidated.

The protesters claim the construction of the Site C project should be put on hold while court proceedings are still in place and until the proposal is

properly vetted and reviewed by the BC Utilities Commission.

The newly created reservoir would be about 83 kilometres long and two-to-three times wider than the current river, flooding 5,550 hectares of land.

Suzuki says [the federal government committed to a “hard” target](#) at the climate change talks in Paris last November, but it’s not changing its ways when it comes to the Site C project.

He says his concern lies in the fact that, the food that Canadians eat is grown, on average, 3,000 kilometers from where it’s consumed and requires fossil fuel to be transported.

“It seems crazy to put farmland in the north under water when that valley could be the breadbasket of the north,” said Suzuki. “We need time to reconsider the way we do everything. This, to me, is one of the great contradictions of a commitment to meeting the Paris target and the apparent lack of concern for a development like the Site C.”

READ MORE: [Everything you need to know about the Site C dam](#)

Meanwhile, B.C. Supreme Court is expected to hear an injunction application from BC Hydro to remove the camp in the way of the Site C construction site.

The proposed Site C hydroelectric dam on the Peace River [cleared major environmental hurdles](#) in October 2014 as the federal and British Columbia governments granted environmental certificates, and a final [go-ahead for construction](#) was granted a month later.

In August, two courts rejected attempts by a pair of [British Columbia First Nations](#) to halt the construction of the Site C hydroelectric dam. A B.C. Supreme Court judge ruled against issuing a stop-work order for the first phase of construction. The federal court also dismissed the First Nations’ challenge of the environmental approval process.

Last week, [over a thousand people lined up](#) at job fairs in Dawson Creek and Fort St. John.

BC Hydro says the nine-billion dollar mega-project will create 10,000

person-years of employment during its construction, and workers are needed in a number of trades.

When finished, BC Hydro estimates it would provide about 5,100 gigawatt hours of electricity each year. Current forecasts have B.C. needing new sources of electricity by 2028, and Site C would move that date well into the future. It's estimated it would take eight years to build the facility.

With files from Justin McElroy and the Canadian Press

Last Updated on Thursday, 25 February 2016 08:39

532 readings

[UN Chief Denied Second Term by a Livid US Veto](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 17 February 2016 07:26

By [Thalif Deen](#)

Boutros Boutros-Ghali: An Appreciation



Boutros Boutros-Ghali

UNITED NATIONS, Feb 16 2016 (IPS) - Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who passed away Tuesday at the age of 93, was the only UN Secretary-General (1992-1996) to be denied a second term in office because of a US veto in the 15-member Security Council.

The US, which preaches the concept of majority rule to the outside world, exercised its veto even though Boutros-Ghali had 14 of the 15 votes in the Security Council, including the votes of the other four permanent members of the Council, namely the UK, France, Russia and China.

In such circumstances, tradition would demand the dissenting US abstain on the vote and respect the wishes of the overwhelming majority in the Security Council.

But the US refused to acknowledge the vibrant political support that Boutros-Ghali had garnered in the world body.

Unlike most of his predecessors and successors, Boutros-Ghali refused to blindly play ball with the US despite the fact that he occasionally caved into US pressure at a time when Washington had gained a notoriety for trying to manipulate the world body to protect its own national interests.

In a statement released Tuesday, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said Boutros-Ghali presided over a dramatic rise in UN peacekeeping at a time when the world increasingly turned to the United Nations for solutions to its problems, in the immediate aftermath of the cold war.

“Boutros Boutros-Ghali did much to shape the Organization’s response to this new era, in particular through his landmark report “An Agenda for Peace” and the subsequent agendas for development and democratization,” said Ban.

In his 345-page book titled “Unvanquished: A US-UN Saga,” released in 1999, Boutros-Ghali points out that although he was accused by Washington of being “too independent” of the US, he eventually did everything in his power to please the Americans.

But still the US was the only country to say “no” to a second five-year term for Boutros-Ghali although he also had the overwhelming support of the remaining 184 member states of the General Assembly at that time.

The former UN chief recalls a meeting where he tells the then-Secretary of State Warren Christopher that far too many Americans had been appointed to UN jobs “at Washington’s request over the objections of other UN member states.”

“I had done so, I said, because I wanted American support to succeed in my job (as Secretary-General”), Boutros-Ghali says. But Christopher refused to respond.

When he was elected Secretary-General in January 1992, Boutros-Ghali noted that 50 percent of the staff assigned to the UN's administration and management were Americans, although Washington paid only 25 percent of the UN's regular budget.

When the administration of US President Bill Clinton took office in January 1993, Boutros-Ghali was signalled that two of the highest ranking UN staffers appointed on the recommendation of the outgoing (President George) Bush's administration— Under-Secretary-General Richard Thornburgh and Under-Secretary-General Joseph Verner Reed — were to be dismissed despite the fact that they were theoretically “international civil servants” answerable only to the world body.

They were both replaced by two other Americans who had the blessings of the Clinton Administration.

Just before his election in November 1991, Boutros-Ghali remembers someone telling him that John Bolton, the US Assistant Secretary of State for International Organisations, was “at odds” with the earlier Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar because he had “been insufficiently attentive to American interests.”

“I assured Bolton of my own serious regard for US policy.” “Without American support,” Boutros-Ghali told Bolton, “the United Nations would be paralysed.”

Boutros-Ghali also relates how Christopher had tried to convince him to publicly declare that he will not run for a second term as secretary-General. But Boutros-Ghali refused.

“Surely, you cannot dismiss the Secretary-General of the United Nations by a unilateral diktat of the United States. What about the rights of the other (14) Security Council members”?, he asked Christopher.

But Christopher “mumbled something inaudible and hung up, deeply displeased”.

Boutros-Ghali also says that in late 1996 US Ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine Albright, on instructions from the US State Department, was fixated on a single issue that had dominated her life for months: the “elimination” of Boutros-Ghali.

Under-Secretary-General Joseph Verner Reed, an American, is quoted as saying that he had heard Albright say: “I will make Boutros think I am his friend; then I will break his legs.”

After meticulously observing her, Boutros-Ghali concludes that Albright had accomplished her diplomatic mission with skill.

“She had carried out her campaign with determination, letting pass no opportunity to demolish my authority and tarnish my

image, all the while showing a serene face, wearing a friendly smile, and repeating expressions of friendship and admiration," he writes.

"I recalled what a Hindu scholar once said to me: there is no difference between diplomacy and deception."

One of his "heated disputes" with Albright (later U.S. secretary of state) was over the appointment of a new executive director for UNICEF back in 1995. It was a dispute "that seemed to irritate Albright more than any previous issue between us".

President Bill Clinton wanted William Foege, a former head of the U.S. Centres for Disease Control, to be appointed UNICEF chief to succeed James Grant.

"I recalled," says Boutros-Ghali, "that President Clinton had pressed me to appoint him (Foege) when we had met in the Oval Office in May 1994."

"I replied to her (Albright) as I had then to President Clinton: that while Dr. Foege was without doubt a distinguished person, unfortunately, I could not comply," writes Boutros-Ghali.

He also told Clinton that he was personally and publicly committed to increasing the number of women in the top ranks of the United Nations, and UNICEF would particularly benefit from a woman's leadership.

Since Belgium and Finland had already put forward "outstanding" women candidates – and since the United States had refused to pay its U.N. dues and was also making "disparaging" remarks about the world body – "there was no longer automatic acceptance by other nations that the director of UNICEF must inevitably be an American man or woman."

"The U.S. should select a woman candidate," he told Albright, "and then I will see what I can do," since the appointment involved consultation with the 36-member UNICEF Executive Board.

"Albright rolled her eyes and made a face, repeating what had become her standard expression of frustration with me," he wrote.

When the Clinton administration kept pressing Foege's candidature, Boutros-Ghali says that "many countries on the UNICEF Board were angry and (told) me to tell the United States to go to hell."

The U.S. administration eventually submitted an alternate woman candidate: Carol Bellamy, a former director of the Peace Corps.

Although Elizabeth Rehn of Finland received 15 votes to

Bellamy's 12 in a straw poll, Boutros-Ghali said he appealed to the Board president to convince the members to achieve consensus on Bellamy so that the United States could continue a monopoly it held since UNICEF was created in 1947.

And so Boutros-Ghali ensured that the post of UNICEF executive director will remain the intellectual birthright of the Americans – even to this date.

The writer can be contacted at thalifdeen@aol.com

COMMENT

by JoanRussow

In 1995 I sent a proposal to Secretary Boutros Boutros Ghali
Global Compliance Resolution

The General Assembly, and its member states

Solemnly proclaim 1996 the International Year of
Global Compliance

and solemnly pledge

to do the following:

* to establish conditions under which justice and
respect for the

obligations arising from treaties and
international law can be maintained;

* to fulfill fifty years of obligations
undertaken through Conventions,

Treaties, Declarations and Resolutions made in

the UN system;

* to sign and ratify what they have not yet signed and ratified, and to

enact the necessary legislation to ensure the discharging of these

obligations;

* to fulfill additional obligations undertaken through globally adopted UN

Conference action plans, and programs of action.

I received the following response;

"Thank you for sharing with me the "Global Compliance Resolution" whose

spirit reaffirms the commitment of people the world over to the principles

enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations"
(July 5, 1995)

Last Updated on Wednesday, 17 February 2016 07:44

800 readings

[CURRENT BC CLIMATE CHANGE
PROPOSAL SHOWS LACK OF VISION,
AND DISREGARD FOR PRESENT AND
FUTURE GENERATIONS](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 15 February 2016 11:56

LINK TO BC PLAN and "engage"

www.interceptum.com/s/en/ClimateActionLeadership-Winter2015-16

Submission to BC government climate PLAN

BY JOAN RUSSOW PHD



forest fire in British Columbia

In the 2014 IPCC Report, the urgency of addressing climate change was reaffirmed;

The world is not ready for the impacts of climate change, including more extreme weather and the likelihood that populated parts of the planet could be rendered uninhabitable. The report argues that world leaders have only a few years left to reduce carbon emissions enough to avoid catastrophic warming, which would produce significant sea level rise and large-scale shifts in temperatures that would dramatically disrupt human life and natural ecosystems.

At COP21 Ban Ki-Moon urged States to negotiate with a global vision not from specific national interests”.

A global vision is not just ‘recalling’ (Paris Agreement) but abiding by articles 2, 3, 4 in the legally binding 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This Convention which has been ratified by all member states of the United.

The 1992 UNFCCC was a global vision. For the complete document see

http://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/background_publications_htmlpdf/application/pdf/conveng.pdf

What COP21 should have been was a new global vision with legally binding actions to finally implement the legally binding commitments and adhere to the principles. In the UNFCCC In article 2 under the legally binding UNFCCC is the obligation :

....stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system

In COP21, there is the following;

2(a) 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 a .8 DEGREE RISE IN TEMPERATURE THERE IS ALREADY DE-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 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 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.

THE “CONTRIBUTION” MUST BE A COMMITMENT:

Real commitment 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, 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,

CURRENT BC PROPOSAL SHOWS LACK OF VISION, AND DISREGARD FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATION

- End old technology that impacts on food security and First Nations Rights (Site C- AND LNG)

-Investment should be spent on geothermal, solar and wind

Sincerely,

Joan Russow

Last Updated on Monday, 15 February 2016 18:29

611 readings

[Jamaica' s Drought Tool Could Turn](#)



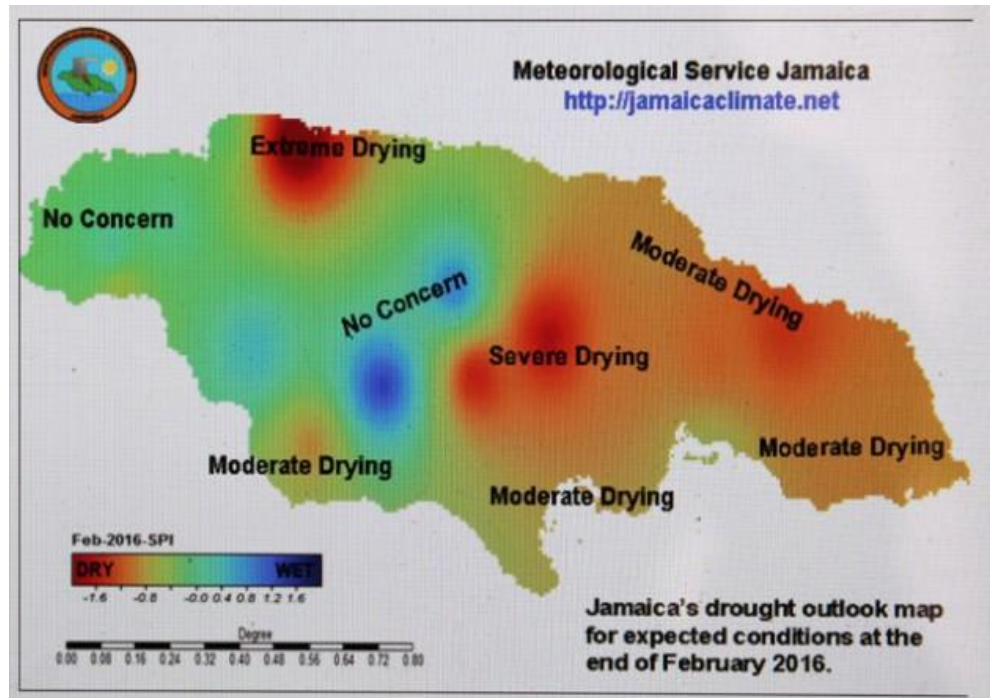
[the Table on Climate Change](#)

[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 15 February 2016 11:46

By [Zadie Neufville](#)



KINGSTON, Jamaica, Jan 13 2016 (IPS) - On a very dry November 2013, Jamaica's Meteorological Service made its first official drought forecast when the newly developed Climate Predictability Tool (CPT) was used to predict a high probability of below average rainfall in the coming three months.

By February, the agency had officially declared a drought in the eastern and central parishes of the island based on the forecasts. July's predictions indicated that drought conditions would continue until at least September.

Said to be the island's worst in 30 years, the 2014 drought saw Jamaica's eastern parishes averaging rainfall of between 2 and 12 per cent, well below normal levels. Agricultural data for the period shows that production fell by more than 30 per cent over 2013 and estimates are that losses due to crop failures and wild fires amounted to one billion dollars.

Jamaica's agricultural sector accounts for roughly seven per cent of the island's gross domestic product (GDP) and employs about 20 per cent of its workforce.

The Met Service's, Glenroy Brown told IPS, "The CPT was the main

tool used by our Minister (of Water, Land, Environment & Climate Change) Robert Pickersgill throughout 2015 to advise the nation on the status of drought across the island .”

It was also used but the National Water Commission (NWC) to guide its implementation of island-wide water restrictions.

A technician with Jamaica’s Met Service, Brown designed and implemented the tool in collaboration with Simon Mason, a climate scientist from Columbia University’s International Research Institute (IRI) for Climate and Society with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

“The tool provides a Windows package for constructing a seasonal climate drought forecast model, producing forecasts with updated rainfall and sea surface temperature data,” he explained.

The innovation was one of the first steps in building resilience under Jamaica’s national climate policy. It provides drought-monitoring forecasts that allows farmers to plan their planting around dry periods and has been “tailored for producing seasonal climate forecasts from a general circulation model (GCM), or for producing forecasts using fields of sea-surface temperatures,” Brown said.

The tool combines a number of applications including Google Earth and localized GIS maps, to generate one to five day forecasts that are country and location specific. The information is broken down and further simplified by way of colour-coded information and text messages for the not so tech-savvy user.

The tool designed by Brown and Mason also incorporated IRI’s own CPT (designed by Mason) that was already being used by Caribbean countries with small meteorological services and limited resources, to produce their own up-to-date seasonal climate forecasts. The new tool combined data on recent rainfall and rainfall predictions to provide a forecast that focused specifically on drought.

“It was important for us to design a system that addressed Jamaica’s needs upfront, but that would also be suitable for the rest of the region,” Mason noted.

The scientists explained, “Because impact of a drought is based on the duration of the rainfall” and not only the amount of rainfall, looking forward is not enough to predict droughts because of factors related to accumulation and intensification.

“What we’re doing is essentially putting a standard three-month rainfall forecast in context with recent rainfall measurements,” Mason, told USAID’s publication Frontlines last May. He noted that if below-normal rainfall activity was recorded during an unusually dry period, indications were there was a “fairly serious drought” ahead.

Sheldon Scott from Jamaica’s Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA) told IPS that farmers who used the SMS information

were able to avoid the worse effects of the drought.

“The impacts were visible in relation to farmers who used the information and others who didn’t, because those who did were able to manage the mitigating factors more effectively,” he said.

During the period, more than 500 farmers received text alerts and about 700,000 bulletins were sent to agricultural extension officers.

Among the farmers who signed up for text messaging service, Melonie Ridsen told Frontlines, “The information we received from the Met office gave us drought forecasts in terms of probabilities. We still decided to plant because we were fortunate to have access to the river and could fill up water drums ahead of time in anticipation of the drought.”

Ridsen lost the corn she planted on the 13-acre property in Crooked River, Clarendon, one of the parishes hardest hit by the drought with only two per cent of normal rainfall, but was able to save much of the peas, beans and hot peppers.

Six months after Jamaica’s Met Service made its ground-breaking forecast, the CIMH presented the first region-wide drought outlook at the Caribbean Regional Climate Outlook Forum in Kingston. Now 23 other Caribbean and Central American countries are using the tool to encourage climate change resilience and inform decision-making.

“Regionally the tool is now a standard fixture across several countries within the region, including the Dominican Republic, Cuba and Haiti. This regional effort is coordinated by the CIMH,” Brown said.

Back in Jamaica, the tool is being hailed “a game-changer” in the climate fight by Jeffery Spooner head of the Met Service, who described the CPT as “an extremely important tool in Climate Change forecasting and specifically for the agricultural – including fisheries- and water sectors for rainfall projection .”

The CPT is now also used to provide regular monthly bulletins that are published by the Meteorological Service on their web site www.jamaicacclimate.net. RADA has also continued to use the CPT in its extension service, to enhance the ability of farmers’ and other agricultural interests to improve water harvesting, planting and other activities.

Since most of the island’s small farms depend on rainfall, more farmers – including those with large holdings – are using the information to better manage water use and guide their activities, Scott said.

Local and international scientists have linked the extreme atmospheric conditions related to the droughts affecting Jamaica and the region to the persistent high-pressure systems that has prevented the formation of tropical cyclones to global warming and climate change.

Across the agricultural sector, Jamaica continues to feel the impacts of drought and the challenges are expected to increase with the climate change. In a 2013 agricultural sector support analysis, the Inter-American Development Bank estimated, low impact on extreme climate events on Jamaica's agriculture sector by 2025 could reach 3.4 per cent of "baseline GDP" annually.

In fact, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Synthesis Report (AR5) pointed to tools like the CPT to mitigate the impacts of climate change. Its importance to Jamaica's and the region's food security and water sector cannot be overlooked.

In addition to adaptation for the water sector, the CPT is being modified to provide early warning indicators for wind speeds and coral bleaching among among other applications, said the report.

And as showers of blessings cooled the land and brought much relief in the closing months of the year, CPT shows the drought could well be over.

621 readings

[Jamaica's Climate Change Fight Fuels Investments in Renewables](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 15 February 2016 11:42

By [Zadie Neufville](#)



Jamaica's electricity generation systems and grid will require significant upgrades and expansion. Credit: Zadie Neufville/ IPS

KINGSTON, Jan 18 2016 (IPS) - By year's end, Jamaica will add 115 mega watts (MW) of renewable capacity to the power grid, in its quest to reduce energy costs and diversify the energy mix in electricity generation to 30 per cent by 2030.

With 90 per cent of its electricity coming from fossil fuels, the government is committed to reducing the country's carbon emissions by increasing the amount of electricity generated from renewables from 9 per cent now, to 15 per cent by 2020.

Junior Minister Julian Robinson told IPS via email, a National Energy Policy is guiding actions to cut costs and comply with the international agreements to reduce carbon emissions; among them are plans to reduce the amount of electricity generated from petroleum from 95 to 30 per cent.

Reliance on fossil fuels is also costing the country in terms of high local pollution, health care costs and its contribution to global climate change. According to Jamaica's 2nd National Report to the United Nations Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC,) in 2000, the energy sector accounted for 86 per cent of the 9,532 Giga-grams (Gg) of carbon dioxide emissions, up 1,114 Gg over 1994.

And according to business leaders, the high energy cost is a major barrier to the country's economic development and is a leading cause of business failure in the country. At 0.40 cents per kilowatt-hour, Jamaicans pay one of the highest rates for electricity in the region.

In 2011, 1.48 billion dollars or 15 per cent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was spent on petroleum imports. Even with

oil prices currently hovering at an all-time low of below 34 dollars per barrel, a falling Jamaican dollar, the possibility of higher petroleum prices and as much as 22.3 per cent generation and distribution losses (at 2011 estimates) mean the country is unlikely to divert from the course set by the energy policy.

Estimates are that 10 medium-sized wind farms producing 60MW each, could supply the energy needs of more than half of the island. So in 2015, several companies were invited to bid for a chance to help the country reduce its dependence on fossil fuels.

More than 200 million dollars were invested to bring a mix of wind and solar projects online. The Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR), the agency responsible for overseeing the operations of utility companies, approved 80MW of additional capacity by way of Blue Mountains Renewables' (BMR) 36.3 MW wind farm and a 24.4 MW addition to the state-owned Wigton wind farm.

To complete the 115 MW of renewable energy commissioned in 2015, Content Solar Limited (CSL) -a Jamaican subsidiary of the Florida based WRB Enterprises – was approved and began construction of a 20 megawatt solar photovoltaic facility, which president Robert Blenker noted will supply enough electricity to power 20,000 homes.

Another 37 MW was tendered at the end of the year, said Robinson who sits in the Ministry of Science and Technology, Energy and Mining.

According to Blenker, "Content Solar will be the largest project of its kind in the Caribbean, delivering clean and reliable renewable energy at a stable price to Jamaica and will displace more than 3 million gallons of fossil fuel currently burned each year."

Content's plan falls in line with commitments to make electricity cheaper and more efficient under the new electricity act, Robinson said. The act "provides the framework to maximize efficiency by the provision of a dispatcher (JPS) that will dispatch the cheapest source of electricity to the end user," he added.

In addition, the minister noted the government has introduced net billing so that householders who produce excess energy could sell back to the grid. He also pointed out that a "30 per cent reduction in the cost of solar panels" and an improvement in technology that makes wind and

olar technologies more efficient will ensure that investments in renewables continue even as the price of oil falls.

WorldWatch Institute's Sustainable Energy Roadmap for Jamaica 2013 stated that increasing the number of households using solar water heaters, could save an additional 75 to 100 GWh of electricity per year. It concluded that there was a need to create a "smooth

transition” to a sustainable and economically viable energy system.

Experts say that by making the switch to an electricity system based mainly on renewables could save the country as much as 12.5 billion dollars by 2030, freeing up much needed cash for public and social spending in a country that according to 2012 estimates, spends around 54 per cent of its earnings on debt servicing.

If Jamaica transitioned to an electricity system powered almost exclusively by renewables, Jamaica could reduce the average cost of electricity by 67 per cent when compared to 2010 by 2030 the Worldwatch report said.

The transition, could create up to 4,000 new jobs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the electricity sector to the equivalent of 0.7 million tons of CO₂-annually. Accelerating the process would require high levels of up-front investments but so far, Jamaica has been lucky, since the bulk of the investments have come from investor, private sector and donor funding.

Alexander Ochs, Worldwatch’s Director of Climate and Energy confirmed the report’s findings, noting that Jamaica’s “entire electricity demand could be met with renewable resources” from solar and wind energy.

The public sector has already begun its own programme of retrofitting and energy reduction strategies that is said to be saving millions of dollar in expenditure at government agencies and institutions.

Worldwatch noted that investments of roughly 6 billion dollars could increase the contribution of renewables to Jamaica’s electricity production to 93 per cent by 2030, while significantly slashing energy costs.

So armed with feasibility studies that points to the possibility for hydro-power development along six rivers, Robinson is setting his sights on the road ahead, and another 26MW of power in the very near future.

Last Updated on Monday, 15 February 2016 11:44

[OP-ED: Rising Temperature, Rising Food Prices](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 06 March 2016 13:04

By [Lester R. Brown](#)

By [Lester R. Brown](#)



Many farmers will be forced to adapt to a changing climate. Geoffrey Ndung'u, from Kanyonga village in semi-arid Eastern Kenya, earns a living growing watermelons on his dry land. Credit: Isaiah Esipisu/IPS

WASHINGTON, Aug 21 2013 (IPS) - Agriculture as it exists today developed over 11,000 years of rather remarkable climate stability. It has evolved to maximize production within that climate system. Now, suddenly, the climate is changing. With each passing year, the agricultural system is becoming more out of sync with the climate system.

In generations past, when there was an extreme weather event, such as a monsoon failure in India, a severe drought in Russia, or an intense heat wave in the U.S. Corn Belt, we knew that things would shortly return to normal. But today there is no 'normal' to return to. The earth's climate is now in a constant state of flux, making it both unreliable and unpredictable.

Since 1970, the earth's average temperature has risen more than one degree Fahrenheit. If we continue with business as usual, burning ever more oil, coal, and natural gas, it is projected to rise some 11 degrees Fahrenheit (six degrees Celsius) by the end of this century. The rise will be uneven. It will be much greater in the higher latitudes than in the equatorial regions, greater over land than over oceans, and greater in continental interiors than in coastal regions.

Related IPS Articles

- [Ecological Cuban Recipes Boost Sustainable Agriculture](#)
- [Biofuels Get a Dubious Boost](#)
- [Small Farmers Buffeted by Climate Change](#)

As the earth's temperature rises, it affects agriculture in many ways. High temperatures interfere with pollination and reduce photosynthesis of basic food crops. High temperatures can also dehydrate plants. When a corn plant curls its leaves to reduce exposure to the sun, photosynthesis is reduced.

The earth's rising temperature also affects crop yields indirectly via the melting of mountain glaciers. As the larger glaciers shrink and the smaller ones disappear, the ice melt that sustains rivers, and the irrigation systems dependent on them, will diminish. The continuing loss of mountain glaciers and the resulting reduced meltwater runoff could create unprecedented water shortages and political instability in some of the world's more densely populated countries.

Scientists also expect higher temperatures to bring more drought – witness the dramatic increase in the land area affected by drought in recent decades. A team of scientists at the National Centre for Atmospheric Research in the United States reported that the earth's land area experiencing very dry conditions expanded from well below 20 percent from the 1950s to the 1970s to closer to 25 percent in recent years.

As the earth's temperature rises, scientists expect heat waves to be both more frequent and more intense. Stated otherwise, crop-shrinking heat waves will now become part of the agricultural landscape. Among other things, this means that the world should increase its carryover stocks of grain to provide adequate food security.

From “Full Planet, Empty Plates: The New Geopolitics of Food Scarcity” by Lester R. Brown (New York: W.W. Norton & Co.) Supporting data, video, and slide-shows are available for free download at www.earth-policy.org/books/fpep.

Last Updated on Sunday, 06 March 2016 13:11

[Portland, Ore. to Sue Monsanto for 'Favoring Profits Over Ecological and Human Health'](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 18 March 2016 07:36

City council passed resolution allowing city attorney to take legal action

by

[Andrea Germanos, staff writer](#)



Walkers and bikers next to the Willamette River in Portland, Oregon. (Photo: [Ian Sane](#)/flickr/cc)

Portland, Oregon's city council on Wednesday voted unanimously to authorize City Attorney Tracy Reeve to sue Monsanto for contaminating water bodies within the city with PCBs.

"Portland's elected officials are committed to holding Monsanto accountable for its apparent decision to favor profits over ecological and human health," Reeve said in a [statement](#). "Monsanto profited from selling PCBs for decades and needs to take responsibility for cleaning up after the mess it

created," she said.

The [resolution](#) passed by the city body states that the company was the only manufacturer of PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) from 1935 until they were banned in 1979. The contamination from PCBs—which cause a range of harmful effects on wildlife and humans and are categorized as probable human carcinogens—lingers, and it "has been found in sediments within the City of Portland in the Columbia Slough and the Willamette River," the resolution states.

"In our case there are PCBs widely distributed throughout Portland Harbor and that's one of the main reasons it was listed as a super-fund site back in December of 2000," Travis Williams, executive director of Willamette Riverkeeper, [told](#) local news *KGW*.

Portland [joins](#) six other West Coast cities—Seattle, Spokane, Berkeley, Oakland, San Diego and San Jose—to file such a suit. The seven cities [will use](#) the same two law firms for their separate suits.

Last Updated on Friday, 18 March 2016 07:39

1780 readings

[Site C hunger striker Kristin Henry 12th day](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 24 March 2016 13:39

Hunger strikers call on Trudeau to stop Site C

The Vancouver Hunger Strikers. Photo from the 'Hunger Strike for the Peace River Valley - STOP SITE C.' Facebook page

POSTED BY: [MONTANA CUMMING](#) MARCH 23, 2016

VANCOUVER, B.C. — Protesters of Site C based in Vancouver have penned an [open letter](#) to the Prime Minister, calling on him to stop Site C construction.

The letter argues that, because Treaty 8 First Nations have not provided consent to construction of the Site C dam, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is not upholding his promise build a "renewed nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous Peoples" by allowing it to continue.

Wednesday marks the eleventh day of the hunger strike, and one protester, Kristin Henry, intends to quit eaten until the project is scrapped altogether. She hasn't eaten anything since March 13.

"She is already facing serious health risks, and the likelihood of permanent physical consequences grows with every day this hunger strike continues," the letter states. "She has been joined by other hunger strikers who agree that construction of the Site C dam cannot continue."

On Thursday, the hunger strikers will be inviting people to join them and send letters. According to a social media post on [Facebook](#), over 70 letters have already been sent.

According to agrologist Wendy Holm, who is referenced in the letter, the Peace River Valley could feed one million people due to its unique micro-climate, soil, and access to water.

In the House of Commons [last month](#), Federal Environment Minister Catherine McKenna stated that the former government approved the project and set legally binding conditions with which the proponent must comply.

She added that construction has started on Site C, and BC Hydro must meet requirements set out in the EA decision and other regulatory requirements.

Some have come to interpret this as a signal that the Liberal government doesn't intend to stop Site C, or hasn't made any intentions clear.

President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Grand Chief Stewart Philip, said late last year that Trudeau [must veto the project](#) to show his commitment to reconciliation.

The letter from the Vancouver Hunger Strikers finishes by asking, 'Mr. Trudeau, will you keep your promise?'

<http://energeticcity.ca/article/news/2016/03/23/hunger-strikers-call-trudeau-stop-site-c>

Last Updated on Sunday, 27 March 2016 15:58

1435 readings

[Three International Days in a Week, But Is Anybody Listening?](#)

[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 23 March 2016 06:57

By [Monique Barbut](#)



Monique Barbut

BONN, Germany, Mar 22 2016 (IPS) - For three consecutive days this week, we gave thought to our future. On International Forests Day, Monday, 21 March, we were reminded that forests are vital for our future water needs. On Tuesday, 22 March, [World Water Day](#), we learned that half the world's workers are involved in the water sector and some 2 billion people, especially women and girls, still need access to improved sanitation. World Meteorological Day, on Wednesday, 23 March, concluded with the warning of [a hotter, drier and wetter future](#). A reality that is already evident and frightening, as productive land turns to sand or dust.

Is anybody listening?

The overall message of this week is: we have developed a reckless appetite for resources and we are not doing enough to meet future demand. But nature is neither kind nor forgiving. When the resources are exhausted or destroyed humans will lose, and lose big.

Few of us can visualize a future without trees, fresh water or productive land while the resources are still flowing and politicians muddle the science. Denial and inaction have prevailed – except in countries like Rwanda and Ethiopia where land degradation has already led to economic ruin, poverty and political conflict.

Ethiopia's history offers us a glimpse into what our own future might

look like if we fail to act now. Its story of recovery should inspire us to act – while we still can.

In just one century, [Ethiopia reduced its forest cover from 40% to below 3%](#). It is easy to see why. In a country where agriculture is the main source of livelihoods for 85 percent of the country's 90 million people, and also makes up 90% of the exports, it seemed like there was little choice.

Following decades of deforesting and converting forests into farmland, the land's vulnerability to recurrent and longer droughts grew. By the 1980s, food and water shortages were severe. The political situation worsened in tandem. But Ethiopia is rising, and her people are doing the unimaginable.

For the 2007 World Environment Day, Ethiopia signed up for a 60 million tree-planting campaign. Success led to a bolder target. In late 2014, [Ethiopia announced to the world that it will recover 22 million hectares of degraded lands and forests](#). That is an area [more than one-sixth of the entire country](#). Recently, Ethiopia took the bolder step of becoming land degradation neutral by 2036. Under [this scheme](#), it plans to recover and rehabilitate, voluntarily, up to 33 million hectares of degraded land to ensure the country's productive areas remain stable thereafter.

Ethiopia is re-covering the power to feed itself and replenishing its ground water sources, but has gained much more than it anticipated. It is creating new jobs every day, by paying its population to restore degraded lands. It is re-building the means to shield itself or recover from the future drought risks. And there is a global bonus. Ethiopia's highlands are nourishing River Nile, a lifeline for the drier countries downstream. Ethiopia's experience is rich, with lessons for everyone.

Restoring degraded land, is a revolutionary, yet counter-intuitive, way to create formal jobs, eradicate poverty, replenish ground water sources, revive dying lands, manage disaster and climate change risks, and channel resources to the neediest.

The [Bonn Challenge](#), which aims to restore 350 million hectares of degraded forests, is also built on inspiring stories of land restoration. Costa Rica doubled its forest cover in 25 years, and boosted its tourism industry. In just 15 years, land users in the Shinyanga area of northern Tanzania restored 2 million hectares of land, and household incomes doubled. The Republic of Korea restored more than half its forest cover and now earns up to US\$50 billion in ecosystem services every year.

We are treading a dangerous path with a bleak future, but that path is not fated. We can change the trajectory of our history by our choices as individuals, organizations and countries.

At the UNCCD, we have chosen to follow the example of countries like Ethiopia. We are working with countries, UN partners, civil society




organizations and women and youth groups to recover 500 million of the [2 billion hectares of land](#) we have degraded in the course of our development.

Since the adoption of the global Goals for sustainable development last September, 65 countries have expressed interest in our programme to set out voluntary targets to become land degradation neutral by 2030. This is a sea-change that few people could have visualized five years ago.

We may never know the true value of the International Days. But they offer unique moments to share inspiring stories that are too often lost in the clutter of political negotiations. If we listen to the stories and act on them, we can influence hearts and minds, and inspire action.

Monique Barbut is Assistant Secretary General of the UN and Executive Secretary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification

1412 readings

[Federal direction to Canada's spy agency on anti terror bill C 51 largely secret](#)   

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 09 April 2016 06:46

By Jim Bronskill

<http://ipolitics.ca/2016/03/27/federal-direction-to-canadas-spy-agency-on-anti-terror-bill-c-51-largely-secret/>



<="" p="">

OTTAWA – The federal government has issued guidance to Canada’s spy agency on using contentious new anti-terrorism laws – but most of the instructions won’t be made public.

Many passages of the ministerial direction to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, issued last July, were withheld from release due to provisions of the Access to Information Act concerning security, internal deliberations and cabinet confidences

The office of Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale said ministerial offices are not involved in the processing of access requests, nor should they be.

But the federal decision to keep much of the ministerial direction under wraps did nothing to reassure those with concerns about C-51, the omnibus security bill that received royal assent early last summer.

The legislation gave CSIS the power to actively disrupt suspected terrorist plots, even allowing the spy service to take actions that breach the Charter of Rights and Freedoms as long as a judge approves.

“One of our greatest concerns with C-51 is that CSIS has been given extraordinary new powers, including the power to break the law and violate the Constitution,” said Josh Paterson, executive director of the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association.

“While some details need to remain secret, it’s troubling that so much of the minister’s high-level, general direction to CSIS on how the agency should interpret its new powers is blacked out. The government should be more transparent about the direction it is giving our spy agencies as to how they

should be accountable.”

While the public safety minister does not dictate day-to-day decisions by CSIS, he periodically issues written directions to the spy agency that broadly guide its actions.

The July direction combined and replaced two previous instructions, one on spy agency operations and another on accountability to the minister. In drafting it, Public Safety officials consulted CSIS, Justice Canada, the RCMP, Foreign Affairs and the office of then-public safety minister Steven Blaney.

The direction set out “overarching parameters for CSIS’s use of its new powers” under C-51 and Bill C-44, which addressed matters including source protection and use of judicial warrants, says a July 29 memo to Blaney.

Elements of the direction that were released to The Canadian Press mention fundamental principles CSIS must follow, including respect for the rule of law and the use of operational methods “reasonable and proportional” to the threat.

The direction also stresses the fair treatment of human sources who help CSIS and says the spy service’s activities abroad must respect Canada’s foreign policy interests as well as the security of overseas missions and personnel.

However, the details on how all this must be done have been stripped out of the direction and several annexes.

“The really interesting stuff, I’m sure, is in the redacted portions,” said University of Ottawa law professor Craig Forcese, co-author of “False Security,” a book critiquing C-51.

Forcese said the direction should include things like guidance to CSIS about being careful not to step on the RCMP’s toes and potentially derail a criminal prosecution.

“I think we need to know some of these details,” said Forcese, who questioned classification of parts of the direction as cabinet secrets.

Scott Bardsley, a spokesman for Goodale, said responsibilities for Access to Information requests are delegated within each department and are processed outside of ministers’ offices.

“Avoiding political interference or the appearance of it is crucial for the integrity of the regime. We don’t have a comment on particular decisions,” he said.

“Having said that the goal of our government is to make government information open by default. In the meantime, we have to operate under the existing act.”

C

COMMENTS WERE CLOSED HERE IS WHAT I WOULD HAVE COMMENTED

[1997 Discrimination Against Russow on Grounds of Political Opinion: Will C51 Be the Same?](http://www.pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10469:1997-discrimination-on-grounds-of-political-opinion-will-c51-be-the-same&catid=75:cjustice-news&Itemid=218) http://www.pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10469:1997-discrimination-on-grounds-of-political-opinion-will-c51-be-the-same&catid=75:cjustice-news&Itemid=218 By Joan Russow PhD - Global Compliance Research Project

See update bio in Annex; What actions was I involved in to justify the government's designating me as a threat; in 2016, I have still have not found out the reason for my being placed on a threat assessment List



Last Updated on Thursday, 14 April 2016 16:56

1297 readings

[TPP](#)

[at](#)   

[UVIC](#)

[Justice News](#)

Posted by dragonslayer

Thursday, 07 April 2016 20:43




Public Notice:

Dr Shiv Chopra will be talking about how the TPP will adversely affect Canada at the University of Victoria on Apr 10 at 7pmin the David Turpin Bldg (rm A104) - admission free.

Petition: [www. foodsovereigntycanada.com](http://www.foodsovereigntycanada.com)

Last Updated on Thursday, 07 April 2016 20:54

1461 readings

[Bernie Heads to the](#)   
[Vatican](#)

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 09 April 2016 16:32

By

> The senator from Vermont will speak about creating a “moral economy.”

EMMA GREEN

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- APR 8, 2016
- [POLITICS](#)
- [HTTP://WWW.THEATLANTIC.COM/POLITICS/ARCHIVE/2016/04/BERNIE-HEADS-TO-THE-VATICAN/477471/](http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/04/bernie-heads-to-the-vatican/477471/)



Brian Frank / Reuters

- 10k

Updated April 8, 4:30 p.m. EST

A socialist, Jewish, “[not particularly religious](#)” senator from Vermont will soon make his debut at the Vatican. On Friday, Bernie Sanders announced

that in a week or so, he will be speaking at the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, a scholarly body that's part of Catholic Church in Rome.

RELATED STORY



[Pope Francis: Real Families Are Not Theological Abstractions](#)

“I was very moved by the invitation,” he said during an interview [on Morning Joe](#). “People say Bernie Sanders is radical? Uh-uh. Read what the pope is writing.”

There is a somewhat uncanny overlap between the way Bernie and Francis talk about economic issues. One of the first pieces of writing the pope [released during his tenure, *Evangeliu Gaudium*](#), is all about the greed and fundamental corruption at the heart of the global economy. Both men speak with passion about poverty and talk about labor and wages in moral terms. And Sanders has often praised the pope, including after the pontiff addressed the U.S. Congress in September.

Last Updated on Thursday, 14 April 2016 16:31

1533 readings

[BC Hydro Paying Millions to Independent Power Producers to Not Produce Power Due to Oversupply](#)

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 16 April 2016 17:25

EXCLUSIVE:

Judith Lavoie • Desmog

<http://www.desmog.ca/2016/04/05/b-c-hydro-paying-independent-power-producers-not-produce-power-due-oversupply>

Tuesday, April 5, 2016 - 17:06



A state-of-the-art gas thermal power plant in Campbell River sits idle 90 per cent of the time, but — under a contract that runs until April 2022 — BC Hydro is paying about \$55-million a year to ensure emergency power is available if needed, DeSmog Canada has learned.

The Island Generation plant, with a 275-megawatt capability, meaning it is capable of powering about one-third of Vancouver Island homes, is owned by Capital Power Corp., and is fired up only for peak power demands or when there are problems with subsea cables from the mainland that usually power Vancouver Island.

The company only incurs minor expenses as there is a skeleton crew of about 14 people and few maintenance problems, meaning it is similar to being paid for parking a vehicle in a garage, said a former employee.

“All the money they are getting for not running the plant is free,” said Kerry McRae, former construction superintendent for the plant who is questioning why BC Hydro is forging ahead with plans to spend \$9-billion on the Site C dam when it is not using power from existing facilities.

It is a question that Adrian Dix, NDP critic for BC Hydro, would like answered, but during Question Period in the Legislature Tuesday, Energy and Mines Minister Bill Bennett took the question on notice, meaning he will answer later when he has more information.

BC Hydro is paying Independent Power Producers across the province, in communities such as Nanaimo and Prince George, to not produce power because of over-supply, Dix told DeSmog Canada.

Most of the affected IPPs use biomass and are connected to pulp and paper operations as it is more difficult to stop run-of-river or wind power production, he said.

While the Campbell River plant has a role as an emergency power producer in low water years, other producers are simply being told BC Hydro will not take the power and, since contracts are in place, Hydro is paying penalties, Dix said.

“We are paying money for nothing,” he said.

“BC Hydro dramatically miscalculated energy demands in the current context. They overbought IPPs, which is one of the reasons we are in the catastrophic financial situation we are in now.”

The problem goes back to cabinet instructions under former premier Gordon Campbell’s government to buy enough energy from IPPs to be self-sufficient in low water years and now, with energy demands dropping and no sign of significant increases in industrial demand, there is a dramatic surplus while ratepayers are facing hefty cost hikes, Dix said.

“It was a cabinet decision to overbuild, but BC Hydro has effectively mismanaged the system,” he said.

“According to BC Hydro they are losing \$1.4 billion in IPP power.”

The larger problem will come when the Site C dam comes into operation in about a decade, putting massive amounts of power into the system.

Site C is being built without any economic justification, the power will probably have to be sold at a significant loss and the influx could cause independent biomass power plants to go down, Dix said.

“Site C is a catastrophe for the economy,” he said.

However, BC Hydro spokesman Kevin Aquino said Site C is being built to meet the long-term electricity needs of BC Hydro customers and forecasts show that electricity demands in the province will increase by about 40 per cent over the next 20 years.

“Once complete, in 2024, Site C will provide clean, reliable and cost-

effective electricity in the province for more than 100 years,” he said, pointing to a section of the Joint Review Panel report that says Site C, after an initial burst of expenditure, would lock in low rates for many decades.

The same report, however, stated that demand for the project couldn't be proven, adding: ““Justification must rest on an unambiguous need for the power and analyses showing its financial costs being sufficiently attractive as to make tolerable the bearing of substantial environmental, social and other costs.”

When asked about the Campbell River Island Generation plant, Aquino said BC Hydro has a responsibility to ensure power is available when customers need it.

“We need to meet the needs of British Columbians on the coldest, darkest days of the year and that’s why we need to have back-up sources of power, such as the Island Co-generation plant,” he said.

Hydro has had a contract with the Campbell River plant since 1998, when it was a co-generation plant, attached to the Elk Falls pulp and paper mill. The mill closed in 2008 and the power plant was converted to run solely on natural gas instead of sending steam to the mill.

It is the largest power producing plant on Vancouver Island and has been a key source of emergency energy, Aquino said.

“We cannot afford to not have backups in place.”

Neither Hydro nor Capital Power, which bought the plant in 2010, would confirm the contract figures, but the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union previously estimated that Hydro was paying \$150,000 a day or \$55-million annually.

“Island Generation is fully contracted under a long-term tolling agreement with BC Hydro until April 2022,” said company spokesman Michael Sheehan.

During 2015 the plant produced 79 GWh of power and is an important source of power during periods of peak energy demand or when the main transmission lines to Vancouver Island are out of service, Sheehan said.

But a former employee, who cannot be named because of an agreement with the company, said, for the last three years, the plant has run less than 10 per cent of the time even though it is extremely efficient and clean.

“The strangest thing is (the company) is making more money than if they had it running,” he said.

Last Updated on Friday, 22 April 2016 12:21

1329 readings

[18th!](#) [@DemilitarizeDay](#)   
[#welfarenotwarfare](#)

[Peace News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 14 April 2016 16:54

**Monday April 18th from 12pm - 1pm
827 Fort Street, Victoria
Outside DND Recruitment Centre**

Organized by the [Canadian Voice of Women for Peace](#) and the [International Peace Bureau](#)

The [Canadian government spends over \\$23.6 billion](#) on the Department of National Defence and \$9.8 billion on Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness but only \$1.5 billion on Environment Canada, of which only [\\$172 million is planned to be spent](#) on "Climate Change and Clean Air" for the 2015, 2016 & 2017 budget periods. Canada is the 6th highest spender on the military among NATO countries and is the 16th highest worldwide.

We cannot tackle the climate crisis and end poverty in our country, if we continue to waste our precious tax dollars on war and weapons. Let's move the money from militarism to sustainability!

Read the VOWPeace.org Article...

[Government of Canada Must Reduce Military Spending](#)

Last Updated on Thursday, 14 April 2016 16:59

1228 readings

[Ending Poverty, Hunger Possible
With Just a Fraction of Global
Military Spending](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 11 April 2016 19:48

World's military spending was \$1.7 trillion in 2015, marking a 1 percent increase from 2014.

by

[Andrea Germanos, staff](#)

[wri](#)

ter Common Dreams

http://www.commondreams.org/news/2016/04/06/ending-poverty-hunger-possible-just-fraction-global-military-spending?utm_campaign=shareaholic&utm_medium=twitter&utm_source=socialnetwork

Campaigners outside of the UN building in New York on the eve

of the Sustainable Development Goals Summit in 2015. (Photo:[Marisol Grandon](#)/Department for International Development via flickr/cc)

Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger—two of the the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) [agreed](#) by the United Nations in 2015—may seem far out of reach. But, according to a new study, it could done with about ten percent of the world's military spending.

The finding highlighting global priorities is from the the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), whose latest [analysis](#) (pdf) shows that global military spending is up for the first time since 2011.

Total such expenditures added up to \$1.7 trillion in 2015, marking a 1 percent increase from 2014.

Spending \$596 billion in 2015, the U.S. still ranks number one in terms of military expenditures, though that spending declined 2.4 percent, "its slowest annual rate since 2011," the report notes. It still greatly outspent China, which holds the number 2 spot, which SIPRI estimates to have spent \$215 billion.

Along with the U.S. and China, Saudi Arabia, Russia, and the UK are the biggest spenders.

While North America and Western Europe saw declines in military expenditures, Central and Eastern Europe, Asia and Oceania saw increases, SIPRI's analysis finds.

"Military spending in 2015 presents contrasting trends," said Sam Perlo-Freeman, head of SIPRI's military expenditure project, in a press statement. "On the one hand, spending trends reflect the escalating conflict and tension in many parts of the world; on the other hand, they show a clear break from the oil-fueled surge in military spending of the past decade. This volatile economic and political situation creates an uncertain picture for the years to come."

Perlo-Freeman also [looked](#) at what could be achieved with those funds—or the "opportunity cost" of the military allocation of the funds—at his organization's WritePeace blog. Take SDGs 1 and 2 on ending hunger and poverty, respectively:

A 2015 [report from the UN Food and Agriculture Organization](#) suggests that eliminating extreme poverty and hunger sustainably by 2030 (SDGs 1 and 2) would require an estimated additional \$265 billion a year on average (2013 prices). Of this, \$89–\$147 billion would need to come from public funding, putting total annual public spending requirements at \$156–214 billion (2013 prices). This amounts to 9.5–13% of global military spending in 2015.

Take about 50 percent of global military spending, and the achievements are clearly more far-reaching. He wrote:

A [2015 report by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network](#) found that achieving the SDGs in health, education, agriculture and food security, access to modern energy, water supply and sanitation, telecommunications and transport infrastructure, ecosystems, and emergency response and humanitarian work (SDGs 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14 and 15), including additional sums to allow for climate change mitigation and adaptation, would require further spending from public sources of \$760–\$885 billion a year between 2015–30 (2013 prices). This amounts to 46–54% of world military spending in 2015.

Reallocating only around 10% of world military spending would thus be enough to achieve major progress on some key SDGs, supposing that such funds could be effectively channeled towards these goals and that major obstacles, such as corruption and conflict, could be overcome.

Looking at such comparisons "gives some sort of perspective that can allow people to see what is the opportunity cost involved with global military spending," Perlo-Freeman [told Reuters](#).

"This could stir up some debate although we are certainly not expecting a 10 percent cut in military spending at all," he said. "That is all about the politics of these countries."

As Winnie Byanyima, Executive Director of Oxfam International, stated following the SDGs' adoption, "The goals are achievable, but it cannot be business as usual. Governments—rich and poor—must defy vested interests that seek to maintain the status quo at the expense of people and the planet."

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NOTE

Last Updated on Thursday, 14 April 2016 16:05

PETITION TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED REDUCE
MILITARY SPENDING AND RE-ALLOCATE
FUNDS TO SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL
PRIORITIES



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 20 April 2016 08:55

PETITION

TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED

**REDUCE MILITARY SPENDING AND RE-ALLOCATE FUNDS TO
SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES**

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Last Updated on Wednesday, 20 April 2016 21:59

1196 readings

[UN Chief Seeks Fast-Paced Ratifications for Climate Change Treaty](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 20 April 2016 06:21

By [Thalif Deen](#)



“Predictions are that the emission reduction pledges under the Agreement would lead to rise in temperatures beyond 3 degrees celsius, which would be catastrophic for the world,” Meena Raman told IPS. Credit: Manipadma Jena/IPS.

UNITED NATIONS, Apr 19 2016 (IPS) - Over 150 countries are expected to sign the Paris climate change agreement on April 22 but the historic treaty will not come into force until it has been ratified by 55 countries.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who has hailed the agreement as “a landmark of international cooperation on one of the world’s most complex issues”, is hoping for fast-paced ratifications – perhaps before the end of the year so that it will also be considered as one of his lasting political legacies before he steps down in December.

And he may not be far off the mark.

“Early ratification and entry into force will send a strong signal to Governments, businesses and communities that it is time to fast-track climate action,” Ban said last week.

The real challenge lies ahead, he declared, describing it in a single word: “Implementation.”

Dr Palitha Kohona, a former Chief of the UN Treaty Section, told IPS although signatories are important, the more significant aspect of any international treaty is ratification – some of them long drawn out because that action has to be taken by domestic legislatures.

The Paris Agreement (PA), he pointed out, will enter into force when 55 countries that produce at least 55 percent of the world’s Greenhouse Gas (GHGs) — “ratify, accede, approve or accept it.”

Signatures alone, even by a large majority, will not bring it in to force, he added. He said there are other treaties with similarly complex entry-in-to force provisions.

The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), he noted, has still not entered in to force despite having been signed by over one hundred countries on the first day it was opened for signature at a glittering ceremony at the UN headquarters over 20 years ago.

President Clinton was the first to affix his signature on behalf of the US, he said. That treaty has been ratified by 157 countries, but the holdouts include the US, China, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, North Korea and Pakistan.

“The critical element to entry in to force (of the Paris agreement) will be the key GHG producers. The US, China, Brazil, Russia and the European Union (EU) account for over 75 percent of the world’s GHG emissions and they could provide the main impetus for bringing the agreement in to force”, said Dr Kohona.

Asked if it is realistic to expect the treaty to come into force early, Meena Raman, Legal advisor of the Malaysia-based Third World Network, told IPS: “Well, if the United States and China both ratify early or even this year, then about 40 percent of the global emissions would have been covered but the remaining countries would have to account for the balance of the 15 percent of the emissions and at least 55 countries must have ratified the agreement.”

So it is not completely unrealistic for the early ratification of the agreement before 2020, said Raman, who was been monitoring all of the climate change negotiations as a member of civil society.

However, what is more important to consider, she argued, is the effect of the early ratification and entry into force of the agreement.

The contributions that Parties will make (referred to as ‘nationally determined contributions’) – as to how they would contribute to emission reductions and adaptation actions will only be effective from 2020 onwards, as that is what countries have stated they will do in their intended nationally determined contributions (INDCs), prior to Paris.

So, even if the PA comes into effect say in 2017 or 2018, the actual effect of actions by Parties will begin to materialise from 2020 to 2025/2030 onwards only under the agreement, she noted.

It is well known that the aggregate emissions reductions from the existing INDCs that have been communicated by Parties thus far which will translate to their contributions under the Agreement is grossly inadequate to keep temperature rise to well below 2 degree celsius, let alone 1.5 degrees, she said.

“Predictions are that the emission reduction pledges under the Agreement would lead to rise in temperatures beyond 3 degrees Celsius, which would be catastrophic for the world.”

So, while the early entry into force of the PA may send some positive signals, the real issue is whether governments, especially in the developed world step up with their emission cuts even more ambitiously now and provide the necessary financial and technology transfer resources to developing countries to also act with urgency in the pre-2020 time frame – and not wait for actions after 2020, as they had agreed under the various decisions of the UNFCCC (UN

Framework Convention on Climate Change) and the Kyoto Protocol.

Eliza Northrop, an Associate in the International Climate Initiative at the Washington-based World Resources Institute, told IPS the Paris Agreement, with the required ratifications, could enter into force in 2017 or even earlier.

It certainly will happen faster than previous comparable agreements, such as the Kyoto Protocol, she pointed out.

“Not only is there greater political momentum behind the Paris Agreement but the conditions for entry into force are different to that of the Kyoto Protocol”.

Although the Kyoto Protocol followed a similar “55 Parties/55 percent of emissions” approach to the Paris Agreement – in the case of the Kyoto Protocol, the “55 percent of emissions” threshold was only based on the carbon dioxide emissions from developed country Parties.

By contrast, she said, the Paris Agreement takes into account all greenhouse gas emissions from all countries.

“Entry into force will require the support of a broad constituency of countries and broad support for climate action from the largest emitters to the most vulnerable island nations,” Northrop added.

Dr Kohona told IPS the policy of the US would be seminal.

While its past performance in this area of global law making has not been encouraging, and climate skeptics exert a disproportionate amount of influence on US policy making, it is to be hoped that the threat to the very existence of the human race that climate change poses will influence its decision making.

“Any dilution of the leadership provided so far by the US could provide the excuse for others to to lose their enthusiasm”.

The commitment of the administration of President Barack Obama to address the threat of climate change forcefully must remain unabated if the world is to deal with this problem effectively, he declared.

Meanwhile, the provisions of the agreement include reaffirming the goal of limiting global temperature increase well below 2 degrees Celsius, while urging efforts to limit the increase to 1.5 degrees.

At the same time, the Paris Agreement calls for establishing binding commitments by all parties to make “nationally determined contributions” (NDCs), and to pursue domestic measures aimed at achieving them; commits all countries to report regularly on their emissions and “progress made in implementing and achieving” their NDCs, and to undergo international review and submit new NDCs every five years, with the clear expectation that they will “represent a progression” beyond previous ones.

Additionally, the agreement reaffirms the binding obligations of developed countries under the UNFCCC (UN Framework Convention on Climate Change) to support the efforts of developing countries, while for the first time encouraging voluntary contributions by developing countries too, and extends the current goal of mobilizing \$100 billion a year in support by 2020 through 2025, with a new, higher goal to be set for the period after 2025.

The writer can be contacted at thalifdeen@aol.com

COMMENT'




Good piece

In Paris, the "contributions" were all over the place; different percentages, different baselines and different targets

At least the major GHG emitters, and per capita emitters should commit to 25% below 1990 levels by 2020 and decarbonization by 2050

Last Updated on Wednesday, 20 April 2016 07:24

2177 readings

[On April 22, if there is no Global Vision & firm commitments, signing of the Paris Agreement and will undermine the agreement will lead nowhere](#)   

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 21 April 2016 10:51



[SDG Goal 13 Climate Change; urgent means urgent](#)

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 interference with the climate system.)

A global vision to implement article 2 would be, at a minimum, to immediately end all subsidies for fossil fuel, to divest in fossil fuels, to not use "transition" to justify the continuation of the fossil fuel industry, to reinvest in socially equitable and environmentally sound renewable energy, to calculate the carbon budget for each state, to enforce fair share of the carbon budget, to commit to 25% reduction of GHGs emissions below levels by 2020, to de-carbonisation by 2050, to conserve nature (not just means to offset emissions), to compensate for historical emissions which impacted on vulnerable states, to avoid all false solutions such as nuclear, engineering and bio-fuels which would all violate principles within UNFCCC, to end the exemption of the contribution of militarism to greenhouse gas emissions, and finally to implement the following commitment "to reallocate resources at present committed to military purposes (Article 16e, Chapter 33, Agenda 21, UNCED)

Last Updated on Monday, 09 May 2016 07:11

1328 readings

PETITION TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED REDUCE
MILITARY SPENDING AND RE-ALLOCATE
FUNDS TO SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL
PRIORITIES



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 20 April 2016 08:55

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TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED

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NAME
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Last Updated on Wednesday, 20 April 2016 21:59

[2016 WORLD HUMANITARIAN SUMMIT : TO PREVENT AND END CONFLICT BY PROMOTING COMMON SECURITY](#) 

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 23 May 2016 16:26



By Joan Russow PhD Coordinator, Compliance Research Project

1230 St Patrick St Victoria BC V8S 4Y4

The fundamental objective of the Charter is to prevent the scourge of war entails the prevention of conflict.

to implement the first obligation, of the World Humanitarian Summit, to event and end conflict, the Conference must embodied the moral imperative to move from militarized security to true security; common security

Rather than abiding by Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations- the peaceful resolution of disputes, Governments have used notion of militarized security which has resulted in years of

pretexts for invasion:

For years states have used various pretexts to justify the invasion of and aggression against other states; For example, the pretext of “human security” was used to justify the invasion of Iraq in 1991, then “humanitarian intervention” was used to justify the invasion of Kosovo; so-called “self Defense” (Art. 51 of the UN Charter), to justify the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, then "Pre-emptive/ preventive" attack to justify the invasion of Iraq in 2003, finally it was “the responsibility to protect” to justify the intervention in Haiti in 2004, and the invasion of Libya in 2011. Even in 2013, after all the previous pretexts had been discredited, a new pretext was proposed, the “Will to Intervene” which had just been waiting to be used to justify an intervention future invasion

A REALLOCATE MILITARY EXPENSES**B. END CONTINUED RELUCTANCE OF STATES TO IGNORE THE
CRIES TO ABOLISH NUCLEAR WEAPONS .****C. END MISAPPROPRIATION OF SECURITY****D. REDEFINE WHAT CONSTITUTES SECURITY****COMMON SECURITY MUST TRUMP MILITARIZED SECURITY**

No Expanded Doc Available

1033 readings

[Will Canada Recognise Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Developing Countries Too?](#)

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 20 May 2016 19:11

By [Aruna Dutta](#)



Indigenous women and children in Guatemala are among those affected by Canadian mining companies. Credit: Danilo Valladares/IPS

UNITED NATIONS, May 19 2016 (IPS) - While Canada's long-awaited support for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples brought hope and celebration last week, it's not yet clear whether the rights of Indigenous people in developing countries harmed by Canadian mining companies will also be included.

The Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, told IPS that Canada's support for the Declaration is a "breath of fresh air."

For almost a decade, Ottawa had voted against the Declaration, a global set of collective human rights covering an array of indigenous issues. The Conservative government that was voted out last year claimed that the provision requiring government to consult indigenous groups before making any decision that might impact their way of life or their ability to exercise rights over traditional lands and territories would amount to a indigenous veto on major resource projects. Signing the Declaration would be ignoring the human rights of non-indigenous Canadians, it asserted.

Although in a significant turnaround for Canada, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government has accepted the declaration, Tauli-Corpuz cautioned that the government also has to be aware of how the numerous Canadian mining companies operating abroad are also putting a heavy toll on indigenous lives.

"Signing the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People as well as the demands of civil society are very likely to prompt action," -- Mercedes Garcia

It's estimated that [75 percent](#) of the world's mining and exploration companies are based in Canada, and mining is one of Canada's most economically powerful sectors.

Activists say as a global power-player in mining it is still a long way from protecting indigenous people elsewhere from the onslaught of mining interests.

"I do not think that the idea of free, prior and informed consent is being taken seriously by the Canadian government, whether concerning mining operations within Canada or abroad" Jennifer Moore, Mining Watch's Latin America Project Coordinator, told IPS.

This central part of the declaration would not only entail consulting with Indigenous peoples but also respecting their right to consent – to say yes or no to policies and projects affecting them at every stage.

"The government carefully crafted its statements last week with regard to how it would interpret the UN declaration in Canada on the domestic front to try to preclude respect for the full extent of this right, " said Moore. She says this is because the Liberal administration is still very committed to the same corporate-driven agenda of the prior government in many ways.

"Canada continues to view the problems with this industry as one of a

few bad apples and a problem for Canada's reputation rather than wanting to face up to the systematic harms taking place in Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities as the result of providing access to easy money while promoting and protecting the interests of a destructive development model around the world."

"The Liberal government has so far been reaffirming past policies and practices of the former Conservative government concerning the globalized mining sector abroad," she said.

This, Moore says, includes the dysfunctional complaints mechanisms in place that "(don't) investigate complaints or determine whether or not companies actually abide by the standards the government supposedly promotes, let alone lead to any remedy or sanction."

This lack of justice is a significant problem in Honduras, where the mining industry is mainly comprised of Canadian based companies, and the lives of those who dare to speak out about impacts on health, land, sacred spaces and their community fabric are threatened.

At least 109 people were killed in Honduras between 2010 and 2015, for taking a stand against destructive dam, mining, logging and agriculture projects according to [Global Witness](#). Of the eight victims whose cases were publicly reported in 2015, six were from indigenous groups.

"Given the prominence of Canada in the mining sector in Honduras, it is fair to expect the Canadian government play a much more decisive role to contribute to put an end to such abuses," Mercedes Garcia, Research Associate at Council of Hemispheric Affairs, told IPS.

Last month, Development and Peace and Mining Watch Canada called on Trudeau to give special attention to an [open letter](#) from close to 200 Latin American and international organizations urging sweeping change to Canada's policy regarding the global mining sector.

Over 50 percent of Latin America's mining investments come from Canada. Through a [study](#) of 22 mining projects carried out by Canadian companies in nine Latin American countries, a pattern of human rights violations related to large scale mining was discovered.

"Canada's human rights performance has deteriorated considerably, not only in the eyes of the international community, but also from the perspective of the individuals, peoples, and communities that live with the negative impacts of Canadian extractive projects," the letter says.

The letter demanded that the Canadian government ensure that their companies respect the decisions of numerous communities, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, who have said no to large-scale mining because of its severe damaging impacts on the environment and social well being. There has not been a response from the Trudeau administration about these concerns.

For Garcia, Canada's support for the UN Declaration is a sign of hope.

"Signing the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People as well as the demands of civil society are very likely to prompt action," said Garcia.

John McKay, a liberal MP said he expected Canada's new government to try Bill C-300 again soon. Bill C-300, also known as the Responsible Mining Act, was a legislative initiative that intended to tighten regulations for Canadian corporations overseas in 2010 but that was not approved.

"Current Prime Minister Justin Trudeau voted in favor of the bill when he was in parliament, so it is likely that if brought to discussion, bill C-300 has a greater chance to be passed." Garcia told IPS.

"Furthermore, several Guatemalan indigenous women seeking remedy for their abuses from workers of Canadian mining companies have been at times successful at bringing their cases to Canadian courts. Their cases are currently open, if ruled in their favor, this will represent a constructive new precedent and pathway for those victims seeking justice."

1349 readings

[The Trillion Dollar Question the Media Have Neglected to Ask Presidential Candidates](#)



[Peace News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 12 May 2016 07:41

The American people will be footing the bill — but, by and large, they haven't heard much about our country's planned trillion-dollar nuclear weapons upgrade.

BY LAWRENCE WITTNER | MARCH 21, 2016



A deactivated Titan II nuclear ICMB is seen in a silo at the Titan Missile Museum on May 12, 2015 in Green Valley, Arizona. (Brendan Smialowski/AFP/Getty Images)

This post originally appeared at [History News Network](#).

Isn't it rather odd that America's largest single public expenditure scheduled for the coming decades has received no attention in the 2015-2016 presidential debates?

The expenditure is for a 30-year program to "modernize" the US nuclear arsenal and production facilities. Although President Obama began his administration with a [dramatic public commitment](#) to build a nuclear weapons-free world, that commitment has long ago dwindled and died. It has been replaced by an [administration plan](#) to build a new generation of US nuclear weapons and nuclear production facilities to last the nation well into the second half of the 21st century. This plan, which has received almost no attention by the mass media, includes redesigned nuclear warheads, as well as new nuclear bombers, submarines, land-based missiles, weapons labs and production plants. The estimated cost? \$1,000,000,000,000.00 — or, for those readers unfamiliar with such lofty figures, \$1 trillion.

Critics charge that the expenditure of this staggering sum will either bankrupt the country or, at the least, require massive [cutbacks in funding](#) for other federal government programs. "We're... wondering how the heck we're going to pay for it," [admitted Brian McKeon](#), an undersecretary of defense. And we're "probably thanking our stars we won't be here to have to have to answer the question," he added with a chuckle.

This nuclear "modernization" plan violates the terms of the 1968 nuclear [Non-Proliferation Treaty](#), which requires the nuclear powers to

engage in nuclear disarmament. The plan is also moving forward despite the fact that the US government already possesses roughly [7,000](#) nuclear weapons that can easily destroy the world. Although climate change might end up accomplishing much the same thing, a nuclear war does have the advantage of terminating life on earth more rapidly.

This trillion-dollar nuclear weapons buildup has yet to inspire any questions about it by the moderators during the numerous presidential debates. Even so, in the course of the campaign, the presidential candidates have begun to reveal their attitudes toward it.

On the Republican side, the candidates — despite their professed distaste for federal expenditures and “big government” — have been enthusiastic supporters of this great leap forward in the nuclear arms race. Donald Trump, the frontrunner, contended in his presidential announcement speech that [“our nuclear arsenal doesn’t work,”](#) insisting that it is out of date. Although he didn’t mention the \$1 trillion price tag for “modernization,” the program is clearly something he favors, especially given his campaign’s focus on building a US military machine [“so big, powerful and strong](#) that no one will mess with us.”

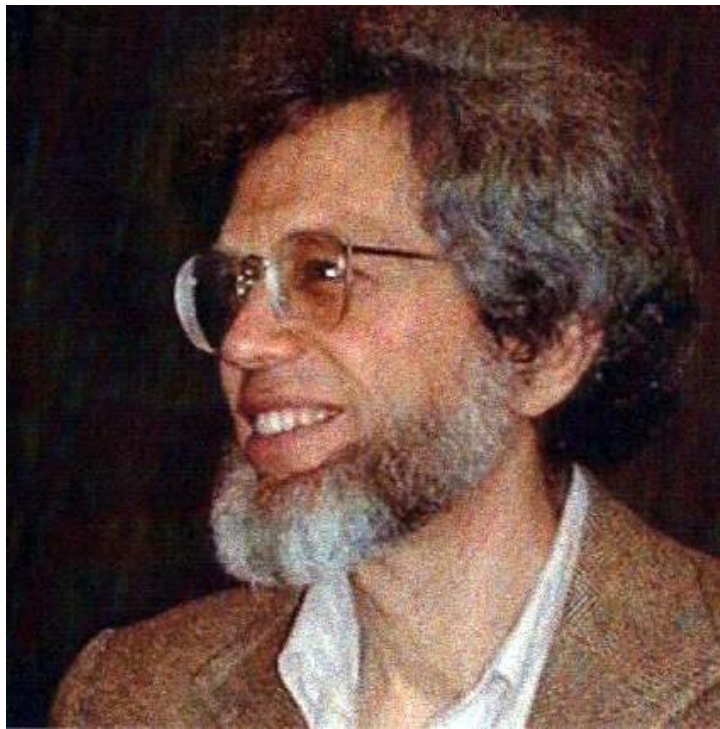
His Republican rivals have adopted a similar approach. [Marco Rubio](#), asked while campaigning in Iowa about whether he supported the trillion dollar investment in new nuclear weapons, replied that “we have to have them. No country in the world faces the threats America faces.” When a peace activist questioned [Ted Cruz](#) on the campaign trail about whether he agreed with Ronald Reagan on the need to eliminate nuclear weapons, the Texas senator replied: “I think we’re a long way from that and, in the meantime, we need to be prepared to defend ourselves. The best way to avoid war is to be strong enough that no one wants to mess with the United States.” Apparently, Republican candidates are particularly worried about being “messed with.”

On the Democratic side, Hillary Clinton has been more ambiguous about her stance toward a dramatic expansion of the US nuclear arsenal. Asked by a peace activist about the trillion dollar nuclear plan, [she replied](#) that she would “look into that,” adding: “It doesn’t make sense to me.” Even so, like other issues that the former secretary of state has promised to “look into,” this one remains unresolved. Moreover, the [“National Security” section](#) of her campaign website promises that she will maintain the “strongest military the world has ever known” — not a propitious sign for critics of nuclear weapons.

Only Bernie Sanders has adopted a position of outright rejection. In May 2015, shortly after declaring his candidacy, Sanders was asked at a public meeting about the trillion dollar nuclear weapons program. He [replied](#): “What all of this is about is our national priorities. Who are we as a people? Does Congress listen to the military-industrial complex” that “has never seen a war that they didn’t like? Or do we listen to the people of this country who are hurting?” In fact, Sanders is one of only three US Senators who support

the [SANE Act](#), legislation that would significantly reduce US government spending on nuclear weapons. In addition, [on the campaign trail](#), Sanders has not only called for cuts in spending on nuclear weapons, but has affirmed his support for their total abolition.

Nevertheless, given the failure of the presidential debate moderators to raise the issue of nuclear weapons “modernization,” the American people have been left largely uninformed about the candidates’ opinions on this subject. So, if Americans would like more light shed on their future president’s response to this enormously expensive surge in the nuclear arms race, it looks like they are the ones who are going to have to ask the candidates the trillion dollar question.



LAWRENCE WITTNER

Dr. Lawrence Wittner is professor of history emeritus at SUNY/Albany. His latest book is a satirical novel about university corporatization and rebellion entitled [What’s Going On at UAardvark?](#)

Last Updated on Tuesday, 24 May 2016 17:07

1297 readings

[Donald Trump’ s Finance Chair Is](#)



[the Anti-Populist From Hell](#)

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 10 May 2016 07:33



Timothy A. Clary/Getty Images

Donald Trump's Finance Chair Is the Anti-Populist From Hell

Steve Mnuchin specialized in fraudulent foreclosures during the heart of the Great Recession. Power to the people.

BY DAVID DAYEN

<https://newrepublic.com/article/133368/donald-trumps-finance-chair-anti-populist-hell> May 9, 2016

Donald Trump's first major staff selection since securing the Republican nomination, national finance chairman Steven Mnuchin, co-founded and manages the hedge fund Dune Capital. Not only did he make partner at Goldman Sachs, so did his father in the 1960s. With over 30 years of experience at the top levels of finance, Mnuchin was present for every recent major banking innovation, including those that brought the country to the brink of economic collapse.

Critics have raised many questions about Mnuchin's financial

dealings, from a lawsuit over pocketing profits in the Bernie Madoff case to his suspiciously quiet exit from the Hollywood production company Relativity Media just before it took huge losses and filed for bankruptcy. Just his association with “vampire squid” Goldman Sachs has motivated some anger. But another part of Mnuchin’s history is more relevant: his chairmanship of OneWest Bank, a major cog in America’s relentless foreclosure machine.

Even among the many bad actors in the national foreclosure crisis, OneWest stood out. It routinely jumped to foreclosure rather than pursue options to keep borrowers in their homes; used fabricated and “robo-signed” documents to secure the evictions; and had a particular talent for dispossessing the homes of senior citizens and people of color.

Mnuchin’s bank had a particular talent for dispossessing the homes of senior citizens and people of color.

Mnuchin’s presence in the campaign reveals how the qualities Trump loyalists projected on their hero don’t measure up to the truth. They have venerated him throughout the Republican primary for rejecting the dirty business of pay-to-play politics, and for populist vows to protect the ordinary worker. But in selecting Mnuchin, not only has Trump submitted to the realities of presidential campaign finance; he’s chosen one of the most notorious bankers in America to carry it out.

When I heard Mnuchin’s name last week, I immediately remembered the front lawn of his mansion. Back in 2011, local housing activists and the Occupy movement in Los Angeles camped out on that lawn to save the home of Rose Mary Gudiel, a La Puente, California, resident who faced eviction after being just two weeks late on one mortgage payment. The activists threatened to move all of Gudiel’s furniture into Mnuchin’s \$26 million Bel Air estate if the eviction wasn’t stopped. Twenty police officers and a helicopter met the protesters.

Why was Mnuchin’s front lawn the focal point for the protest? Because years after forming Dune Capital in 2004, Mnuchin’s hedge fund purchased the failed lender IndyMac, one of America’s largest home lenders and a leading distributor of Alt-A mortgages, a subprime hybrid which did not require borrowers to accurately state their incomes. After IndyMac failed, Dune led the investment group that purchased it from the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) in 2009, renaming it OneWest Bank. Mnuchin became OneWest’s principal owner and chairman.

The purchase—which happened, remember, during the height of the financial crisis—was kind of a can’t-lose proposition for Mnuchin and his investors. The FDIC, as part of a standard deal they made on

transactions for failed banks during the financial crisis, agreed to cover all losses above the first 20 percent on loan defaults. That limited the downside risk of foreclosures, and OneWest could easily recoup its other losses with various fees. Protected by a federal backstop, OneWest turned \$3 billion in profits from 2009 to 2014, off an initial investment of \$1.65 billion. They spun \$1.86 billion of that out to investors in dividend payments. Meanwhile, the FDIC wound up losing \$13 billion on the IndyMac failure, and will pay an estimated \$2.4 billion to OneWest for its foreclosure costs.

As the servicer for many of the old IndyMac mortgages that were sold to investors, OneWest made decisions on whether to offer troubled homeowners loan modifications, or to foreclose on them. It routinely chose the latter. “During Mnuchin’s tenure, OneWest foreclosed on tens of thousands of families, with California’s communities of color shouldering a disproportionate share,” says Kevin Stein of the California Reinvestment Coalition, a housing advocacy organization. Maps provided by his organization show that, of the 36,382 OneWest foreclosures in California between 2009 and 2015, 68 percent of the foreclosures occurred in zip codes with a majority non-white population. While foreclosures hurt non-white families more than their white counterparts overall, these numbers are extreme. Some of OneWest’s foreclosure stories were particularly heartless. Leslie Parks of Minneapolis was negotiating with OneWest for a modification, when she came home during a blizzard in December 2009 to find the locks changed. This practice of “dual tracking” — negotiating with a homeowner while pursuing foreclosure—violates federal servicing statutes. It took Parks two years to end the ordeal, receiving a grant to keep the home. Rose Mary Gudiel, the woman who camped out on Mnuchin’s lawn, also got a loan modification to save her home. But typically only the cases that reached the headlines ended happily; tens of thousands of others ended in foreclosure.

OneWest accomplished these foreclosures through fraud. Erica Johnson-Seck, a vice president of foreclosure and bankruptcy for OneWest, explained in a July 2009 deposition that she “robo-signed” 6,000 foreclosure-related documents per week, spending just 30 seconds on each sworn affidavit that attested to the veracity of all relevant information in the case. Johnson-Seck admitted to not reading the documents before signing them, to not knowing how the records were generated, and to not signing in the presence of a notary, all of which made the affidavits she signed false evidence in court.

In the case where Johnson-Seck was deposed, OneWest was trying to foreclose in its own name, although it didn’t own the loan. The bank executed a mortgage assignment after the foreclosure case was filed to try and cover that up. OneWest and other mortgage companies regularly executed this elaborate scheme, one of the biggest fraud scandals of the financial crisis era. In this case, the judge threw out the foreclosure, one of several homeowner victories against OneWest for

wrongful foreclosure practices, some of them settled for millions of dollars.

But most OneWest homeowners were not so lucky, particularly seniors. OneWest had a subsidiary named Financial Freedom that specialized in reverse mortgages, the kind sold by has-been actors on late-night TV. In a reverse mortgage, homeowners aged 62 and older can extract the equity from their homes, receiving a sum of cash and deferring payments on that loan. While they're a way for seniors to acquire money, these are dangerous products, because interest and ongoing fees build up, while widows and widowers can face foreclosure when their spouses die.

Trump as populist was always something of a pose, covering for a deep nationalism and antipathy to immigrants. The Mnuchin pick just brings that into sharper relief.

The OneWest subsidiary Financial Freedom executed 39 percent of all foreclosures on reverse mortgages between 2009 and 2015, despite servicing only 17 percent of the market, according to data from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) obtained by the California Reinvestment Coalition. OneWest disclosed in its most recent annual report that it's under investigation for this disproportionate share of "widow foreclosures" by HUD's Inspector General. The victims include 103 year-old Myrtle Lewis of North Texas, who OneWest put into foreclosure after her insurance coverage lapsed; Karen Hunziker, who got a foreclosure notice from OneWest ten days after her husband passed away in 2014; and a host of others.

Rather than punishment, Mnuchin reaped huge rewards from OneWest. In 2015, the firm merged with CIT Bank for \$3.4 billion, more than doubling the return for Mnuchin's investment group. OneWest still operates 70 branches in southern California under its own name, and Mnuchin serves on the board of directors of the merged company, continuing to profit from the unreformed foreclosure activities.

Trump's loyal fans aren't likely to scrutinize Mnuchin's record, but they should. You can measure political candidates in part by who they associate with. The foreclosure history in Mnuchin's past reflects an extreme mentality of profit at all costs, and hardly a viewpoint of standing up for the little guy. Trump as populist was always something of a pose, covering for a deep nationalism and antipathy to immigrants. The Mnuchin pick just brings that into sharper relief.

Trump's main money-chaser has profited off the suffering of ordinary Americans for years. There's no reason to believe Trump will offer a better deal to the working class.

Correction: An earlier version of this story stated that Steve Mnuchin

was the current vice chair of the company formed in the merger of CIT and OneWest Bank. Mnuchin stepped down from those duties March 31, though he remains on the board of directors. Mnuchin received a \$10.9 million severance package from CIT for less than one year's work as vice chair.

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Jun Cen

Last Updated on Tuesday, 10 May 2016 07:38

1138 readings

[Trump University fraud allegations
raise questions over his
suitability as US president](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 09 May 2016 10:23

David Millward

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/05/07/trump-university-fraud-allegations-raise-questions-over-his-suit/>

7 MAY 2016 • 10:00PM

It was billed as the chance to become the new Donald Trump, the opportunity to follow in the mogul's footsteps and make a fortune in property.

According to one estimate, 7,000 students thought this was a good idea and signed up for a course at "Trump University" where, they hoped to learn the investment secrets of "the most celebrated entrepreneur on earth".

Now, however, the university is no more - and in a class legal action, a number of students are alleging the whole thing was a fraud and demanding their money back and damages in three separate court cases.

With Mr Trump having pitched his presidential bid on his stellar business record, the litigation over Trump University may not only cost him financially but is certain to be seized on by opponents in the months ahead.

The message from Mr Trump's opponents is a simple one. If this is how he operated one of his businesses, can he be trusted to run the country?

It is already a theme which has featured in attack ads, such as one produced by American Future Fund, a conservative group in which disgruntled former students spoke of their experience.

"I am a single mum. Based on the fact it was Donald Trump, I signed up. I made a huge mistake trusting him," said Sherri Simpson. "America, do not make the same mistake that I did with Donald Trump. I got hurt badly and I would hate to see this country get hurt by Donald Trump."

Within days of the Mr Trump becoming the party's presumptive nominee last week, a court in San Diego, California held a case conference in one of the cases brought against him by one batch of disgruntled students. The judge ruled it will go to trial on November 28, after the presidential election.

One of the California cases is even alleging that Trump University broke racketeering laws.

On the other side of the country, Eric Schneiderman, New York's Attorney General, is pursuing a case in which he is seeking \$40 million on behalf of around 5,000 students at "Trump University".

The allegations in the court papers are damning. The New York case alleges that the three-day seminar – which cost students \$1,495 (£1,036) – was a "bait and switch scheme", a sales pitch to persuade them to join more expensive courses, in some cases costing as much as \$35,000.

According to the New York court papers, cheques were written to Mr Trump personally and that he made up to \$5 million in profit.

The property experts who were described as being "handpicked" by Donald Trump, were nothing of the sort according to the court papers.

"Not a single one was "handpicked" by Donald Trump. Many came to Trump University from jobs having little to do with real estate investments, and some came to Trump University shortly after their real estate investing caused them to go into bankruptcy."

Some had worked as motivational speakers with other companies or had even been sales representatives.

They deployed these skills to persuade students to dig deep into their pockets and where necessary persuade credit card companies to increase their credit limits.

"Trump University even provided handouts with scripted talking points for students to use in their phone calls with credit card companies, explicitly encouraging people to falsify their current income," the court papers allege.

During the three-day seminar hints were dropped that he "often drops by" or that there may be a "surprise" or even a "special guest speaker".

The nearest students came to having their picture taken with Mr Trump was being snapped with a life-size model.

Some of the students are now counting the cost. "Some students took on upwards of \$20,000 in credit card debt, often at the suggestion of Trump University speakers, that

they are still paying off.

“One student lost her life savings, and another had to downsize from a house to a studio apartment, as a result of their investments in the costly mentorship programmes.”

Mr Trump has vigorously defended his courses, insisting that they were a great success.

He insisted that he did handpick some of the instructors and that the overwhelming majority of students were happy.

Speaking a few months ago on Fox News Sunday, he said: “Ninety-eight percent of the people that took the courses, 98 percent approved the courses, they thought they were terrific.”

814 readings

[Coalition urges banks to deny financing for Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 12 June 2017 11:17

Indigenous and environmental groups urge governments to divest from banks that ignore opposition to pipeline

The Canadian Press Last Updated: Jun 12, 2017 7:59 AM MT



Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project is the target of a coalition of interest groups is calling on Canada's

A coalition of interest groups is calling on Canada's six biggest banks and others to back away from providing funding for Kinder Morgan Canada's controversial Trans Mountain pipeline expansion.

The coalition of 20 Indigenous and environmental groups says in an open letter that it will use its influence to urge local and foreign governments to divest from banks that ignore its opposition to the pipeline.

•

[Kinder Morgan Canada says Trans Mountain moving forward after extensive review](#)

•

It names a total of 28 banks as potential targets for its campaign, including 14 that underwrote the recent initial public offering for Calgary-based Kinder Morgan Canada.

The 14 underwriters included all of Canada's biggest banks as well as others from the United States, European Union and Japan.

The coalition's letter urges the banks to decline any additional involvement with Kinder Morgan that would help to finance the Trans Mountain expansion project, particularly a \$5.5 billion credit facility the company is seeking.

Among the signatories on the letter is Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, president of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, and Grand Chief Serge Simon of the Mohawk Council of Kanesatake in Quebec.

Last Updated on Tuesday, 04 July 2017 23:04

1053 readings

[An 11 year old perspective on
canadian politics](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 12 June 2017 16:07

By Sophia Crabb Russow



The cartoon states that Canada could give marijuana to ISIS to cause the entire militant

insurgency to collapse because of the effects marijuana has on human behavior.

The cartoonist is saying that most other countries are using violence and that is bad because

they are killing innocent people but there is a better solution. The plane is a Hercules, one

of the biggest cargo planes ever. The plane can hold up to 45,000 pounds. The cartoon

shows how much marijuana Canada would have to give ISIS to affect the militant group.

Canada is in the process of legalizing marijuana so they could make this happen!

By Alfa Rikter

[https://forums.spacebattles.com/threads/political-cartoons-no-political-debates-arguing.](https://forums.spacebattles.com/threads/political-cartoons-no-political-debates-arguing.421058/page-46)

[421058/page-46](https://forums.spacebattles.com/threads/political-cartoons-no-political-debates-arguing.421058/page-46)

Test
Immigrants

For



Kellie Leitch was a candidate in the federal Conservative Party leadership race.

She was proposing to have a test for immigrants to see if they have her undefined “Canadian values”. An Indigenous man is saying that aboriginal people

should have given a test to the first Europeans that came to Canada.

The test by aboriginal people would have been helpful to determine if they wanted

European people to stay in Canada. They could have asked questions such as

“Will you take our land?” or “Will you put us in residential schools?” or

“Will you control us?” or “Will you take our resources?” or

“Will you accept our cultures and religions without trying to force yours?”.

The expression on the aboriginal man’s face shows how disgusted he is about

the idea that the non native people have a problem with immigrants coming into the country.

By Greg Perry

<http://www.thespec.com/opinion-story/7200129-march-21-editorial-cartoon>

Technology Influencing Kid



The cartoon shows how much technology is influencing our society.

The kid is so distracted by his device that he does not pay any attention to his surroundings.

The sign depicts that cars are supposed to stop for kids that are addicted to their devices.

Usually school crossing signs are there to remind distracted drivers that there will be kids

crossing but in this image it is the kids who are distracted. In addition, the books show how

technology is influencing school work. The kid should really be focusing on his school work

or on the books in his bag instead of the device in his hand.

By Malcolm Mayes

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/technology/Concert+review+Nickelback/3101983/Malcolm+>

Mayes+Cartoon/1007472/story.html

Trans Mountain Pipeline

The cartoon talks about how Prime Minister Trudeau has approved the Kinder Morgan

Trans Mountain Pipeline. Many people are against the pipeline including many First

Nations groups, for example, Tsleil-Waututh, Musqueam and Squamish, in addition

to environmental groups and politicians like David Suzuki and Elizabeth May. Obviously,

pipelines are underground but the cartoonist didn't depict them that way because the pipelines would look out of sight and out of mind when they are actually in the front of everyone's mind. The trees in the background symbolize that the pipeline is on

pristine land. Trudeau is smiling and waving as if he is hiding something or trying to act secretive. Trudeau is building the pipeline himself to represent the fact that he is really involved in the project.

By Graeme MacKay

<http://mackaycartoons.net/tag/natives>

Trump Light



Kevin O'Leary was a candidate in the federal Conservative Party leadership race.

Many people said that he was the Canadian Donald Trump. The cartoonist was

making the connection between the two businessmen and their platforms.

The cartoon is saying that if Trump was Budweiser, O'Leary would be Bud Light.

At the bottom of the can there is an advertisement saying that this is better than

a normal version. In this case, the cartoonist is saying that Trump and O'Leary

have the same amount of loud aggressiveness but O'Leary has less hair. Since

O'Leary is Canadian, the beverage is now sold in Canada. The bubbles on top

symbolise gas because they are both full of hot air. As of April 26th 2017,

Kevin

O'Leary dropped out of the Canadian federal Conservative Party race.

by Greg Perry

https://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorial_cartoon/2016/01/18/greg-perry-trump-light.html

Brexit



The cartoon shows the flag of the European Union (E.U.). The cartoonist is saying that the

E.U. is falling apart because United Kingdom is leaving. In this case, the stars represent

countries, and the one leaving is the United Kingdom. Most Brexit supporters say that

they want to leave because they think Germany is controlling the E.U. (the star at the top).

All of the other stars look very angry but amongst all the anger there is a small amount of

curiosity. The countries remaining in the E.U. may think that some other countries will follow.

The star is taking a suitcase to symbolise that the United Kingdom will take a lot with them.

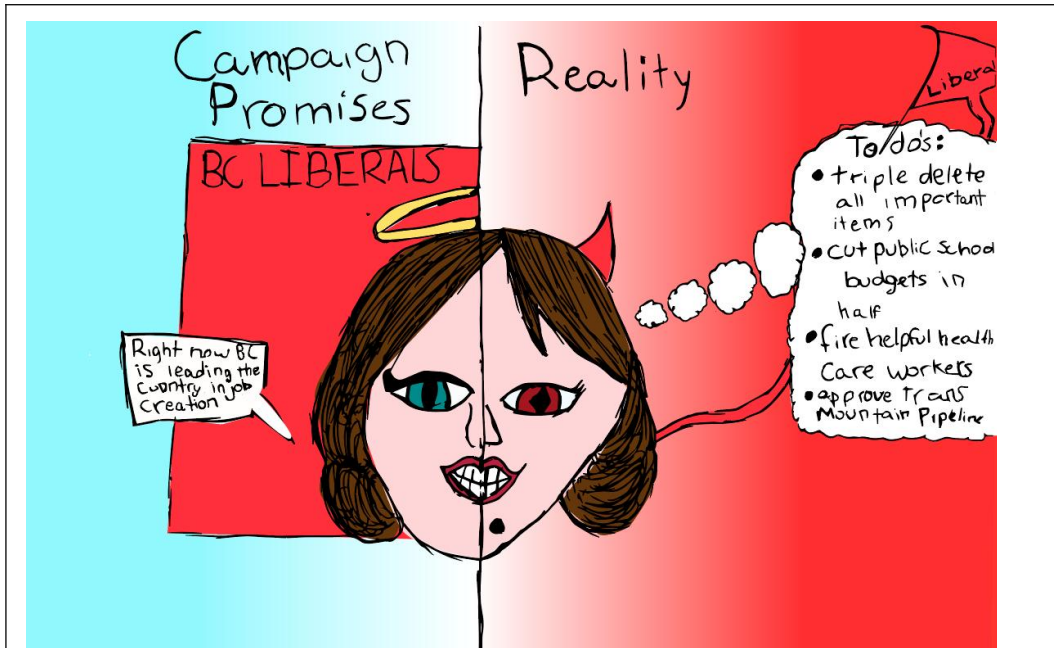
The stars stand for the ideals of unity, solidarity and harmony among the peoples of Europe.

The number of stars has nothing to do with the number of member countries, though the circle is a symbol of unity. Unfortunately, that unity is breaking.

By Daryl Cagle

<https://scroll.in/article/810605/what-happens-after-brexit-only-cartoons-and-memes-seem-to-have-some-answers>

Christy Clark



Cristy Clark's campaign promises are not always true to reality, some of Christy's statements are false like the one in

the cartoon. Clark always looks so cheery when she is on camera or with the press. In reality, she has done so many

skandals and falsehoods that she has probably grown devil ears and a tail. notice how on one side it is all blue and

happy and the other is red and mischievous.

By Sophia Crabb Russow

Last Updated on Tuesday, 04 July 2017 22:49

140 readings


[Latin America's Rural Exodus Undermines Food Security](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 30 June 2017 15:31

By [<="" a="">](#) 

[<="" a=""> This article forms part of special IPS coverage for the World Day to Combat Desertification, celebrated June 17.](#)

[<="" a="">](#)



[Livestock seek shade on a small farm in the arid centre of the northern Argentine province of Santiago del Estero, where men are forced to migrate to cities or to seek seasonal work in more fertile regions, fleeing from drought and poverty. Credit: Fabiana Frayssinet/IPS](#)

[BUENOS AIRES, Jun 16 2017 \(IPS\) - In Latin America and the Caribbean, which account for 12 per cent of the planet's arable land, and one-third of its fresh water reserves, a number of factors contribute to soil degradation and to a rural exodus that compromises food security in a not-so-unlikely future.](#)

[These figures, and the warning, emerge from studies carried out by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation \(FAO\) ahead of the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought](#), celebrated

on June 17. This year's theme is "Our land. Our home. Our Future," highlighting the link between desertification and rural migration, which is driven by the loss of productive land to desertification.

Over the past 50 years, the agricultural area in Latin America increased from 561 to 741 million hectares, with a greater expansion in South America, from 441 to 607 million hectares. This growth led to intensive use of inputs, degradation of the soil and water, a reduction of biodiversity, and deforestation.

Fourteen per cent of the world soil degradation occurs in this region, and it is worst in Mesoamerica (southern Mexico and Central America), where it affects 26 per cent of the land, compared to 14 per cent in South America.

This vicious circle has to do with the historical backwardness of Latin American rural areas, where vulnerability to climatic phenomena aggravate other factors that drive people to migrate, due to the lack of opportunities

and because what used to be their main economic activity, agriculture, no longer allows them to survive with dignity," Saramago said from FAO's regional office. -- André Saramago

"As the soil degrades, the capacity for food production declines, jeopardising food security," explained FAO forestry officer Jorge Meza from the organisation's regional office in Santiago, Chile.

According to Meza, soil degradation depends on factors such as the extent and severity of the degradation, weather conditions, the economic conditions of the affected populations and the country's level of development.

He told IPS that the first reaction of people trying to survive is intensifying the already excessive exploitation of the most accessible natural resources.

The second step they take, he said, is selling everything they have, such as machinery, to meet monetary needs for education and healthcare, or to put food on the table.

"The third is the fast increase in rural migration: adult men or young people of both sexes migrate seasonally or for several years to other regions in the country (especially to cities) or abroad, looking for work. These survival

strategies tend to generate a breakdown of the community and sometimes of the family,” he added.

“The outlook for the future is that as climate change advances and rural populations, particularly vulnerable ones, fail to become more resilient, these figures could significantly increase,” warned the FAO expert.

According to the [Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean](#) (ECLAC), some 28.4 million Latin Americans live outside the countries where they were born, nearly 4.8 per cent of the total population of

599 million people.

Central America is the area with the most migration, with nearly 15 million migrants, who represent 9.7 per cent of the total population of 161 million people

Last Updated on Tuesday, 04 July 2017 22:13

509 readings

[Jeremy Corbyn speaks to Naomi Klein about creating a better world](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 21 July 2017 09:07

creating-better-world - Green Left Weekly/July 18, 2017

"Social justice isn't copyrighted," British Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn told Naomi Klein in an on Thursday Common Dreams said that Klein, a left-wing writer and activist whose new book is No Is Not Enough, spoke to the socialist Labour leader about discuss [sic] Labour's stunning results in last month's elections, the Trump administration, Bernie Sanders, the Paris Climate Agreement, the Grenfell Tower and much more.

Despite attacks from his own party establishment and hostility from all the corporate media, Corbyn led Labour to win the reatest rise in proproption of vote for Labour in any election since the end of World War II

(with Labour winning almost 10% more than in the 2015 elections).

These results by journalist and Labour supporter Owen Jones as "the most incredible amazing political upset in British history" were in part thanks to the mass mobilization of young people who turned out to the party.

Despite his personal success in politics, Corbyn said: "It's not about me. It's about a cause, it's about people.... When people's minds are opened up, there is no end to the possibilities."

He told Klein: "It is about what we do to deal with issues of injustice and inequality and poverty, and above all, hope and opportunity for young people. ... And it's also about the contribution we make to the rest of the

world and the relationship we have with the rest of the world. I want a foreign policy based on human rights, based on respect for international law, recognising the causes of the refugee flows, the causes of the injustice

around the world.

Naomi Klein, reporting for The Intercept, and I'm here in London at the Houses of Parliament with Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the Labour Party, three weeks after the Labour Party in an historic election won many, many

more seats than anybody predicted - except for some of the people in this room, who saw it coming. And it's just an enormous pleasure to be here with Jeremy and to talk about the importance of a forward-looking,

bold agenda to do battle with the right.

"Jeremy Corbyn: Lovely to see you. So, Jeremy Corbyns been extraordinary being in the U.K. this week, and seeing the political space that you have opened up, and the fact that now we're seeing the Tories try to poach

some of your policies and scramble to try to appeal to young people by talking about maybe getting rid of tuition fees.

JC: Well, social justice isn't copyrighted, but it's a bigger picture than just the individual issues. I want to talk about this extraordinary moment in which the project that really began under Thatcher in this country, and

Reagan in the U.S. — the whole so-called consensus that never really was a consensus, the war on the collective, on the idea that we can do good things when we get together — is crumbling. But it's also kind of a

dangerous moment, when you have a vacuum of ideology, because dangerous ideas are also surging. So what is the plan to make sure that it is progressive, hopeful ideas that enter into this vacuum that has opened up?

JC: It's been a very interesting two years. We've had two leadership elections in the Labour Party, which mobilized very large numbers of people. It's not about me. It's about a cause, it's about people. And then we've just

come out of a general election campaign in which we started in a very difficult political position and ended up gaining three million more votes than 2015, and the highest Labour vote in England for many, many decades.

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JC: I'm not in any way minimizing the horror of what happened or the awful things the individuals did, but I said you've got to look at the international context in which there's been this growth. And I can hear myself like yesterday, on February 15, 2003, saying, “What could be the worst-case scenario if we went to war in Iraq?” I wasn't defending Saddam Hussein. I was just saying, if you go to war in Iraq and you destabilize the whole country, there are consequences.

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JC: He also attacked the mayor of London, who's the first Muslim elected to mayoral office anywhere in Western Europe. People were extremely angry at the language he used toward Sadiq Khan, who is, after all,

elected mayor of the city.

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NK: But certainly because they're going so rogue on climate, I think there is a responsibility for everybody else to do more in this moment, not to just sort of - okay, he's lowered the bar so much that everybody looks good in comparison. And we are seeing examples of that. We're seeing - including in the U.S., we're seeing cities stepping up and saying, well, we're going to speed up our transition to renewables. And internationally I think we can see the same thing as well.

JC: I think that the image of the USA is too often presented as the image of what Donald Trump has said day-to-day, whereas the reality, look at the number of jobs in renewables in California alone runs into the hundreds

of thousands. Look at the growth of renewable energy systems across the USA, the number of states and cities that are serious about protecting their environment and controlling what they can of climate change.

NK: I want to talk a little bit about the way some of my friends in the

United States are feeling right now, who were very inspired by this election campaign and by your leadership bid within the Labour Party.

I have to tell you that people are feeling a little discouraged right now in the United States. They are up against Trump, but they're also up against a Democratic party that is fighting them on single-payer healthcare,

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needs for good jobs, for a free public education and affordable healthcare. What do you say to the people who organized for Bernie and are just feeling really frustrated right now?

JC: Bernie called me the day after our election here. I was half asleep watching something on television. And Bernie comes on to say, well done on the campaign, and I was interested in your campaigning ideas. Where did

you get them from? And I said, well, you, actually.

And what I would say to people is: Don't be discouraged. At the end of the day, human beings want to do things together. They want to do things collectively. And that's the kind of society all of us are trying to create.

We went into an election campaign in a difficult political position, and we put forward a manifesto that was collective in its approach, was specific in what it would do, in the sense of ending university tuition fees, in the

sense of raising minimum income, and we gained the biggest increase in vote for our party since the Second World War. And we gained the support and participation of a very large number of people. We didn't win

the election. I wish we had. But in that campaign, we changed the debate in exactly the same way Senator Bernie Sanders's intervention into Democratic nomination did mobilize a very large number of people.

NK: But you did win the leadership of the Labour Party. That campaign wasn't ultimately successful within the Democratic Party. Do you think people should keep fighting for the soul of that party?

JC: Well, it's the soul of the people, isn't it?

It's not for me to tell people what specific organizations they should or shouldn't have in the USA, because the party system in the USA is very different.

What we've done is change the terms of debate, but the other key point, and this is what works on both sides of the Atlantic, is a method of campaigning. You knock on doors and you identify voters. That's key, crucial. But if you're seen solely through the prism of media that is quite rightwing and quite conservative in its views, then all you're doing when you knock on the door is hearing an echo of what people have heard on a rightwing television station or through the printed media.

Social media and the technology and techniques that are there through social media give an opportunity that's never been there before to get that message across. Just think, those people that were campaigning for social justice in Chicago in the 1920s, the best they could do was print their own newspaper if they could afford it, or make a leaflet and take it round and hand it out on bread queues. I grew up in the era when you used to print your own leaflets and go and give them out. You can now send out something on social media, and you can reach potentially millions of people in five minutes. The opportunities are there. And it's not regulated, it's not censored, it's not controlled.

NK: It seems to me that you have received just about as bad media treatment, smears from elite media, as is possible to receive. And yet it didn't work. In fact, it seems to have backlashed and contributed to this feeling of loss of faith in many of these elite institutions.

JC: I think there's something in that. After a while, a high degree of media abuse makes you a figure of interest.

NK: You talk about changing the debate, and that's clearly happened. One of the places we've seen this is in the Grenfell Tower catastrophe crime scene. And the way in which this horrific event has been interpreted, it seems, throughout British society, is as extreme evidence of a failed system that does not value human life, that puts kind of a hierarchy on life.

JC: What it exposed was something about modern urban living. This is the borough in London that is the richest in the whole country. Very, very rich borough. And its council gave a rebate to the top taxpayers last year. Gave them a little gift.

NK: Money back.

JC: That tower had several hundred people living in it, some of whom were tenants of the local council, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Some flats had been bought independently, and they were sub-tenanted or sub-sub-tenanted. Nobody really knew who was in the block. The whole system collapsed. The reality was, it's a product of insufficient regulation, of deregulation, and it was a towering inferno of the poor being burnt in the richest borough in the country.

And that's a wakeup call about safety of buildings. It's a wakeup call about the idea you go forward to this wonderful free market Valhalla of the future by tearing up every regulation like it's a denial of the opportunities for the private sector. And so the debate has turned full circle on this. I went there the following day and spent quite a lot of time talking to those that escaped

from the tower, and talking to traumatized firefighters and paramedics and ambulance workers and police officers who were getting ready to go into the building - to was then cooling from the fire - in order to bring out the bodies. They're the real heroes in this. It's a lesson for the whole country. But people are frightened.

NK: There's a wall now - and I think you've probably seen it — where residents have put up questions that they have for the authorities. And you know, these questions are just completely heartbreaking. There's kids asking, Is my school safe? There's one question from a ten-year-old child who said, “Why does it take this to bring us together?”

JC: That's a good question.

NK: I think we learn this lesson again and again during times of crisis, when we're tested. We can either turn inward and against each other, and we saw a lot of that after 9/11 in the United States, where Muslims were scapegoated, and we lost a lot of liberties in this country and around the world with these draconian laws pushed through. Wars were started in the name of that attack.

And here we are in a time of overlapping crisis. Climate change is one of those crises, and inequality is another, and racial injustice is another. Do you think we can connect the dots and develop an agenda that solves multiple problems at once, multiple crises?

JC: Well, climate change and refugees are linked. Climate change and war is linked. Environmental disaster, not necessarily always associated with climate change, is also linked when you have deforestation and you end up

destroying your local environment because of it.

And so, if you look at the war in Darfur, look at the refugee flows into Libya, partly from the war in Syria, also from human rights abuses across the whole region. Also from people who have been driven off their land in sub-Saharan Africa to make way for often very large corporations buying up land to grow various crops, often rice or fruit, to export somewhere else, leaving the local population unemployed and hungry. There is a connection about the need for supporting the living and development rights of everybody, not just yourself at their expense.

NK: I want to ask you if there's been a moment that really sticks with you during the campaign or since that is the most hopeful moment you've seen, where you could see the country that you want to live in, a glimpse of it.

JC: There was a gentleman who came to our rally in Hastings, which is south coast seaside resort fishing town. He was aged 91. I joked with him, because I'd been told he was 92, and he said how dare I call him 92, he was only 91. He joined the Labour Party in 1945, been a party member ever since then. Very active all his life. And he said this was the most hopeful time of his life. And he told me his mother had been a suffragette who campaigned for the women's right to vote at the time of the First World War. And his grandfather had been in the Chartists in the 1850s, which helped bring about some degree of democracy in Britain. And I just thought, this man has come out to a rally on a Saturday morning at that age because he's full of hope for young people.

We were characterized as an election

campaign that was full of young, idealistic people. Yeah, there were a lot of young people there, and many of them with brilliant ideals and brilliant imagination. There were also a lot of older people there who came there saying, "I want something better for my grandchildren. I want something better for society in the future." It was a coming together of large numbers of people.

NK: Well, I really want to thank you for your leadership and for your boldness, because it isn't only inspiring people in this country; I think it's inspiring people around the world who really do need some inspiration right now, particularly in United States.

JC: Thank you very much. It's not about you or I as individuals. When people's minds are opened up, there is no end to the possibilities.

Last Updated on Saturday, 22 July 2017 01:17

415 readings

[Venezuela Needs Dialogue and Negotiation to Avoid Civil War; Not Trump-Supported "Regime Change"](#)

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 20 July 2017 12:44

This column was written for Tribune News Services, in response to the question, "Should the United States support regime change in Venezuela?" It was distributed by the Tribune Content Agency on July 19, 2017, and published by the Sacramento Bee and other newspapers.

The question of what role Washington should play in Venezuela's crisis is

a simple one, given its recent history. The answer is the same as it would be with regard to the role we would want the Russian government to play in US politics and elections: none at all.

The United States in Venezuelan internal affairs in the 21st century has dwarfed anything that anyone has ever accused Vladimir Putin of doing here. According to the US State Department

Washington “provided training, institution building, and other support to individuals and organizations understood to be actively involved” in the 2002 military coup. Since the coup, Washington has given tens of millions of dollars to the Venezuelan opposition.

In 2013, when the opposition initiated violent protests to overturn the results of a democratic election, Washington supported the protesters. The same was true in 2014.

Today, Florida Senator Marco Rubio openly threatens governments including the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, and Haiti with punishment if they do not cooperate with Washington’s abuse of the Organization of American States to delegitimize the government of Venezuela. And the Trump administration is threatening more severe economic sanctions against Venezuela, which will only worsen shortages of food and medicine there.

Overall, Washington has pretty consistently played a role that has increased political polarization in Venezuela and continues to do so. For most of the past 15 years, Venezuela has been one of Washington’s top two (along with Iran and Iraq) targets for regime change.

It is reasonable to assume that the Trump administration — which takes counsel from extremist elements like Marco Rubio — is likely to be even more reckless.

This is particularly dangerous because Venezuela remains a polarized country. President Nicolás Maduro’s approval rating has been about 21 percent over the past year, but other numbers show much more division. A recent poll from the most-cited pro-opposition pollster, Datanalisis, shows 51 percent supporting the protests, with 44 percent against. Some 55 percent continue to approve of the late president Hugo Chávez, which reflects the decade of economic and social progress that the country had before it fell into recession in 2014, and slid into its current state of depression and economic crisis.

Despite the current crisis, there are millions of Venezuelans, especially those associated with the government or governing party, who have reason to fear an opposition takeover. After the 2002 coup, government officials were detained and dozens of people were killed within the first 36 hours of the short-lived opposition government. Opposition leaders today have

almost never denounced violence by their supporters, which has taken many lives during the current wave of protests.

Because of this political polarization, Venezuela needs a negotiated solution that provides credible, constitutional guarantees that whichever side loses the next election will not be politically persecuted by a party that controls all three branches of government.

International mediation can help, as was shown by the release of opposition leader Leopoldo López from prison to house arrest last week; former Spanish prime minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero played a constructive role. But the mediators must be nonpartisan, which rules out the OAS so long as it is dominated by the Trump administration.

*There is a real risk that Venezuela's current political polarization and violence could escalate into civil war. Those who are familiar with the tragedies of the Washington-fueled civil wars of the 1980s in Central America, which took hundreds of thousands of mostly innocent lives, must take this threat seriously — especially since the Trump administration could possibly block or sabotage a negotiated solution if it appears within reach. - Mark Weisbrot of the Center for Economic and Policy Research in Washington, DC and president of Just Foreign Policy. He is also the author of the book *Failed: What the "Experts" Got Wrong About the Global Economy* (Oxford University Press, 2015).*

***CEPR** is an independent, nonpartisan think tank that was established to promote democratic debate on the most important economic and social issues that affect people's lives.*

*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.*

Last Updated on Saturday, 22 July 2017 00:35

126 readings

[Chemical weapons from secret Canadian-U.S. mustard gas program in Panama to be destroyed](#)

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 19 July 2017 11:35

by David Pugliese, Ottawa Citizen<p>

Scientists conducted race-based experiments on San Jose Island where they monitored how mustard gas affected the skin of blacks, Puerto Ricans, Japanese and Caucasians

The U.S. has agreed to destroy chemical bombs left over from a secret U.S.-Canadian test program that conducted mustard-gas experiments on various ethnic groups during the Second World War.

The eight bombs were discovered on San Jose Island, the site of an extensive wartime chemical weapons test program and, later, the location for several seasons of the Survivor reality TV series.

The weapons on the Panamanian island will be destroyed in September.

Canada's Department of National Defence had warned years ago that Canadian-made mustard gas and other chemical weapons might still be found on the island, according to documents obtained by the Ottawa Citizen through the Access to Information law.

Photo: An unidentified Canadian soldier with burns caused by mustard gas gets treatment. Library and Archives Canada/CP]

The failure by the U.S. and Canadian governments to commit to cleaning up the contaminated island has angered Panamanian officials for years. The chemical bombs were discovered in 2002 but it has taken until now to get the U.S. to agree to dispose of the weapons.

More than 30,000 chemical bombs were detonated on the island during the U.S.-led program. One report indicated that there could be up to 3,000 bombs still intact and scattered in the jungles on San Jose.

Canadian DND scientists also noted in one report that in 1974 a worker at a construction site on the island suffered burns from a mysterious

substance.

Still, a Panamanian company developed a small resort on a portion of the island. San Jose was temporarily closed down in 2001 after chemical weapons were found but it was reopened so the Survivor reality TV series could film segments on the location's white sandy beaches several years later.

Canada is not participating in the disposal of the bombs, a Global Affairs Canada official said Monday.

But in the past, Canadian diplomats have tried to either deny Canada's involvement in the Second World War testing or have claimed that Canada never left any weapons behind.

Canada supplied much of the mustard gas used in the U.S.-led test program as well as 1,000 bombs, DND records show. Canadian chemical warfare specialists from Suffield, Alta., helped design some of the tests and Canadian pilots took part in the bombing raids.

Susan L. Smith, a University of Alberta historian, said Canada was a significant participant in the chemical weapons testing on San Jose Island. "This was an area where Canada indeed punched above its own weight," said Smith, author of a new book called Toxic Exposures, which chronicles mustard-gas use during the Second World War.

During her research, Smith found that scientists conducted race-based chemical warfare experiments on San Jose Island. Scientists monitored how mustard gas affected the skin of Puerto Ricans and Caucasians, during the tests. Other tests in the U.S. focused on blacks and Japanese. Smith noted that all individuals, no matter what their ethnicity, suffered extensively from the mustard-gas exposure.

At one point, the U.S. considered using mustard gas as a method to kill Japanese troops hiding in bunkers and other fortresses on Pacific islands. Tests on San Jose Island were key in those preparations but the Americans decided not to proceed with using the weapons.

It will take between six and eight weeks to dispose of the eight weapons, Panamanian officials have said.

"Canada has a moral commitment to help clean up the mess it created," Smith added.

A DND report noted that Canadian-made mustard gas may still be on the island since the heavy metal shipping containers they were transported in were robust and would have survived over the decades. Some bombs that did not detonate would also still contain mustard gas or other chemicals.

In other cases, the mustard gas would have dissipated but it would have produced toxic byproducts in the soil. Lewisite, another chemical tested on San Jose, decomposes into arsenic, Smith noted.

Panama, which has few resources to deal with chemical weapons, had asked Canada in 2001 to help it conduct a comprehensive search of San Jose Island for abandoned bombs. Canada, however, refused.

That didn't, however, stop Canadian diplomats in the same year from asking Panama to financially support Canada's efforts to rid the world of land mines.

The Panamanians pointed out that they didn't have any minefields in their country but did have thousands of abandoned U.S. and Canadian bombs.

The Canadian diplomats backed off their request, pointing out that the situation could get embarrassing for Canada. "At present we see considerable risk of a public affairs failure if we were to proceed," the message to Ottawa at the time noted.

Last Updated on Saturday, 22 July 2017 00:13

509 readings

[Jeremy Corbyn speaks to Naomi Klein about creating a better world](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 21 July 2017 09:07

creating-better-world - Green Left Weekly/July 18, 2017

"Social justice isn't copyrighted," British Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn told Naomi Klein in an on Thursday Common Dreams said that Klein, a left-wing writer and activist whose new book is No Is Not Enough, spoke to the socialist Labour leader about discuss [sic] Labour's stunning results in last month's elections, the Trump administration, Bernie Sanders, the Paris Climate Agreement, the Grenfell Tower and much more.

Despite attacks from his own party establishment and hostility from all the corporate media, Corbyn led Labour to win the reatest rise in propoortion of vote for Labour in any election since the end of World War II (with Labour winning almost 10% more than in the 2015 elections).

These results by journalist and Labour supporter Owen Jones as "the most incredible amazing political upset in British history" were in part thanks to

the mass mobilization of young people who turned out to the party.

Despite his personal success in politics, Corbyn said: "It's not about me. It's about a cause, it's about people.... When people's minds are opened up, there is no end to the possibilities."

He told Klein: "It is about what we do to deal with issues of injustice and inequality and poverty, and above all, hope and opportunity for young people. ... And it's also about the contribution we make to the rest of the world and the relationship we have with the rest of the world. I want a foreign policy based on human rights, based on respect for international law, recognizing the causes of the refugee flows, the causes of the injustice around the world.

Naomi Klein, reporting for The Intercept, and I'm here in London at the Houses of Parliament with Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the Labour Party, three weeks after the Labour Party in an historic election won many, many more seats than anybody predicted - except for some of the people in this room, who saw it coming. And it's just an enormous pleasure to be here with Jeremy and to talk about the importance of a forward-looking, bold agenda to do battle with the right.

"Jeremy Corbyn: Lovely to see you. So, Jeremy Corbyns been extraordinary being in the U.K. this week, and seeing the political space that you have opened up, and the fact that now we're seeing the Tories try to poach some of your policies and scramble to try to appeal to young people by talking about maybe getting rid of tuition fees.

JC: Well, social justice isn't copyrighted, but it's a bigger picture than just the individual issues. I want to talk about this extraordinary moment in which the project that really began under Thatcher in this country, and Reagan in the U.S. — the whole so-called consensus that never really was a consensus, the war on the collective, on the idea that we can do good things when we get together — is crumbling. But it's also kind of a dangerous moment, when you have a vacuum of ideology, because dangerous ideas are also surging. So what is the plan to make sure that it is progressive, hopeful ideas that enter into this vacuum that has opened up?

JC: It's been a very interesting two years. We've had two leadership elections in the Labour Party, which mobilized very large numbers of people. It's not about me. It's about a cause, it's about people. And then we've just come out of a general election campaign in which we started in a very difficult political position and ended up gaining three million more votes than 2015, and the highest Labour vote in England for many, many decades.

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I have to tell you that people are feeling a little discouraged right now in the United States. They are up against Trump, but they're also up against a Democratic party that is fighting them on single-payer health-care, on universal public health-care, that seems to want to keep charting what they see as a safe, centrist path, but what we're seeing again and again is it's not safe because it's a losing path. It's not speaking to people's urgent needs for good jobs, for a free public education and affordable health-care. What do you say to the people who organized for Bernie and are just feeling really frustrated right now?

JC: Bernie called me the day after our election here. I was half asleep watching something on television. And Bernie comes on to say, well done on the campaign, and I was interested in your campaigning ideas. Where did you get them from? And I said, well, you, actually.

And what I would say to people is: Don't be discouraged. At the end of the day, human beings want to do things together. They want to do things collectively. And that's the kind of society all of us are trying to create. We went into an election campaign in a difficult political position, and we put forward a manifesto that was collective in its approach, was specific in what it would do, in the sense of ending university tuition fees, in the sense of raising minimum income, and we gained the biggest increase in vote for our party since the Second World War. And we gained the support and participation of a very large number of people. We didn't win the election. I wish we had. But in that campaign, we changed the debate in exactly the same way Senator Bernie Sanders's intervention into Democratic nomination did mobilize a very large number of people.

NK: But you did win the leadership of the Labour Party. That campaign wasn't ultimately successful within the Democratic Party. Do you think people should keep fighting for the soul of that party?

JC: Well, it's the soul of the people, isn't it?

It's not for me to tell people what specific organizations they should or should

What we've done is change the terms of debate, but the other key point, and if you're seen solely through the prism of media that is quite rightwing and television station or through the printed media.

Social media and the technology and techniques that are there through social justice in Chicago in the 1920s, the best they could do was print their own your own leaflets and go and give them out. You can now send out

something on social media, and you can reach potentially millions of people in five minutes. The opportunities are there. And it's not regulated, it's not censored, it's not controlled.

NK: It seems to me that you have received just about as bad media treatment, smears from elite media, as is possible to receive. And yet it didn't work. In fact, it seems to have backlashed and contributed to this feeling of loss of faith in many of these elite institutions.

JC: I think there's something in that. After a while, a high degree of media abuse makes you a figure of interest.

NK: You talk about changing the debate, and that's clearly happened.

One of the places we've seen this is in the Grenfell Tower catastrophe crime scene. And the way in which this horrific event has been interpreted,

JC: What it exposed was something about modern urban living. This is the borough in London that is the richest in the whole country. Very, very rich borough. And its council gave a rebate to the top taxpayers last year.

Gave them a little gift.

NK: Money back.

JC: That tower had several hundred people living in it, some of whom

were tenants of the local council, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Some flats had been bought independently, and they were sub-tenanted or sub-sub-tenanted. Nobody really knew who was in the block. The whole system collapsed. The reality was, it's a product of insufficient regulation, of deregulation, and it was a towering inferno of the poor being burnt in the richest borough in the country.

And that's a wakeup call about safety of buildings. It's a wakeup call about the private sector. And so the debate has turned full circle on this. I

went there the following day and spent quite a lot of time talking to those ready to go into the building - to was then cooling from the fire - in order to bring out the bodies. They're the real heroes in this. It's a lesson for the w

NK: There's a wall now - and I think you've probably seen it — where resid
Is my school safe? There's one question from a ten-year-old child who
said, “Why does it take this to bring us together?”

JC: That's a good question.

NK: I think we learn this lesson again and again during times of crisis, when we're tested. We can either turn inward and against each other, and we saw a lot of that after 9/11 in the United States, where Muslims were scapegoated, and we lost a lot of liberties in this country and around the world with these draconian laws pushed through. Wars were started in the name of that attack.

And here we are in a time of overlapping crisis. Climate change is one of those crises, and inequality is another, and racial injustice is another. Do

JC: Well, climate change and refugees are linked. Climate change and war is linked. Environmental disaster, not necessarily always associated with climate change, is also linked when you have deforestation and you end up

destroying your local environment because of it.

And so, if you look at the war in Darfur, look at the refugee flows into Libya, partly from the war in Syria, also from human rights abuses across the whole region. Also from people who have been driven off their land in sub-Saharan Africa to make way for often very large corporations buying up land to grow various crops, often rice or fruit, to export somewhere else, leaving the local population unemployed and hungry.

There is a connection about the need for supporting the living and development rights of everybody, not just yourself at their expense.

NK: I want to ask you if there's been a moment that really sticks with you during the campaign or since that is the most hopeful moment you've seen, where you could see the country that you want to live in, a glimpse of it.

JC: There was a gentleman who came to our rally in Hastings, which is south coast seaside resort fishing town. He was aged 91. I joked with him, because I'd been told he was 92, and he said how dare I call him 92, he was only 91. He joined the Labour Party in 1945, been a party member ever since then. Very active all his life. And he said this was the most hopeful time of his life. And he told me his mother had been a suffragette who campaigned for the women's right to vote at the time of the First World War. And his grandfather had been in the Chartists in the 1850s, which helped bring about some degree of democracy in Britain. And I just thought, this man has come out to a rally on a Saturday morning at that age. We were characterized as an election campaign that was full of young, idealistic people. Yeah, there were a lot of young people there, and many

of them with brilliant ideals and brilliant imagination. There were also a lot of older people there who came there saying, "I want something better for my grandchildren. I want something better for society in the future." It v

NK: Well, I really want to thank you for your leadership and for your boldness, because it isn't only inspiring people in this country; I think it's inspiring people around the world who really do need some inspiration right now, particularly in United States.

JC: Thank you very much. It's not about you or I as individuals. When people's minds are opened up, there is no end to the possibilities.

Last Updated on Saturday, 22 July 2017 01:17

614 readings

[Hiroshima Nagasaki Commemoration](#)
[Wednesday, August 9, Victoria](#)



[Peace News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 06 August 2017 16:23

Event: - Esquimalt Gorge Park,

The Vancouver Island Peace and Disarmament Network and the Physicians for Global Survival present Victoria's annual commemoration of the horrors perpetrated by nuclear arms in Hiroshima and Nagasaki 72 years ago.

The Hon. Judith Guichon will be present and introduce special guest speaker RUDI HOENSON, a well-known Nagasaki survivor and local philanthropist, who will read his poem, "Atomic Lament".

Mere weeks ago, on July 7, 122 countries adopted the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in New York, its goal a total worldwide elimination of nuclear weapons. It is a profound demonstration of the increasing global discontent with the existence of nuclear weapons.

The Hiroshima Nagasaki Commemoration is a free family event featuring lantern – making, all materials supplied, from 6:30-7:00pm. The Hiroshima/Nagasaki Art Exhibition; performances by the Nikkei Society-Furusato Dancers and the Getting Higher Choir; and culminating with the traditional release of lanterns as a prayer for peace.

For decades, the Victoria Raging Grannies have conducted the Hiroshima Commemoration and shared their irreverent wit and compassionate purpose with thousands. This year, they graciously passed the baton to the Vancouver Island Peace and Disarmament Network to carry their cause forward.

HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI REMEMBERED

Wednesday, August 9 6:30 PM – 9 PM

Esquimalt Gorge Park

1070 Tillicum Rd., Esquimalt, Coast Salish

For more information, please contact:

Dr. Jonathan Down

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Last Updated on Saturday, 12 August 2017 23:38

573 readings

Last-minute Charges Laid Against Mount Polley in Private Prosecution Against Mount Polley in Private Prosecution



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 05 August 2017 12:20

Last-minute Charges Laid Against Mount Polley in Private Prosecution Carol Linnitt - August 4, 2017

In a surprise eleventh-hour move, indigenous activist and former Chief of the Xat'sull First Nation, Bev Sellars, has filed charges against the Mount Polley Mining Corporation, owned by Imperial Metals, for the mine disaster that saw 24 million cubic metres of mine waste released into Quesnel Lake on this day, three years ago.

We just couldn't let it go," Sellars said in a press release. "In my culture, we have a sacred responsibility not only to care for the land, waters, animals, and people living today, but also for the next seven generations to come."

Private prosecutions in general are unusual," Canning told DeSmog Canada, adding the last-minute nature of the charges was due, in part, to waiting on potential charges from the new government.

Sellars said she hopes her private prosecution could act as a 'door stopper' for B.C., allowing the provincial Conservation Service Office to complete its investigation.

"While we are ready to go to full trial if necessary, we also believe it is ultimately the province's job to enforce its own laws when they are violated," Sellars said.

“If B.C. laws cannot be enforced when such a massive mining spill occurs, then we have a serious problem in B.C. and we must act to fix these laws.”

Gage said the rate of successful prosecution in environmental cases has dropped since the 1990s and early 2000s.

“I think that we need to have an expectation that laws will be enforced, even against, maybe especially against powerful players that can cause great environmental harm,” he said.

“The other things is there is a very practical consideration in bringing a prosecution and that is under the Environmental Management Act, the court can actually order alternative remedies, like remediation, compensation, restoration of fish habitat—all these practical consideration that the community around Quesnel Lake need desperately,” Gage said.

The case would also send a broader message to industry that environmental rules will be enforced in B.C., he said.

“I think it’s important when you’re dealing with an industry that has a temptation to cut corners...they need to know, given the consequences this industry can have, that they will be caught and there will be consequences for polluting when they don’t follow the law.”

Sellars’ private prosecution was brought with support from a number of organizations including MiningWatch Canada, West Coast Environmental Law’s Environmental Dispute Resolution Fund, the Wilderness Committee, and the First Nation Women Advocating For Responsible Mining.

Last Updated on Sunday, 13 August 2017 00:18

357 readings

[World Still Lagging on Indigenous Rights 10 Years After Historic Declaration, UN Experts Warn](#)

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 07 August 2017 10:06

By [Mariam Wallet Aboubakrine](#), [Albert K. Barume](#) and [Victoria Tauli-Corpuz](#)

Mariam Wallet Aboubakrine is Chairperson of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, **Albert K. Barume** is chairman of the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and **Victoria Tauli-Corpuz** is the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples



Women from Nepal's indigenous tribe. Credit: Mallika Aryal/IPS

GENEVA / NEW YORK, Aug 7 2017 (IPS) - The world's indigenous peoples still face huge challenges a decade after the adoption of an historic declaration on their rights, a group of United Nations experts and specialist bodies has warned. Speaking ahead of the

International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples on 9 August, the group says States must put words into action to end discrimination, exclusion and lack of protection illustrated by the worsening murder rate of human rights defenders.

The joint statement from the Chairperson of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples reads as follows:

“It is now 10 years since the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted by the UN General Assembly, as the most comprehensive international human rights instrument for indigenous peoples. The Declaration, which took more than 20 years to negotiate, stands today as a beacon of progress, a framework for reconciliation and a benchmark of rights.

But a decade on, we need to acknowledge the vast challenges that remain. In too many cases, indigenous peoples are now facing even greater struggles and rights violations than they did 10 years ago.

Indigenous peoples still suffer from racism, discrimination, and unequal access to basic services including health-care and education. Where statistical data is available, it shows clearly that they are left behind on all fronts, facing disproportionately higher levels of poverty, lower life expectancy and worse educational outcomes.

Indigenous peoples face particularly acute challenges due to loss of their lands and rights over resources, which are pillars of their livelihoods and cultural identities.

Indigenous women face double discrimination, both as women and as indigenous peoples. They are frequently excluded from decision-making processes and land rights, and many suffer violence.

We call on all States to ensure that indigenous women fully enjoy their rights as enshrined in the Declaration and emphasize that their rights are a concern for all of us.

The worsening human rights situation of indigenous peoples across the globe is illustrated by the extreme, harsh and risky working conditions of indigenous human rights defenders.

Individuals and communities who dare to defend indigenous rights find themselves labelled as obstacles to progress, anti-development forces, and in some cases, enemies of the State or terrorists.

They even risk death. Last year alone, some sources suggest that 281 human rights defenders were murdered in 25 countries – more than double the number who died in 2014. Half of them were working to defend land, indigenous and environmental rights.

We urge States to protect indigenous human rights defenders.

Crimes committed against them must be duly investigated and prosecuted, and those responsible brought to justice.

Indigenous peoples are increasingly being drawn into conflicts over their lands, resources and rights. Lasting peace requires that States, with the support of the international community, establish conflict resolution mechanisms with the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples', in particular indigenous women.

Many States still do not recognize indigenous peoples, and in particular indigenous women and youth still face a lack of official recognition and direct political participation. Even in States where laws are in place, the Declaration has not been fully implemented.


It is high time to recognize and strengthen indigenous peoples' own forms of governance and representation, in order to establish constructive dialogue and engagement with international and national authorities, public officials and the private sector.

The minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world, as set out in the Declaration, must now be met.

These include the rights to identity, language, health, education and self-determination, alongside the duty of States to consult and cooperate with indigenous peoples to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing measures that may affect them.

The Declaration represents important shifts in both structure and the practice of global politics, and the last 10 years have seen some positive changes in the situation of indigenous peoples and greater respect for indigenous worldviews.

But we still have a long way to go before indigenous peoples have full enjoyment of their human rights as expressed in the Declaration. We call on all States to close the gap between words and action, and to act now to deliver equality and full rights for all people from indigenous background.

[Wildlife-management reform is long overdue](#) 

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 11 August 2017 12:56

By Chris Genovali is executive director of Raincoast Conservation Foundation. Large-carnivore expert Paul C. Paquet is Raincoast's senior scientist.

AUGUST 11, 2017 08:17 AM

The underpinnings of contemporary wildlife management are political and ideological, largely at the expense of wildlife for the presumed benefit of people.

Unsurprisingly, wildlife management in British Columbia is marked by an outdated mindset that primarily views wild animals as a “resource” to be exploited by recreational hunting or as troublesome creatures that need to be killed because their existence conflicts with human endeavours. Saddled by a myopic adherence to the debunked and inaptly named North American model of wildlife conservation, wildlife policy in B.C. is mired in a philosophically and structurally faulty approach.

Simply, wildlife policies are focused on consumption and control, rather than conservation.

As ethicist Michael Nelson and wildlife ecologists John Vucetich, Paul C. Paquet and Joseph Bump note in their critique, *North American Model: What's Flawed, What's Missing, What's Needed*, the model's primary tenet, i.e. recreational hunting being central to wildlife conservation, is based upon an inadequate account of history and an inadequate ethic.

Largely ignoring the biology and intrinsic value of all species, the model reinforces the narrow idea that nature is a commodity — a “resource” — owned and used by humans in pursuit of personal interests. This “management” perspective draws its support from — and sustains — the view that humans exist outside of nature, and that other species, apart from their utility for humans, are of little importance in the larger scheme of things. Human dominion and domination over nature are deemed to be the natural order.

Predominantly driven by a recreational hunting agenda, the North American model is informed largely by values, attitudes and atavistic beliefs entrenched in the self-serving fallacy that killing wild animals for sport and control is essential to wildlife conservation.

As explained in the critique, the model relies on a misinterpretation of history in which recreational hunting is disproportionately, and inaccurately, seen as the driver of North American wildlife conservation, while downplaying the contributions of monumental figures such as John Muir and Aldo Leopold, who pioneered broad-based approaches to

conservation without focusing on hunting as its primary tool.

The province's recent proposal to privatize wildlife management illustrates the pernicious effect of the North American model on the mindset of government bureaucrats and politicians. In the run-up to the election, the B.C. Liberals announced plans to implement an extra-governmental agency that would be controlled by recreational hunting groups.

This perverse scheme is the culmination of decades of undue influence by the recreational hunting lobby on the B.C. government; it was also inevitable under the model, where science and ethics are ignored in favour of self-perpetuating myth and anecdote.

With its philosophical roots in the model, the grizzly-bear hunt is an egregious and persistent example of how B.C. wildlife management fails to address ecological, economic and ethical considerations. Using the province's kill data to determine if B.C.'s grizzly management meets its own objectives, Raincoast Conservation Foundation scientists have found that total kills commonly exceed limits determined by provincial policy. Financial analyses have shown that grizzlies are worth far more alive than dead, and poll after poll indicates a clear majority of British Columbians have judged the recreational hunting of these large carnivores an abhorrent activity.

Considering centuries of human privilege over the needs of the environment, what we need to manage is not wildlife but ourselves. Recognizing that many human activities have damaging effects on biodiversity and ecological communities, what should wildlife management in B.C. look like?

Briefly, Raincoast envisions a compassionate conservation policy based on management for wildlife, as opposed to management of wildlife — a policy that takes into account the health and well-being of individuals and populations. Furthermore, we envision substantially more consideration given to maintaining the integrity of ecological systems upon which species depend.

Although species might continue to exist and suffer long after natural ecological relationships have been altered or destroyed, such impoverished conditions are not sustainable and do not typify healthy environments. Finally, wildlife management needs to emerge from the shadows and adopt practices in keeping with modern science, as well as principles regarding the ethical treatment of animals.

Without a significant shift in how we relate to and interact with wildlife, future generations will look back with stunned dismay at how our society could be so divorced from reality and morality. The hopeful news in B.C. is that with a new government there is the opportunity for positive change and a much more ecologically and ethically informed approach to wildlife

management.

Chris Genovali is executive director of Raincoast Conservation Foundation. Large-carnivore expert Paul C. Paquet is Raincoast's senior scientist.

Last Updated on Sunday, 13 August 2017 01:26

424 readings

[International Youth Day: Reach HIGH for a nuclear-weapon-free world](#)



[Peace News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 11 August 2017 07:33

UN FOLD ZERO Newsletter United Nations International Youth Day. The theme this year is **Youth Building Peace**. One important way youth can help build peace is to promote the global abolition of nuclear weapons.

Leaders of nuclear-armed States - like President Donald Trump of USA, 'Supreme Leader' Kim Jong-un of North Korea and President Vladimir Putin of Russia - are increasing their threats to use nuclear weapons.

They need to hear from youth that nuclear weapons must never be used, and that nuclear weapons should be prohibited and eliminated



August 12 social media action: Reach HIGH for a nuclear-weapon-free world. #ReachHIGH, #YouthAgainstNukes, #Youth4Peace

UNFOLD ZERO and the Abolition 2000 Youth Working Group call on youth to **Reach HIGH for a nuclear-weapon-free world** on August 12 with a simple social media action.

- Take a photo of yourself, or you and other young people, on a high place or reaching high, or lifting a peace sign/object up high.
- Post your photo on social media with the hastags #Youth4Peace, #YouthDay, #ReachHIGH and/or #YouthAgainstNukes.

2018 UN High Level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament

The United Nations will hold a High-Level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament in 2018. At this conference governments could end their threats to use nuclear weapons and agree to a program to prohibit and eliminate them.

On International Youth Day:

- call on your government to support a diplomatic solution to the North Korean nuclear crisis;
- call on your government to commit to attending the 2018 UN Conference at the highest level (i.e. your Prime Minister or President should go), and to pledge to do everything in their power at the conference to abolish nuclear weapons .

Governments should join with youth to **Reach HIGH for a nuclear-weapon-free** world, now and at the 2018 UN High

Level Conference.

For more information, including contacts for governments, Call on Governments: Reach HIGH for a nuclear weapon-free world.

Have a great International Youth Day.

Marzhan and Alyn

On behalf of the [UN FOLD ZERO](#) team

Last Updated on Sunday, 13 August 2017 01:20

509 readings

[Kinder Morgan TMX: Crude Awakening](#)

Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 11 August 2017 17:24

By Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs

Subject: - KM TMX: Crude Awakening

August 11, 2017 at 2:22:29 PM



KM TMX: Crude Awakening

(Coast Salish Territory/Vancouver, BC -- August 11, 2017 The Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) remains steadfast in its ongoing opposition to Kinder

Morgan's Trans Mountain Expansion Project (TMX).

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, UBCIC President, stated, "Though we welcome the BC Government's commitment to defending the coasts and waterways, and commend BC's resolve to ensure the Province meets its constitutionally-enshrined, judicially-recognized obligations to consult Indigenous Peoples, for all future generations, we must continue the true fight against increasingly rapid climate change. These devastating mega-projects must obtain the free, prior and informed consent of all affected Indigenous Peoples. Period."

As defined by the United Nations' Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous Nations retain the right to provide or withhold their free, prior and informed consent regarding developments on their respective territories. The vast majority of BC remains the unceded territory of Indigenous Nations who remain committed to protecting their inherent rights, their respective cultural beliefs, their families and the natural environment for the benefit of future generations.

The UBCIC firmly believes TMX represents an unacceptable and egregious risk to the clean and healthy ecosystems many Indigenous Peoples and British Columbians' livelihoods depend upon and directly conflicts with the Trudeau Government's Paris Agreement commitments to avoid dangerous climate change by limiting global warming to well below 2°C. Since 2011, the UBCIC has consistently opposed the TMX project, with Grand Chief Stewart Phillip being arrested in November 2014 to protest TMX's exploration of Burnaby Mountain.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip declared "As long as any Canadian or Provincial government permits environmentally destructive projects that places our communities, families and unceded territories at risk, our Nations and communities will exercise our inherent rights and responsibilities to resist within the courts, in the streets and most certainly, on the land itself."

21,561 people have signed the Coast Protectors' pledge: "With our voice, in the courts or the streets, on the water or the land. Whatever it takes, we will stop the Kinder Morgan pipeline expansion."

Media inquiries:

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, Union of BC Indian Chiefs

Phone: **(604) 684-0231** or **ubcic@ubcic.bc.ca**

Last Updated on Saturday, 12 August 2017 23:25

484 readings

[Global legislators push for diplomatic solution to North Korea threats](#)

[Peace News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 10 August 2017 10:06

by Alan Ware UN Foldzero



For immediate release:

Contact Alyn Ware, alyn@pnnd.org . [+420 773 638 867](tel:+420773638867)

'The increasing tensions and threat of military conflict over North Korea's nuclear and missile capabilities makes a diplomatic solution of vital importance and highest priority,' according to Alyn Ware, Global Coordinator for Parliamentarians for Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament (PNND).

'The risk of war, and even the use of nuclear weapons by miscalculation or accident, is increasing. It won't be quelled by threats and counter threats from North Korea, USA, Japan, or South Korea.'

'Legislators from the United States, Japan, South Korea

and around the world recognise this threat and are responding with various calls for diplomacy and proposals for diplomatic solutions.'

64 members of US Congress call for diplomacy

In the United States, 64 members of the US House of Representatives have endorsed a letter to President Trump led by PNND members John Conyers, Jr. (D-MI), Barbara Lee (D-CA), and Congressman Jim McGovern, reminding the President that military strikes without Congressional approval would violate the Constitution, and urging him to follow a diplomatic approach.

The 64 signers represent the 64 years since the Korean Armistice Agreement was signed, putting a halt to the fighting but not officially ending the Korean War or resolving the underlying conflicts.

<"As someone who has watched this conflict evolve since I was sent to Korea as a young Army Lieutenant, it is a reckless, inexperienced move to threaten military action that could end in devastation instead of pursuing vigorous diplomacy." said Conyers, one of two remaining Korean War Veterans serving in Congress.

<"As a daughter of a veteran of the Korean War and a member of the Military and Veterans Appropriations Subcommittee, I will continue to demand that President Trump provide Congress with a comprehensive strategy for deterring North Korea <that puts diplomacy and non-military strategies first," said Congresswoman Barbara Lee.

(See Appeal by 64 US Congress Members for diplomacy in Korea).

Legislators call for a NE Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone

In May 2010, a cross-party group of parliamentarians from Japan and South Korea proposed the negotiation of a North East Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone as a solution to the growing nuclear threat from North Korea. The group included a number of former Foreign Ministers as well as the current Foreign Minister Taro Kono, a Co-President of PNND at the time.

The group believed that a NE Asia NWFZ would be a more feasible

approach than calling for North Korea to unilaterally give up its nuclear option. Informal discussions with North Korean parliamentarians and diplomats since then gives some reason to believe that they are correct in this analysis.

Katsuya Okada, one of the former Foreign Ministers who endorsed the 2010 proposal, has released a Model NE Asia NWFZ treaty based on the 3+3 model pioneered by Dr Hiromichi Umebayashi. This model would require North Korea, Japan and South Korea to agree not to possess nuclear weapons, station them on their territory, or threaten each other with nuclear weapons. The model would also require China, Russia and the United States to commit not to threaten or use nuclear weapons against Japan, South Korea or North Korea.

Dr Umebayashi will in September this year receive the international Nuclear Free Future Award in recognition primarily of the potential of his 3+3 NE Asia NWFZ to help resolve the nuclear crisis in the region.

“I am very pleased to receive the award for my efforts, especially for establishing a Northeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone, but I think I should be modest because establishing such zone is an on-going endeavor being tackled by many players. I do hope this award will help strengthen people’s power as a whole toward that goal.”

Japanese cities and religious leaders support the NE Asian NWFZ proposal

On August 9, 2017, Nagasaki Mayor Tomihisa Taue, called on the Japanese government to examine the NE Asia NWFZ as a possible solution to the growing nuclear crisis. The call was made in the Nagasaki Declaration, presented by Mayor Taue at the annual event commemorating the nuclear bombing of Nagasaki.

Mayor Taue is one of 545 Japanese heads of cities and 126 Japanese religious leaders who have given their support for the NE Asian NWFZ proposal.

A number of US policy experts support the concept of a NE Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, including Morten Halperin, a high-level policy official in the Johnson, Nixon and Clinton administrations. See Promoting Security in Northeast Asia: A New Approach by Morton H. Halperin).

Last Updated on Sunday, 13 August 2017 01:42

422 readings

[Heroes Rising](#) by alexandra   

[Morton](#)

[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 07 August 2017 10:13

[Heroes Rising](#)

As I continued to document the viruses spreading from salmon farms like an oil spill, fighting the Minister of Fisheries, Marine Harvest and Cermaq in court for mandatory farm salmon testing for the highly-contagious piscine orthoreovirus, as well defending myself against Marine Harvest's lawsuit against me for touching their farm with a teaspoon to collect a sample, I got welcome news.

Paul Watson contacted me to say, he was sending research vessel Martin Sheen and crew to work with me again this summer.

Last year we documented the sad state of health of farm salmon and supported the Musgamagw Dzawada'enuxw who served the industry with

eviction notices.

I feel my fight to protect wild salmon would be hopeless without the strong First Nation leadership I serve and the incredible help of the crew of the RV Martin Sheen. In my darkest moments I despair at how incredibly hard it is to keep anything alive on this planet and in particular creatures we claim to *love*.

David Suzuki and Martin Sheen himself turned out to support Traditional Leader Willie Moon and help launch *Virus Hunter II* the 2017 voyage of the Martin Sheen. On July 30, we set forth.

I believe the only reason salmon farms are still allowed to pollute the waters of BC is because no one can see what is going on in them. Salmon farms operate in remote areas of the coast and they openly resist to anyone getting close enough to see the fish in the pens.



We have now passed through the Discovery Islands, a region that Justice Bruce Cohen earmarked as particular sensitive habitat for the beleaguered Fraser River sockeye salmon. In 2016 the Fraser sockeye collapsed to the lowest levels since non-indigenous record keeping began. Fisheries and Oceans' management of these fish is not working. Justice Cohen recommended that the industry cease to operate in the Discovery Islands in 2010 years unless they can prove they are *not* having greater than minimal impact on the sockeye.

We welcomed Hereditary Chief George Quocksister Jr. aboard as we transited his territory. George has expressed strong concern for years that young wild fish are becoming trapped and dying in fish farms. When we pulled up near the Marine Harvest, Sonora Point farm in Nodales Channel he was alarmed to see the water dimpling like rain, as a long-time seine boat skipper he recognized that this was fish sign.

George called the First Nation fisheries office on his reserve, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, DFO's Aquaculture Management Department, his elected non-indigenous leaders, everyone he could think of to come out and look at these fish, figure out what was going on and release these fish. No one

would come. DFO has never returned his calls to this day.

So George took the dingy, approached the farm himself to ask a worker what kind of fish were in the pen. The farmer told him there were no fish in the pen. George did not believe him – too many decades of experience. He took an underwater camera and calmly and resolutely stepped onto the farm, put the camera in the water and started filming. He just held it there as the farmers tried to discourage him. They gave up, there was nothing they could do, we were watching and they returned to the farm shed, caught between a corporate giant rooted in Norway and an indigenous man determined to protect the fish that had fed his ancestors for thousands of years.

The footage revealed what George already knew, thousands of herring were darting desperately trapped in .5 meters of water in the scorching sun of the BC heat wave unable to dive into the cool depths. Tears glistened in George's eyes, why hadn't the farmers even bothered to release these baby fish, he kept asking over and over. It was such senseless abuse of a fish essential to life on the BC coast. He wondered aloud how many tons had been sucked up into the harvest boats with the farm fish and dumped somewhere, or used to feed the farm salmon. Marine Harvest was found guilty of a charge I laid for illegal possession of wild salmon and herring in 2012, but nothing had changed. George knew this was just one of ten pens on this farm, and one of a hundred salmon farm sites along the southern coast of BC.

As we arrived at the next farm two days later, George wanted to know what was happening in this farm and so tying on his ceremonial apron, affixing his cedar/abalone head band he calmly boarded the Hardwicke Site B, Marine Harvest site and then the Marine Harvest Althorp site. The footage from inside these pens was nightmarish. Brown wisps of feces laced the water as emaciated, misshapen, lice ridden Atlantic salmon marinated in this waste. How could Canada sacrifice the gift of wild salmon for this? How could people eat these fish? Why was the Minister of Fisheries fighting me in court to bring diseased fish to these once productive waters



The sun cast a strange and uneasy red light the water through the heavy smoke from the fires raging through BC's interior – yet another state of emergency – as I watched a man put everything on the line for wild fish carrying the promise of life as climate change descends our planet into chaos.



Heroes are rising everywhere. We cannot know if this will be enough to end the madness, but who can look a child in the eyes and not fight with all the goodness and power that exists in each of us.

Thank you Hereditary Chief Quocksister Jr.

Onward to the territory of the powerful Musgamagw Dzawada'enux

.

Last Updated on Sunday, 13 August 2017 01:51

652 readings

[Far-right rally, counter-protest
both planned for Vancouver today](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 19 August 2017 10:48







One demonstration is protesting Islam, while the other is protesting white nationalism

[CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 19, 2017 5:00 AM PT Last Updated: Aug 19, 2017 5:00 AM PM



A counter-protest organized by Stand Up to Racism Metro Vancouver is being held at Vancouver City Hall on Saturday. (Stand Up to Racism Metro Vancouver/Facebook)

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- ['Hatred and racism have no place in this city': Gregor Robertson condemns far-right rally](#)

A far-right rally and a counter-protest are both planned for Vancouver

Saturday, the latter of which is expected to draw thousands.

Plans for the far-right demonstration at Vancouver City Hall began circulating on social media earlier in the week, not long after [a deadly white nationalist march in Charlottesville, Va.](#)

According to a Facebook page for the event, the rally is protesting Islam and the Canadian government's immigration policies. The page is no longer live.

Counter-protest planned in response

By Tuesday, the ad hoc coalition Stand Up to Racism Metro Vancouver had organized its own counter-protest. More than [3,500 people on Facebook](#) have indicated that they plan to be there.

Isabelle Rowe-Codner, one of the rally's organizers, said the number of expected attendees doubled in a day.

"We've gotten so much support ... It's all been happening so quickly," she said on Friday.

Organizers said the counter-protest will be peaceful, "essentially" there to outnumber the far-right protesters and "give our voice some say."

Rowe-Codner said the group has taken extra security measures as its numbers have grown, and volunteers will be watching the counter-protest crowd closely to keep the peace.

"We are going to have many people who are vulnerable attending ... If anybody instigates something from our side, it'll be those [vulnerable] people [in our group] who are most likely targeted by white supremacists," she said.

"If those affected by white supremacy and racism felt unsafe at our rally, then we wouldn't be doing our job."

Rowe-Codner said the coalition has seen some pushback about the rally, and not just from the far-right.

"A lot of people [who lean left and central] are saying, maybe if you ignore this situation they'll go away ... But there are a lot of people and communities out there that face white supremacy and who can't ignore it," she said.

"We can't let this problem grow and grow until it becomes a situation like Charlottesville.

City officials prepared

On Wednesday, Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson [condemned the far-right rally](#), saying "hatred and racism have no place" in the city.

He said people have the right to demonstrate and the city can't shut an event down, but city staff will be working to ensure the events are peaceful.

The Vancouver Police Department has said it's also taking safety precautions, although it hasn't given details on how the event will be policed.

"These types of rallies ... [are] very fluid," Sgt. Jason Robillard said Wednesday. "There's still information coming in. We are monitoring the situation."

398 readings

[PC leader Patrick Brown promotes pill pressing machine ban](#)



346 readings

[Assumed safety of pesticide use is false, says top government scientist](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 25 September 2017 22:29

Damian Carrington Environment editor Friday 22 September 2017 12.23 BST
First published on Thursday 21 September 2017 19.00 BST
The assumption by regulators around the world that it is safe to use pesticides at industrial scales across landscapes is false, according to a chief scientific adviser to the UK government.

Damning assessment by one of the UK's chief scientific advisers says global regulations have ignored the impacts of 'dosing whole landscapes' and must change



The lack of any limit on the total amount of pesticides used and the virtual absence of monitoring of their effects in the environment means it can take years for the impacts to become apparent, say Prof Ian Boyd and his colleague Alice Milner in a new article.

The damning assessment of pesticide regulations that are meant to protect the global environment follows a growing number of highly critical reports including research showing farmers could slash their pesticide use without losses and a UN report that denounced the “myth” that pesticides are necessary to feed the world.

“The current assumption underlying pesticide regulation – that chemicals that pass a battery of tests in the laboratory or in field trials are environmentally benign when they are used at industrial scales – is false,” state the scientists in their article published in the journal *Science*. Boyd is chief scientific adviser to the UK’s Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, where Milner also works on secondment, but their criticism reflects their own views.

“The effects of dosing whole landscapes with chemicals have been largely ignored by regulatory systems,” the scientists said. “This can and should be changed.” They contrast this situation with pharmaceuticals, for which there is a system of rigorous global monitoring after a drug is approved in case adverse effects emerge.

“Vigilance on the scale that is required for medicines does not exist to assess the effects of pesticides in the environment,” they said. They cite the UK as an example of one of the most developed regulatory systems: “Yet it has no systematic monitoring of pesticide residues in the environment. There is no consideration of safe pesticide limits at landscape scales.”

The scientists’ article also criticises the widespread use of pesticides as preventive treatments, rather than being used sparingly and only when needed.

Farms could slash pesticide use without losses, research reveals [Read more](#) Milner told the *Guardian*: “We want to start a discussion about how we can introduce a global monitoring programme for pesticides, similar to pharmaceuticals. It can take years to fully understand the environmental impact.”

“Any chemical you put into the environment has the potential to be widely distributed,” she said. “We’ve known this for decades, particularly through the early work in the 1960s – the Silent Spring, DDT and so on – and you can find chemicals in places that have not been treated because of the connectivity of ecosystems. There are often quite unexpected effects [and] you often don’t see them until the pesticide is used at more industrial scales.”

Matt Shardlow of the conservation group Buglife said: “Pesticides have got big on society – the thin veil of science around the approvals process has been exposed and the marketing strategies are stronger than the products they tout.

“If you think the biggest governments in the world are wrapped around the pesticide industry’s fingers, that’s nothing compared to the 35% of countries that have no regulation at all. It looks as if only an international convention can get pesticides back into a box that helps rather than harms us. It can’t come soon enough.”

The UK government has repeatedly opposed increased European restrictions on widely used insecticides that are linked to serious harm in bees, but a partial ban was backed by other nations and introduced in 2013.

However, the environment secretary, Michael Gove, said in July that changes to pesticide regulation were being considered: “Certainly, it is the case that anyone who has seen the [recent] scientific evidence must inevitably contemplate the need for further restrictions on their use.” After Brexit, he said: “Informed by rigorous scientific analysis, we can develop global gold-standard policies on pesticides and chemicals.”

Keith Tyrell, at Pesticide Action Network, said the current pesticide management system was not fit for purpose: “We don’t know how a pesticide will really impact the environment until it is too late. It can take years before enough scientific evidence is collected to persuade regulators to take action, and they will be fought every step of the way by pesticide manufacturers who make millions from these products.”

N experts denounce 'myth' pesticides are necessary to feed the world Read more
The UN report in March was severely critical of the global corporations that manufacture pesticides, accusing them of the “systematic denial of

harms”, “aggressive, unethical marketing tactics” and heavy lobbying of governments which has “obstructed reforms and paralysed global pesticide

restrictions”.

Sarah Mukherjee, chief executive of an industry group called the Crop Protection Association, said: “As [Boyd and Milner] themselves acknowledge, crop-protection products are a fundamental component of a sustainable, productive agricultural sector which seek to strike the right balance between protecting the environment and providing a reliable supply of safe, healthy, affordable food.

“Pesticides are amongst the most heavily regulated products in the world. It takes up to 12 years and costs over £200m to bring a new product to market. This process, involving rigorous scrutiny by independent scientific experts, ensures plant protection products are safe before they reach the market.”

Last Updated on Monday, 25 September 2017 22:41

840 readings

[Kinder Morgan: Canada's Interpretation of Free Prior Informed is out of Sync with the International Interpretation](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 28 September 2017 11:33

by Joan Russow PhD

Global Compliance Research Project

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE PRINCIPLE OF OBTAINING FREE PRIOR INFORMED CONSENT

As affirmed in International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Canada has an affirmative obligation to “promote the realization of the right of

self-determination, and ... respect that right, in conformity with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.” UN treaty bodies and other diverse entities require or support the standard of Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC). These include: UN General Assembly and specialized agencies, as well as regional human rights bodies.

In 2011, the International Finance Corporation announced: “For projects with potential significant adverse impacts on indigenous peoples, IFC has adopted the principle of ‘Free, Prior, and Informed Consent’ informed by the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.”

The UN Development Programme (UNDP) “will not participate in a Project that violates the human rights of indigenous peoples as affirmed by Applicable Law and the United Nations Declaration”. UNDP added: “FPIC will be ensured on any matters that may affect the rights and interests, lands, resources, territories (whether titled or untitled to the people in question) and traditional livelihoods of the indigenous peoples concerned.”

In March 2016, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recommended that Canada “fully recognize the right to free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples in its laws and policies and apply it in practice.” In particular, the Committee added that: ... the State party establish effective mechanisms that enable meaningful participation of indigenous peoples in decision-making in relation to development projects being carried out on, or near, their lands or territories ... [and] that the State party effectively engage indigenous peoples in the formulation of legislation that affects them.

In July 2015, the UN Human Rights Committee urged Canada to “consult indigenous people ... 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."

FPIC is also highlighted in The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: A Manual for National Human Rights Institutions: “indigenous peoples have the right to determine their own economic, social and cultural development and to manage, for their own benefit, their own natural resources. The duties to consult with indigenous peoples and to obtain their free, prior and informed consent are crucial elements of the right to self-determination.”

In addition to the right of self-determination, the UN Declaration includes a number of provisions that refer to FPIC. No specific provision should be interpreted in isolation, but rather in the context of the whole Declaration and other international human rights law. For example, such approach would apply to article 32(2): States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources. In the Handbook for Parliamentarians on the UN Declaration, 51 the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) emphasizes the importance of Indigenous peoples' "consent":

When parliamentarians consider draft legislation on matters that directly or indirectly affect indigenous peoples, it is important for them to understand and carry out their duty to obtain indigenous peoples' consent, to ensure that such laws not only reflect the views of the non-indigenous communities concerned, but can also be implemented without detrimentally affecting the rights of indigenous communities.

I believe that Ms. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, the current UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples would concur with the necessity to obtain free, prior and informed consent:

I also regret that there are still conflicting interpretations among key actors about how indigenous rights should be applied in specific situations, especially when competing rights and interests are at stake. I continue to observe that discrepancies in interpretation exist especially in relation to rights to lands and resources and the application of the duty of States to consult with and seek the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples before the adoption of measures that affect them. As part of my mandate to promote good practices in this regard, I have provided technical advice through dialogue with Governments on issues such as consultation and consent, indigenous jurisdiction and access to justice for indigenous peoples, particularly indigenous women.

IN NO WAY COULD KINDER MORGAN CLAIM THAT THEY HAVE OBTAINED FREE PRIOR INFORMED CONSENT FROM FIRST NATIONS TO PROCEED WITH KINDER MORGAN EXPANSION

THE UN RAPPOREUR WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY CONCUR ESPECIALLY, IF THE UN RAPPOREUR WERE TO BE INVITED TO VISIT THE SALIS

880 readings

[The Car Free Day in Paris](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 01 October 2017 09:20

nn

All the information to plan your stay in Paris during the Car Free Day which will be held on 1 October 2017



The **Car Free Day** is a unique opportunity to **discover or re-discover Paris!** Take advantage of a whole new area in which to get around in peace and tranquillity throughout the day.

After the success of last year's initiative, Paris City Hall is launching its third

edition that seeks to be even more ambitious.

As regards getting around the capital on business, travel within, from, and to the restricted zone by motorized vehicle will be prohibited between 11am and 6pm

391 readings

[The Nobel Peace Prize for 2017](#)

[Peace News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 06 October 2017 07:33



DEN NORSKE
NOBELKOMITE

The Norwegian Nobel Committee

The Nobel Peace Prize for 2017

[The Norwegian Nobel Committee](#) has decided to award the Nobel Peace Prize for 2017 to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). The organization is receiving the award for its work to draw attention to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and for its ground-breaking efforts to achieve a treaty-based prohibition of such weapons.

We live in a world where the risk of nuclear weapons being used is greater than it has been for a long time. Some states are modernizing their nuclear arsenals, and there is a real danger that more countries will try to procure nuclear weapons, as exemplified by North Korea. Nuclear weapons pose a constant threat to humanity and all life on earth. Through binding international agreements, the international community has previously adopted prohibitions against land mines, cluster munitions and biological and chemical weapons. Nuclear weapons are even more destructive, but have not yet been made the object of a similar international legal prohibition.

Through its work, ICAN has helped to fill this legal gap. An important argument in the rationale for prohibiting nuclear weapons is the unacceptable human suffering that a nuclear war will cause. ICAN is a coalition of non-governmental organizations from around 100 different countries around the globe. The coalition has been a driving force in prevailing upon the world's nations to pledge to cooperate with all relevant stakeholders in efforts to stigmatise, prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons. To date, 108 states have made such a commitment, known as the

Humanitarian Pledge.

Furthermore, ICAN has been the leading civil society actor in the endeavour to achieve a prohibition of nuclear weapons under international law. On 7 July 2017, 122 of the UN member states acceded to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. As soon as the treaty has been ratified by 50 states, the ban on nuclear weapons will enter into force and will be binding under international law for all the countries that are party to the treaty.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee is aware that an international legal prohibition will not in itself eliminate a single nuclear weapon, and that so far neither the states that already have nuclear weapons nor their closest allies support the nuclear weapon ban treaty. The Committee wishes to emphasize that the next steps towards attaining a world free of nuclear weapons must involve the nuclear-armed states. This year's Peace Prize is therefore also a call upon these states to initiate serious negotiations with a view to the gradual, balanced and carefully monitored elimination of the almost 15,000 nuclear weapons in the world. Five of the states that currently have nuclear weapons – the USA, Russia, the United Kingdom, France and China – have already committed to this objective through their accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons of 1970. The Non-Proliferation Treaty will remain the primary international legal instrument for promoting nuclear disarmament and preventing the further spread of such weapons.

It is now 71 years since the UN General Assembly, in its very first resolution, advocated the importance of nuclear disarmament and a nuclear weapon-free world. With this year's award, the Norwegian Nobel Committee wishes to pay tribute to ICAN for giving new momentum to the efforts to achieve this goal.

The decision to award the Nobel Peace Prize for 2017 to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons has a solid grounding in Alfred Nobel's will. The will specifies three different criteria for awarding the Peace Prize: the promotion of fraternity between nations, the advancement of disarmament and arms control and the holding and promotion of peace congresses. ICAN works vigorously to achieve nuclear disarmament. ICAN and a majority of UN member states have contributed to fraternity between nations by supporting the Humanitarian Pledge. And through its inspiring and innovative support for the UN negotiations on a treaty banning nuclear weapons, ICAN has played a major part in bringing about what in our day and age is equivalent to an international peace congress.

It is the firm conviction of the Norwegian Nobel Committee that ICAN, more than anyone else, has in the past year given the efforts to achieve a world without nuclear weapons a new direction and new vigour.

Oslo, 6 October 2017

Approving Kinder Morgan Expansion would impact on climate change and jeopardize the future conservation projects in the Salish Sea and the rights of future generations and the rights of indigenous peoples

By Joan Russow

Global Compliance Research Project

1. Kinder Morgan 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 2016 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."

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 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 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 15% below 1990 by 2017, 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 expansion of the Kinder Morgan 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 the Kinder Morgan expansion

1. The expansion of Kinder Morgan could jeopardize future conservation projects in the Salish Sea, and violate the rights of future generations and the rights of indigenous peoples

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.

Kinder Morgan 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 Kinder Morgan expansion, the Trudeau 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.

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>)

Expansion of Kinder Morgan 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 Kinder Morgan 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.

LEAGACY 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 2016.²

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 the poorly publicized proposal to triple the Kinder Morgan/ Trans Mountain Pipeline 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 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;:

Salish Sea item: <http://www.foe.org/projects/oceans-and-forests/oceangoing-vessels/tar-sands-report>

In conclusion,If the Kinder Morgan 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”.

Approving the Kinder Morgan would demonstrate to the world that Canada is still not serious about reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Proceeding with the Kinder Morgan 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 Kinder Morgan expansion in the sensitive waters of the Salish Sea:

Proceeding with the approval if the Kinder Morgan Expansion would also show that Canada disregards commitments to heritage, to the rights of future generations and to the rights of First Nations and ignores dire warning and social licence.

BACKGROUND TO RELEVANT SECTION IN THE LEGALLY BINDING INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS AND TO THE HISTORY OF ADOPTION OF UNDRIP IN CANADA AND TRC

Canada will not normally become a party to an international agreement which requires implementing legislation until the necessary legislation has been enacted [cite references, including 1982 document circulated by External Affairs "Canadian Reply to Questionnaire on Parliaments and the Treaty-making power"]

The full context of this statement comes from the "Canadian Reply to Questionnaire on Parliaments and the Treaty-making Power". It is an External Affairs Department communiqué which was put together in 1982 to assist the External Affairs Officers in explaining the division of powers and constitutional conventions in Canada in relation to International obligations:

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.

In concluding this section which was referred to by John Hunter, Green, makes a very significant remark, which suggests that Canada is bound by the treaty prior to the enactment into national law:

The fact that a treaty has been signed and ratified but not yet enacted into national law does not preclude the international liability of the signatory under the treaty.

While the previous Conservative government proclaimed- “consent does not really mean consent, and the Federal and former provincial Liberal s through their actions appear to perpetuate this notion.

Article 31, however, in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties states:

General rule 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 language “consent’ means consent.

HISTORY OF THE ADOPTION OF RELEVANT DOCUMENTS TO THE FREE PRIOR AND INFORMED CONSENT

*I was in the United Nations in new York, in 2007 when Canada was shamed as being one of four countries to vote against the UN Declaration on the Rights of indigenous peoples (UNDRIP). Also at that time, **Grand Chief Edward John**,a Representative to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, had an opportunity to speak forcefully reprimanding Canada’s refusal,*

*In April 2009, the Australian Government, reversing its previous refusal,adopted the declaration in Parliament. At that point, given that almost all states from all continents representing the full range of legal systems had adopted the Declaration, UNDRIP began to embody peremptory norms. Peremptory norms (often cited as *jus cogen*) are said to possess a universal character in that no state may derogate from them,*

despite the will of the state to do so.

Not only has the UNDRIP become an international norm, it has been finally adopted in Canada and in British Columbia

After years of reluctance, by the Conservative government, to adopt the Declaration, on May 10, 2016 the Federal Liberal government adopted the UNDRIP.

Now on September 7 2017, Premier **John Horgan, Grand Chief Edward John, and other officials opened the B.C. Cabinet and First Nations Leaders' Gathering in Vancouver with the major announcement.**

The B.C. government will be governing the province according to principles embodied in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

During the 2015 election, Trudeau proclaimed that he would abide by the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

And on September 7 2017, Premier Horgan also affirmed that the provincial government will implement the 94 Calls to Action in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report.

In the UNDRIP is Article 19 which 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.**

As well 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

Thus, Federal and BC governments both incurred the obligation to abide by the principle of free prior informed consent.

Given the years of First Nation's being deprived of their own means of subsistence through resource extraction, and given years of inadequate economic support, from Federal and Provincial governments, for the satisfaction of First Nations basic needs; First Nations are vulnerable to corporate attempts to buy their consent for projects that are not in their long term health and financial interests. Consent that arises through playing on First Nations vulnerabilities does not fulfill the requirements of free prior informed consent.

At a lecture given, at the University of Victoria, by Robert Morales, a member of Cowichan Tribes specializing in the areas of First Nations, compared UNDRIP to the legally binding international Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ratified by Canada in 1976

For example,

Article 1 of the legally binding International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states the following:

In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence.

In the UNDRIP. Under Article 20;

Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and develop their political, economic and social systems or institutions, to be secure in the enjoyment of their own means of subsistence and development, and to engage freely in all their traditional and other economic activities.

As well, Article 43

The rights recognized herein constitute the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world

While the previous Conservative government proclaimed: “consent does not really mean consent, and the Federal and former provincial Liberal governments, through their actions appear to perpetuate this notion.

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In ordinary language “consent’ means consent.

Kinder Morgan Expansion has not obtained the free prior and informed consent for its expansion

Last Updated on Friday, 20 October 2017 11:31

826 readings

[B.C. Hydro's Site C promises ring hollow](#)   

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 27 September 2017 11:30

by Vaughn Palmer, September 26, 2017

VICTORIA — B.C. Hydro was nine per cent over budget and already dipping into contingency funds from day one on the main construction contract at Site C, according to the uncensored version of a report to the B.C. Utilities Commission.

The troubles continue to the present day, with the \$1.8 billion main civil works contract having run through three quarters of its contingency budget with only one quarter of the work being done.

Those and other disturbing details are contained in a report from Deloitte LLP, the consulting firm hired to scrutinize Hydro's numbers as part of the cabinet-ordered review of the Site C dam project.

The commission released the Deloitte report on its website Sept. 8, then took it down because it had neglected to black out passages that were supposed to be kept secret. Later it was reposted with those details obscured.

There matters stood until I was chatting this week with Robert McCullough, the US-based energy expert who has been working up here for the anti-Site C Peace Valley Land Owners Association. He advised me that he had an unredacted version of the Deloitte report posted to mresearch.com.

There British Columbians can see budget figures and other details that B.C. Hydro and the commission sought to withhold about the contract for civil engineering works at Site C — covering excavation of the two river banks, and construction of diversion tunnels, coffer dams and the giant earthworks dam itself.

Hydro budgeted that part of the project at \$1.559 billion when the B.C. Liberals green-lighted construction in December 2014. The following year, the estimate was boosted to \$1.612 billion.

Nevertheless all four bids came in well above. The lowest was \$1.748 billion from Peace River Hydro Partners, a consortium made up of Spain's Acciona Infrastructure, South Korean's Samsung, and Alberta-based Petrowest Corporation.

Even going with the low bid, Hydro had to draw \$136 million from contingencies to close the funding gap, a detail that was somehow left out of the Dec 22, 2015 press release announcing the contract.

The target date for start of construction was Jan. 21, 2016. But the partners were two months late in getting going and remained behind schedule into the summer.

Hydro had to intervene, and with a further \$33.5 million dip into contingencies, managed to get things back on track by January of this year.

A month later a 400-metre long tension crack opened up on the north bank, forcing a 10-week delay in construction. Barely was that under control when a second crack, 250 metres long, opened up on the same bank in mid-May.

By the time Deloitte began asking questions in late August, Hydro was still dealing with the contractors on the budgetary and scheduling fallout from the two cracks and other problems.

While Hydro was reluctant to share details, Deloitte did learn that on Aug. 24, the partners filed a claim for an additional \$327 million payment and a 435-day delay in their share of the construction schedule. The latter would mean missing the September 2019 target for diverting the river, putting the whole

project behind by a year.

Hydro rejects both claims and Deloitte concluded that the partners probably underbid by several hundred millions and are now try to make it up.

But that still leaves the challenge of the schedule. “The partners ability to meet critical milestones poses a major challenge to the project,” wrote Deloitte.

Plus one of the partners, Petrowest, has gone bankrupt, a development that “will create a period of instability that may impact the (contractors) ability to meet its planned work schedule in the short to medium term.”

Nor did the consultants let Hydro off the hook. The low bid on the main civil works contract came in 12 per cent higher than Hydro’s initial estimate, 8.5 per cent over the utility’s final number. “Which raises concerns about Hydro’s ability to estimate large contracts,” concluded Deloitte.

The immediate consequence can be seen in the report’s uncensored numbers on contingencies.

Just two years into an eight year schedule, the main civil works contract has already eaten 77 per cent — \$194 million — of its \$252 million share of the contingency budget, leaving 23 per cent to cover all remaining overruns.

The proportions are reversed on work completed — 24 per cent — versus what remains to be done — 76 per cent.

Not surprisingly, the consultants expect Hydro will have to raid other parts of the contingency budget to cover further overruns with the main civil

works contract before long.

Deloitte then goes on to note that Hydro's record on this contract "reduces our confidence in the accuracy of the other main contract packages that have yet to be awarded."

Next up is the second largest contract on the entire project, for building the generating station and main spillway. Budgeted at \$1.255 billion, but in the absence of access to the bids, Deloitte rightly wonders if that's a take-it-to-the-bank estimate.

Still to come is a contract for transmission lines to link Site C to the provincial grid. Another redacted passage in the report discloses that the transmission lines have already incurred additional costs of \$494 million.

Hydro continues to insist that it can hit the mark on both the Site C budget and the river diversion. But those claims ring hollow, given the facts on display in the uncensored version of Deloitte report.

vpalmer@postmedia.com

Last Updated on Friday, 20 October 2017 11:40

575 readings

B.C. claims approval of Trans Mountain pipeline expansion 'lopsided' for Alberta



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 08 October 2017 11:24

>A lawyer representing British Columbia in its fight against the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion says the federal cabinet's approval of the project is "lopsided" because it put Alberta's economic needs ahead of B.C.'s concerns about oil spills.

CP, THE CANADIAN PRESS - Published on: October 6, 2017 | Last Updated: October 6, 2017 5:58 AM MDT

A lawyer representing British Columbia in its fight against the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion says the federal cabinet's approval of the project is "lopsided" because it put Alberta's economic needs ahead of B.C.'s concerns about oil spills.

Thomas Berger said outside the Federal Court of Appeal on Thursday that the \$7.4-billion project would disproportionately impact the interests of B.C. residents in the event of a marine spill of diluted bitumen.

While Alberta would get the lion's share of benefits through development of its oil resources and access to Pacific Rim markets, B.C. would bear the entire environmental risk, he told The Canadian Press in an interview.

In its approval of the project last November, the governor in council breached its statutory duty to provide reasons for deciding it was not likely to cause significant adverse environmental effects, Berger said on behalf of the attorney general of B.C., which is an intervener in the case.

"The governor in council made its choice but it did not give any reasons. All we got was the conclusion. **It's like getting a judge's verdict without getting any reasons," Berger said.**

"I urged the court to rule that the cabinet had to obey the command of Parliament, which is the order in council must set out the reasons for making the order," the former B.C. Supreme Court judge said.

"I told the court, 'This isn't technical, it's fundamental,'" Berger said.

The federal government's explanatory note accompanying the order in council approving Trans Mountain says detailed reasons for the decision are set out in four reports, including one by the National Energy Board.

"The citizen shouldn't have to search through hundreds of documents to find out the reason why the cabinet made the choice it did," Berger said. "That's why Parliament said cabinet's reasons must be set out in the order in council."

Alberta, which favours the pipeline project on the grounds it would create jobs and investment opportunities, is scheduled to make its arguments in the Federal Court of Appeal next week.

Several First Nations, two environmental groups and the cities of Vancouver and Burnaby are also against the pipeline expansion that the federal government approved last November.

Indigenous groups have maintained a seven-fold increase in tanker traffic would substantially increase the risks of diluted bitumen spills, with no known means of adequately cleaning it up, and put endangered southern resident killer whales in peril.

First Nations groups also say the federal government failed to adequately consult them or gain their consent for expanding the pipeline.

Trans Mountain, a subsidiary of Kinder Morgan Canada, aims to double an existing Alberta-to-B.C. pipeline with nearly 1,000 more kilometres of pipeline in new and existing corridors.

British Columbia's former Liberal government supported the project, saying Kinder Morgan had met five government conditions including a revenue-sharing agreement worth up to \$1 billion.

However, the New Democrat government, which formed an alliance with the Green party to support its minority government this year, has said it would oppose the pipeline expansion.

Earlier Thursday, TransCanada announced it had cancelled its plans for the \$15.7-billion Energy East pipeline, which was to carry oil from Alberta and Saskatchewan to refineries in Quebec and New Brunswick.

Last September, the Federal Court of Appeal overturned Ottawa's approval of Enbridge's Northern Gateway pipeline project, two years after the federal cabinet granted a permit.

Last Updated on Friday, 20 October 2017 11:13

878 readings

Site C: Global Compliance Research Project

Presentation to the BC Utilities Commission

Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 12 October 2017 12:32

Presentation to the BC Utilities Commission

By Dr Joan Russow,

Global Compliance Research Project

Victoria

October 11, 2017

The Global Compliance Research Project monitors the compliance and non-compliance, by member states at the United Nations, with international law.

It's 2017! It's 41 years since Habitat I in Vancouver, where Canada agreed to the following recommendations:

reducing energy consumption becom(ing) aware of the need to cease environmentally degrading and wasteful use of energy resources....Identifying and developing new sources of energy...developing and implementing the utilization of solar and geothermal energy(Excerpts from articles from C4 energy, habitat I)

Yet in 2017. Site C, which is not only ecologically but also economically regressive, advances the tolerance for externalities- the cost that affects a party who did not choose to incur that cost

The first externality is the years of costs caused by the irreversible resource destruction that has deprived First Nations of their subsistence within their territories. This destruction violates Article 1 of the legally binding international Covenant on Civil and Political Rights:

“In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence.”

and contravenes the principle of “free prior informed consent ” in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). 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;=10805:site-c-canada-interpretation-of-free-prior-informed-consent-is-out-of-sync-with-the-international-interpretation&catid;=77:bc-justice-news&Itemid;=219

A second externality is the loss of archeological sites and of the potential damage to the Wood Buffalo World Heritage Site in violation of the UN Convention on the Preservation of Cultural and Natural Heritage.

<http://vancouver.sun.com/news/local-news/united-nations-report-expresses-concern-about-site-c-impact-on-wood-buffalo-national-park>

A third externality is the loss of food security, by destroying acres of rich agricultural land and disregarding the warning by the IPCC on loss of food security caused by climate change:

https://www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/ar4/wg2/en/ch5s5-6-5.html

A fourth externality is undermining the potential for instituting a fair and just transition for workers, into sustainable Green energy: solar, wind geothermal wave tidal and future renewables that could be provided with the subsidies that have been used for fossil fuels. Funds for Site C would displace funds for real solutions

A fifth externality is the rights of future generations a principle affirmed through numerous conventions, including the legally binding Convention on Biological Diversity and the principle embodied in the Bruntland Report:

Sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

SiteC must be cancelled now and the sunk costs absorbed. These costs were incurred from the dereliction of duty on the part of the former BC Liberal governments:

In 2008 for allowing BC hydro to defer expenses for years;

<https://thetyee.ca/News/2016/06/15/Government-Manipulating-BC-Hydro-Finances>

In 2010, for exempting Site C from the usual procedure of sending the proposal to the BC Utilities Commission that would have done an in depth analysis of the exorbitant externality costs

and in 2014, for ignoring the Joint Regional panel's conclusion that the proposed Site C Project would likely cause a number of significant adverse impacts to the rights of Treaty 8 First Nations, and that some of these effects could not be mitigated.

At this point, the precautionary principle should have been invoked, site C Cancelled, not approved.

If Site C is not cancelled now, externality costs will be exacerbated.

Last Updated on Friday, 20 October 2017 13:24

276 readings

Overcoming the Challenges: Securing the World's Food, Energy and Water



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

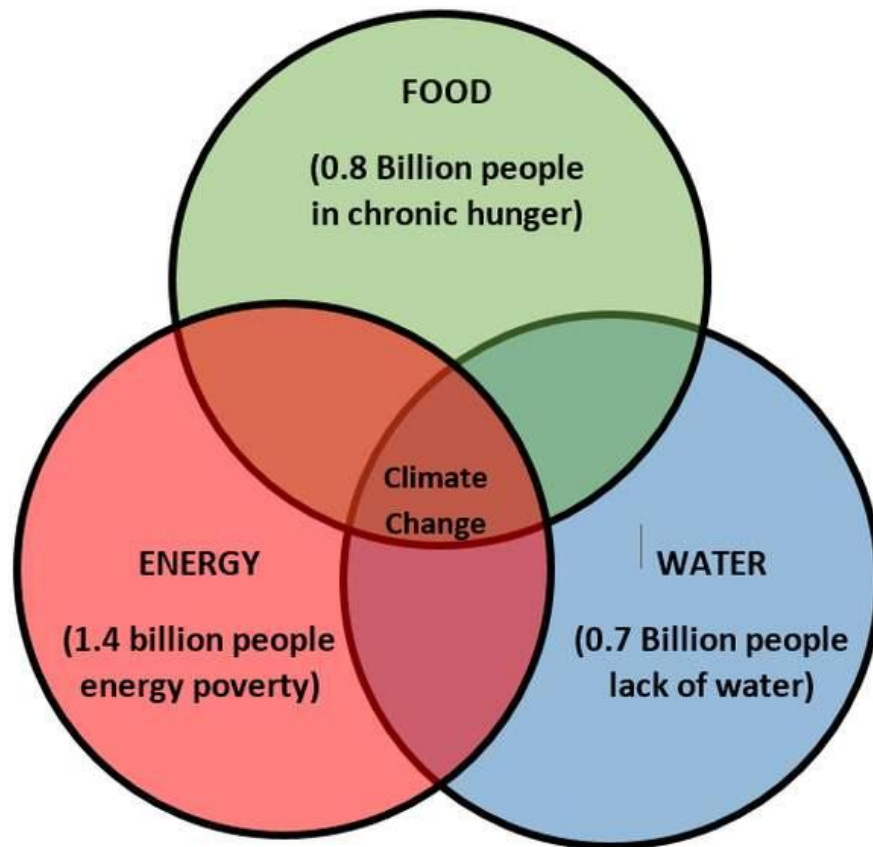
Monday, 16 October 2017 07:19



Credit: Bigstock

SURREY, United Kingdom, Oct 13 2017 (IPS) - According to the United Nations estimates almost 800 million people suffer from chronic hunger (1 in every 9 persons on the planet) and a higher number (1 in 3) suffer from malnutrition. 1 in every 5 persons (1.4 billion people) have no access to electricity worldwide (living with energy poverty) whilst 1 in 10 people do not have access to clean water. With climate change, this situation is worsening across many parts of the world.

Food, Energy and Water (FEW) are linked inextricably and are important requirements for national security and economic development of nations.



To make enough food for a growing world population, more water and energy are needed. To ensure water is accessible and clean for human consumption demands energy and diverts water resources from agriculture. Additionally producing energy requires water, again potentially impacting irrigation. Energy production is further constrained by the need to limit greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. These interlinkages are intensifying in many regions around the world as demand for resources increase with population growth, changing consumption patterns, and low management efficiencies in both supply and demand in these three sectors, likely to be compounded by the impact of climate change.

Attempting to achieve sustainable management in one of these sectors independently, without addressing trade-offs, will endanger sustainability of the other two sectors. It is important therefore to adopt a nexus-thinking approach in the planning and management to achieve intelligent synergies and fair trade-offs between all three sectors.

At the centre of the FEW nexus lies the global challenge of climate change and poverty. According to the UN Declaration on Social development in 1995, poverty, whether it is absolute poverty, extreme poverty, or abject poverty is a condition characterised by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information.

Poverty therefore is the biggest challenge to humanity. The poor suffer from it while the rich fear it. It creates social divisions, fierce competition, greed, tensions and political instability among other societal problems. Eradicating poverty is therefore a moral responsibility and a fundamental requirement to social justice, political stability and sustainable development.

Arguably there could be perhaps two ways to reduce or eliminate poverty: One is to make everybody or every nation rich; though it is not possible politically and logistically, it would still not solve the problem of poverty due to the limited global resources and their geographical distribution and constraints.

The second way is by making the basic needs of Water, Energy and Food available and affordable to everyone. With technological advances, it is possible to achieve the latter but not the former. History shows that since the industrial revolution, science and technology have contributed hugely to reduce global poverty, improve people's health, enhance quality of life, increase education opportunities and even help bring people and nations together by reducing cultural barriers.

However, the over exploitation of science and technology has also contributed to global problems including accelerated depletion of natural resources due to increased population and human greed fuelled by the rich and technologically developed nations' desire to be richer and dominating. These activities have affected the environment negatively and resulted in the challenge of climate change and raised the question of unsustainable development.

Critical to achieving sustainability and eradicating poverty is to have sustainable energy and water supplies that have little or no geographical or climatic condition constraints. This appears near impossible or far reaching given the current rate of consumption of the world's energy and water resources and the status of scientific and technological development.

However, history tells us that humans have always found ways to advance their mission on earth by discovering alternative sources, and/or inventing new ways of doing things better. Examples include how human moved from using wood to coal and then to oil and gas before any of these resources had been completely depleted. However, the challenges, whether they are energy or water resources related have not yet disappeared.

For energy, this is so because fossil based energy sources are available in certain places around the world which presents a geographical, logistical and political constraints. Additionally they have negative impact on the environment, which has resulted in the challenge of Climate Change.



A wind park in Mexico. Credit: Courtesy of Dforcesolar

Renewable energy sources, on the other hand, whether solar, wind, tidal, hydropower, etc., though have less negative impacts on the environment; they are not free from geographical and climatic constraints regardless of their development status. In other words, they are not available to every country, never mind their still

high capital and installation costs, which can be restraining factors.

The global water situation is not different from that of energy. The most populated parts of the world suffer from water shortages. Additionally, most of the larger cities in the world are located near the sea. This mainly provides an option for domestic water sourced from desalinated seawater or by long distance water transportation. Both are energy intensive processes.

The water shortage problem has negatively affected farming and agriculture activities worldwide. Globally, agriculture water constitutes about 70% of the total freshwater use. Groundwater contamination has resulted in a further reduction of water resources which were available for irrigation and exacerbated the problem of water scarcity. Tapping into seawater was considered as an option solution for freshwater supply, but as mentioned before desalination is energy intensive technology and has high installation cost, which limits its use to wealthy and oil rich countries.

Hence low cost energy is the key to a prosperous world. The world needs water and food as well among other key requirements. For water, there is plenty of it in the sea but it is not suitable for human consumption or irrigation. Hence having secure, adequate, sustainable and low cost energy source provides sustainable and affordable water. Both provides the base for food production, as there is little or no shortage of agricultural land.

Should water and energy be available, it could change people's lives. With the availability of these essential ingredients for living, health, prosperity and quality of life among other things for most people could be granted. This will also have a positive effect on the environment and helps reducing the impact of climate change.

There is a good reason for optimism that a sustainable and affordable energy source will be found. The reason for optimism is that because scientists have not exhausted all the options. More scientists are required to innovate and think out of the box including re-examination of the many of the scientific principles and the existing engineering concepts, i.e. doing perhaps more of going back to the basics and applying reverse-engineering among other approaches.

For example, in the case of energy, scientists and engineers for a long time, probably since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, have associated energy transformation and power production to fuel consumption; e.g. burning wood, coal, oil and gas including the nuclear reaction.

This has created a resource problem as most of these sources are not available everywhere. However the renewable energy sources, though they do not involve fuel consumption, have limitations of location, weather and availability. To overcome these limitations, many of the existing political and environmental rules and regulations need to be substantially changed; which is unlikely.

This leaves us with no options but to think beyond the conventional ways. Given that accessible, affordable, secure and low cost energy is central to achieving sustainable development, energy therefore must have the highest global priority. Securing sustainable energy supplies will directly impact the security of water and food; giving the interlinked dependency of these essential needs for our modern civilisation.

Out of the box thinking suggests an energy source that has little or no constraints and that is Gravity. Gravity is everywhere and anywhere with an infinite range and no geographical nor climatic limitations. However, gravity while it powers and is responsible for many of the large scale structures in the Universe, it is largely a negative energy source for humans because of the penalties to overcome it in most human activities expect for hydropower generation and few other uses. Other sources of renewable energy that are not widely exploited include low grade heat and ocean energy.

Turning gravity to an exploitable energy source for electricity production, would present a great leap in technological advancement. Electron is a universal form of energy that is used for lighting and powering machines and devices for all uses and

purposes including heating, transportation, etc. Gravity has the potential to provide electricity.

Investigating the possibility of producing electricity using gravity is currently an area of limited research. This is because the idea is largely perceived as impossible. The number of researchers who are investigating this area is very small compared to the size of the scientific community. If they succeed, the potential would be huge with a global impact and opportunities.

The challenges of Water, Energy and Food along with other challenges of Climate Change and Poverty Eradication, can then be successfully addressed. This would mark the beginning of the Sustainable Age.

This article is part of a series of stories and op-eds launched by IPS on the occasion of this year's World Food Day on October 16.

Last Updated on Friday, 20 October 2017 11:01

285 readings

United Nations Day October 24; Time for Canada to sign and ratify the Treaty on the prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

Peace News

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 24 October 2017 06:31

By Joan Russow

Global Compliance Research Project



A 37-kiloton blast known as "Priscilla" explodes during an Operation Plumbbob nuclear test at the Nevada Test Site on June 24, 1957. The device was detonated from a balloon.

UN Day marks the anniversary of the entry into force in 1945 of the UN Charter. With the ratification of this founding document by the majority of its signatories, ...

In June 2017, I attended the UN negotiations on the Treaty. Canada was absent

The Canadian Government demonstrated dereliction of duty when the it refused to sign the Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons that undertakes never under any circumstances to:

- (a) Develop, test, produce, manufacture, otherwise acquire, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices;
- (b) Transfer to any recipient whatsoever nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or control over such weapons or explosive devices directly or indirectly;

- (c) Receive the transfer of or control over nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices directly or indirectly;
- (d) Use or threaten to use nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices;
- (e) Assist, encourage or induce, in any way, anyone to engage in any activity prohibited to a State Party under this Treaty;
- (g) Allow any stationing, installation or deployment of any nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices in its territory or at any place under its jurisdiction or control.

INSTEAD the Canadian Government as a member of NATO

Agreed to the following

- 1) Nuclear weapons must be maintained indefinitely.
- 2) we can use them first.
- 3) we can target non-nuclear weapons states.
- 4) We can threaten to use them.
- 5) We can keep them in Europe, as we are now doing.
- 6) We can launch some on 15 minutes warning.
- 7) We say "they are essential for peace."

CANADA EVEN SAID AT THE UN WHEN IT REFUSED TO ADOPT THE TREATY ; WE COULD NEVER AGREE THAT NUCLEAR WEAPONS WOULD NEVER BE USED.

.

On the other hand , the Swedish representative at the Treaty negotiations stated; The only guarantee that these weapons will never be used again is their total elimination

Currently ,when Sweden had agreed to sign the Treaty it is being bullied by the US

US Defence Secretary Jim Mattis reportedly warned Sweden of severe consequences if the country followed through on signing a UN treaty banning nuclear weapons.

<https://nuclear-news.net/2017/09/06/america-bullying-sweden-because-sweden-signed-the-un-nuclear-weapons-ban-treaty/>

THE FATE OF THE EARTH MUST NOT BE DECIDED BY THE US AND ITS FELLOW NUCLEAR WEAPONS STATES AND NATO ALLIES.

466 readings

ACTIVISTS OPPOSED TO KINDER MORGAN'S PIPELINE EXPANSION TO RUN TRAINING SESSIONS FOR PROTESTERS



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 31 October 2017 14:46

Just the beginning': anti-pipeline protesters vow 'rise of resistance'

ACTIVISTS OPPOSED TO KINDER MORGAN'S PIPELINE EXPANSION TO RUN TRAINING SESSIONS FOR PROTESTERS

CBC News Posted: Oct 30, 2017 2:28 PM PT Last Updated: Oct 30, 2017 2:29 PM PT

People who were arrested at a protest against energy giant Kinder Morgan are saying what happened this weekend is just the beginning of mass civil disobedience.

On Saturday, protesters gathered both on the water and on land near Kinder Morgan's Westbridge Marine Terminal in Burnaby, B.C., to voice their opposition to the planned expansion of the Trans Mountain pipeline.

- 5 arrested for mischief following Kinder Morgan protest

More than 60 boats linked together in front of the tanker route that connects with the terminal.

Police arrested five of the protesters. They have now been charged with criminal mischief.



Karen Mahon (centre-left) and Saeed Nagyb (centre-right) are two of five people arrested on Oct. 28, 2017 and charged with mischief for their roles in a protest against Kinder Morgan. Chief Bob Chamberlin with the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs (far left) is also opposed to the pipeline. (Christer Waara/CBC)

On Monday, four of the five held a news conference in Vancouver, vowing to ramp up their efforts.

Protester Liam Fox says he believes it is his duty to stand in the way of the construction of the Kinder Morgan pipeline.

"We don't really have any other option. This pipeline has to be stopped," Fox said.

Protester Saeed Nagyb says he was also arrested Saturday, after he tied his kayak to Kinder Morgan's construction barge.

Still, he strongly stands by his opposition to the project.

"At best, I think what Kinder Morgan is doing now is presumptuous and, at worst, a slap in the face to our democratic ideals," Nagyb said.

'Rise of resistance'

"This is the beginning," said Karen Mahon with the group Stand.Earth. Mahon was also among those arrested and charged.

Mahon says starting in a few weeks, her organization will be training people interested in "non-violent direct action."

Part of that will include legal training to make sure participants are aware of their rights.

"You are going to see a rise of resistance like this province hasn't seen before," Mahon said.

Continuing opposition

The Trans Mountain pipeline expansion has faced continued opposition in B.C. from environmentalists, First Nations, municipalities and citizens.

- **First Nations, environmental groups to voice Trans Mountain pipeline opposition at hearings**

The Monday news conference was held at the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs board room.

Chief Bob Chamberlin, the vice president of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, said it was an honour to sit with those who had been arrested.

"It's not a small group of radical people trying to stop any development, it's a large group of Canadian citizens that have a very deep, clear concern for the very environment that these projects are being planned for," he said.

- **Kinder Morgan protest draws huge crowd in Vancouver**

The project has **received approval from the National Energy Board** and the **federal government** but has not yet secured required permits from the City of Burnaby.

Construction on the \$7.4-billion project was set to begin in September.

Last week, Kinder Morgan appealed to the National Energy Board, asking it to allow work to begin even without those permits, saying the City of Burnaby was dragging its feet, an accusation **Burnaby's mayor called insulting**.

Last Updated on Thursday, 09 November 2017 19:55

466 readings

[ACTIVISTS OPPOSED TO KINDER MORGAN'S PIPELINE EXPANSION TO RUN TRAINING SESSIONS FOR PROTESTERS](#)

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 31 October 2017 14:46

Just the beginning': anti-pipeline protesters vow 'rise of resistance'

Activists opposed to Kinder Morgan's pipeline expansion to run training sessions for protesters

CBC News Posted: Oct 30, 2017 2:28 PM PT Last Updated: Oct 30, 2017 2:29 PM PT

People who were arrested at a protest against energy giant Kinder Morgan are saying what happened this weekend is just the beginning of mass civil disobedience.

On Saturday, protesters gathered both on the water and on land near Kinder Morgan's Westbridge Marine Terminal in Burnaby, B.C., to voice their opposition to the planned expansion of the Trans Mountain pipeline.

- 5 arrested for mischief following Kinder Morgan protest

More than 60 boats linked together in front of the tanker route that connects with the terminal.

Police arrested five of the protesters. They have now been charged with criminal mischief.

Karen Mahon (centre-left) and Saeed Nagyb (centre-right) are two of five people arrested on Oct. 28, 2017 and charged with mischief for their roles in a protest against Kinder Morgan. Chief Bob Chamberlin with the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs (far left) is also opposed to the pipeline. (Christer Waara/CBC)

On Monday, four of the five held a news conference in Vancouver, vowing to ramp up their efforts.

Protester Liam Fox says he believes it is his duty to stand in the way of the construction of the Kinder Morgan pipeline.

"We don't really have any other option. This pipeline has to be stopped," Fox said.

Protester Saeed Nagyb says he was also arrested Saturday, after he tied his kayak to Kinder Morgan's construction barge.

Still, he strongly stands by his opposition to the project.

"At best, I think what Kinder Morgan is doing now is presumptuous and, at worst, a slap in the face to our democratic ideals," Nagyb said.

'Rise of resistance'

"This is the beginning," said Karen Mahon with the group Stand.Earth.

Mahon was also among those arrested and charged.

Mahon says starting in a few weeks, her organization will be training people interested in "non-violent direct action."

Part of that will include legal training to make sure participants are aware of their rights.

"You are going to see a rise of resistance like this province hasn't seen before," Mahon said.

Continuing opposition

The Trans Mountain pipeline expansion has faced continued opposition in B.C. from environmentalists, First Nations, municipalities and citizens.

- [First Nations, environmental groups to voice Trans Mountain pipeline opposition at hearings](#)

The Monday news conference was held at the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs board room.

Chief Bob Chamberlin, the vice president of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, said it was an honour to sit with those who had been arrested.

"It's not a small group of radical people trying to stop any development, it's a large group of Canadian citizens that have a very deep, clear concern for the very environment that these projects are being planned for," he said.

- [Kinder Morgan protest draws huge crowd in Vancouver](#)

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Last Updated on Thursday, 09 November 2017 19:55

711 readings

Heiltsuk First Nation to sue Kirby Corporation over 2016 diesel spill

Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 31 October 2017 14:07

As reported in [Coast Mountain News](#), this month marks the one-year anniversary of the October 13 oil spill in Bella Bella, British Columbia. With the community's recovery efforts undermined by government and Kirby Corporation's refusal to take responsibility for the spill and to cooperate in its aftermath, the nation says it has no option but to turn to the courts.

"The oil spill continues to be a catastrophic injury to our food sources, culture, and economy," says Heiltsuk Tribal Council Chief Councillor, Marilyn Slett. "Thanks to Kirby Corporation and the governments of British Columbia and Canada, our community's road to recovery keeps getting longer and longer."



The Nathan E. Stewart articulated tug/ barge was southbound from Alaska when it ran aground at Edge Reef near Athlone Island on Oct. 13, 2016. (Photo Credit: Western Canada Marine Response Corporation)

Kirby Corporation and government have kept information secret about what occurred on October 13, 2016 when the Nathan E. Stewart grounded, sank and spilled oil into Gale Pass. The Heiltsuk Tribal Council made numerous separate requests for information to the polluter (Kirby Corporation) and various government agencies, including Transport Canada, the Transportation Safety Board, and the Canadian Coast Guard. Those requests were largely denied or ignored.

The Nation claims this secrecy and lack of collaboration has continued throughout the post-spill recovery.

"Recently, we learned the B.C. Ministry of Environment and Kirby have been secretly negotiating an agreement on the post-spill environmental impact

assessment since early this year,” says Chief Councillor Slett. “Since this nightmare began, the polluter and provincial and federal governments have ignored our questions and environmental concerns, our collaboration attempts, and our rights as indigenous people. We have no choice but to turn to the courts.”

The nation is preparing to take legal action, aiming to recover damages suffered by its members as well as to examine the actual state of Canada’s “world class” oil spill response system.

The case will seek compensation for loss of commercial harvesting of marine resources and infringement of Aboriginal rights relating to food, social and ceremonial importance of marine resources — factors that the current oil spill liability framework does not account for.

“When I’m not harvesting Gale Pass to feed my family, I am working there as a commercial fisherman, earning an income to support them – and I’m one of many,” says harvester and volunteer oil spill responder, Robert Johnson. “Despite our reliance on Gale Pass, the governments of British Columbia and Canada and Kirby the polluter have little interest in understanding the impacts of this oil spill on the health of my community, this environment, or our economy.”

The existing oil spill response framework excuses the polluter and government from full responsibility for oil spill impacts on Aboriginal rights otherwise protected by the Constitution.

As such, the government of British Columbia and Kirby are not required by law to do comprehensive impact assessments of the oil spill. To date, they have rejected multiple Heiltsuk requests to participate in a study of the current and long-term impacts of the oil spill on the health of the ecosystem and marine resources and the social and economic consequences associated with the loss of harvest and use of the impacted area.

Instead, Kirby Corporation and the BC Ministry of Environment are proposing a limited environmental assessment covering a minority of the area and species affected.

Heiltsuk Nation will be asking the courts to assess whether this existing regime of liability for oil spills can really be considered constitutional.

“We’re learning the hard way that indigenous people and coastal communities can’t count on polluters, Western Canada Marine Response Corporation, or the governments of B.C. and Canada in a crisis situation,” says Kelly Brown, Director of the Heiltsuk Integrated Resource Management Department. “For our sake, and the sake of our neighbours, we are consulting with a range of experts to assess damages, recovery times, and, ultimately, determine how we can prevent a similar disaster in the future.”



The Nathan E. Stewart sinking off Bella Bella, British Columbia

Analyses of the oil spill response have revealed massive safety and planning oversights by the polluter and federal and provincial government regulations. They include: a lack of spill response materials; ineffective booms and delays in employing them; a lack of safety instructions and gear for Heiltsuk first responders exposed to diesel and dangerous marine conditions; and confusion over who was in charge in the early hours of the oil spill.

“Government representatives travel the province, country, and the world preaching reconciliation and nation-to-nation relationships with first people. Meanwhile, back home, they are avoiding our calls and emails, excluding us from meetings, and ignoring our rights,” says first responder and Hereditary Chief Harvey Humchitt. “If the courts have to explain that this is not what nation-to-nation relationships and reconciliation look like, so be it.”

The Heiltsuk Tribal Council expects the results of the various impact assessments, legal analyses, and evaluations to materialize in the coming weeks.

Last Updated on Thursday, 09 November 2017 20:06

799 readings

[COP23; to implement the Paris Agreement; the Systemic Constraints](#)



must be overcome

Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 09 November 2017 03:38

Joan Russow PhD

Global Compliance Research Project



At COP 21, Ban Ki Moon, in Paris, urged states to negotiate with

a global vision not with national vested interests (a paraphrase of statement at

Cop21 press conference)

A global vision would be to address article 2 of the UNFCCC and at a

minimum the following: (i) to immediately end all subsidies for fossil fuel,

(ii) to calculate the carbon budget for each state,(iii) to divest in fossil fuels

and to reinvest and invest in renewable energy, (iv) to conserve sinks

-such as old growth forests and bogs, to strengthen conservation of biodiversity,

(v) to abandon false solutions such as nuclear, Geo-engineering and bio-fuels

which would all violate principles within the UNFCCC

(vi) to compensate for historical emissions, and (vi) to institute a fair and

just

transition for workers affected negatively by the new vision. (vii) to promote nature

based solutions and socially equitable and environmentally sound energy such as solar,

wind, tidal, and geothermal, (viii) end the exemption for military contribution to

greenhouse gas emissions, and (ix) reallocate the military budget and transfer the funds to address climate change

ARTICLE BEING REFORMATTED

COP23 must overcome the systemic constraints that undermined COP21

Systemic constraints preventing the fulfillment of the commitment to urgency

In COP21 in the preamble was the “recognition that climate change represents an urgent and potentially irreversible threat to human society and the planet” yet the existence of the following systemic constraints prevented COP21 from embodying this recognition:

1. The best is the enemy of the good- the compromisers credo

2 Baselines targets time-frames were all out of sync

3. Expedient omission; global carbon budget: historical and per capita emissions

4. A solution should never be equally bad or worse than the problem it is intended to solve

5. Some states are more equal than others

6. The lowest common denominator; the tyranny of consensus

7 The failure to reverse the exemption for the contribution to greenhouse

gas emissions

8. Reluctance to use the international court of Justice

9. Ignoring commitment for funding source

10. The shortness of institutional memory and the undermining of legal

obligations from article 2 3 and 4 of UNFCCC

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.

Almost twenty years ago in 1988, at the Changing Atmosphere

Conference in Toronto, the participants including representatives

from government, academia, NGOs 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.

The time for procrastination has long since has passed.

At COP21, Ban Ki Moon, in Paris, urged states to negotiate with a global vision not with national vested interests (COP 21 press conference)

In 2017, 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 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

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)

Unfortunately, all the way through the negotiations, governments were talking about their red lines: i.e. we will not agree to a document if x is in the text or if x is not in the text.

At COP 23, there must be no compromise to accommodate the Trump government and other major fossil fuel states; 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 to which all states are parties.

SECOND SYSTEMIC CONSTRAINT

BASELINES, TIMEFRAMES AND TARGETS , WERE ALL OUT OF SYNC

At COP21. the proposed "contributions were not legally binding commitments and they ranged in baselines from 1990 to 2010, from percentages from 20- 30 + % and targets from 2010 to 2030.

Given the urgency, now in 2017 there must be real commitments consistent with existing and emerging science such as 20% below 1990 by 2017, 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 a 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 per capita emissions and above all there was no mention of the carbon budget and fair shares of the carbon budget.

At the press conferences 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 up thus about
1000 gigatons remains**

**At the current rate of 35.7 gt per year, in 2015 there would
only remain around 860 gt**

**IPCCC – estimates the total remaining emissions from 2014/2015
to keep global average temperature
below 2°c (900/ 860gtco2) will be used in around 20 years
at current emission rates**

[carbon budget 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: it is startling that it was ignored in the agreement.**

**This evidence is significant for supporting the urgency of having legally
binding internationally determined mitigation commitments.**

**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, and entail
very significant levels of risk.**

FOURTH 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

([Geoengineering is not a solution](#))

Such as BIOFUEL ([agriculture land grabbing still a huge problem in eastern Europe/](#)

[Stop africa land grab](#)

FIFTH SYSTEMIC CONSTRAINT

SOME STATES ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHER

From COP15/16 to COP21 the systemic constraint some states are more equal than others was evident:

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 . At a press conference,

a member of the IPCC stated: “at 2 degree rise the poor, the vulnerable and

the disenfranchised would not survive, at a 1.5 degree rise, they might”

in the Copenhagen Accord, the 2 degree rise was agreed to and the developing

countries were ignored with their pleas for the temperature not to rise above

1.5 degree and some like Bolivia urged the Conference to agree to keep the

Temperature rise below 1 degree.

In COP23. 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,

**SIXTH 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 Shall make every effort to reach agreement on all**

matters by consensus. if such efforts to reach consensus have 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 a legally binding mitigation commitments for the major greenhouse gas emitters.

SEVENTH 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 had insisted on the inclusion of this Exemption at the time of the Kyoto protocol.

[Pentagons hidden impact on climate change](#)

At a 2007 Conference on Climate Change. I worked with the peace Caucus and

The anti-military Caucus on the following:

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

Ant-military caucus 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.;

(iv) 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.

Comment on military influence

At COP16,, “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, that fights more wars over access to oil, and continues 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.”

[\(militar](#)

[isms-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.

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 be

low 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, to 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 Bio-fuels which would all violate principles within the UNFCCC,

EIGHTH 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 they signed and ratified the UNFCCC (provisions of the UNFCCC have become international peremptory norms and as such are binding) and their 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 ([Composition of the Chamber for Environmental Matters](#)).

There should be a campaign to have all states respect the jurisdiction and decisions of the International Court of Justice.

NINTH SYSTEMIC CONSTRAINT.

IGNORING COMMITMENT FOR FUNDING SOURCE

Forty years ago in 1976, in Habitat I 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 will be overcome,, hopefully, COP23 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

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

A global vision would be to address article 2 of the UNFCCC and at a minimum the following: (i) to immediately end all subsidies for fossil fuel, (ii) to calculate the carbon budget for each state,(iii) to divest in fossil fuels and to reinvest and invest in renewable energy, (iv) to conserve sinks -such as old growth forests and bogs, to strengthen conservation of biodiversity, (v) to abandon false solutions such as nuclear, geo-engineering and biofuels

which would all violate principles within the UNFCCC

(vi) to compensate for historical emissions, and (vi) to institute a fair and just transition for workers affected negatively by the new vision. and (vii)

to promote nature based solutions and socially equitable and environmentally sound such as solar, wind, tidal, and geothermal.



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

COP21 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 UNFCCC

THE FOLLOWING IS EXCERPTS FROM THE UNFCCC FOR BACKGROUND

UNFCCC Objective article 2

COP23 needs to advocate stronger actions than were proposed in the UNFCCC was in 1992 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 countries will grow to meet their social and development needs,

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

ARTICLE 2 OF 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.

In COP21 there was the following:

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;

At 1 degree rise in temperature, however, there is already destabilization 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 (for background info)

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 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

(ii) 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.

Article 4 2. 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

sub-paragraph;

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

(b) sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases not controlled by the

(c) Montreal Protocol for the period referred to in subparagraph (a), with the aim

(d) of returning individually or jointly to their 1990 levels these anthropogenic

(e) 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 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

this includes policies and measures adopted by regional economic integration organizations. on methodologies

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, review

the adequacy of subparagraphs

(a) and (b) above. such review shall be carried out in the light of the best

(b) 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 first session, shall also take decisions regarding criteria for joint

implementation as indicated in paragraph (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

(iii) identify and periodically review its own policies and practices which

(iv) encourage activities that lead to greater levels of anthropogenic

(v) emissions of greenhouse gases not controlled by the Montreal

(vi) Protocol than would otherwise occur;

UNFCCC 4.2(f) the conference of the parties shall review, not later than 3

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 1 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

(c) above. the depositary shall inform the other signatories and parties of

(d) any such notification.

UNCED 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 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.

developed to achieve the objective of the convention; and

- (iii) identify and periodically review its own policies and practices which**
- (iv) encourage activities that lead to greater levels of anthropogenic**
- (v) emissions of greenhouse gases not controlled by the Montreal**
- (vi) Protocol than would otherwise occur;**

UNFCCC 4.2(f) the conference of the parties shall review, not later than 3 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;

At COP 21, Ban Ki Moon, in Paris, urged states to negotiate with

a global vision not with national vested interests (a paraphrase of statement at

Cop21 press conference)

A global vision would be to address article 2 of the UNFCCC and at a

minimum the following: (i) to immediately end all subsidies for fossil fuel,

(ii) to calculate the carbon budget for each state,(iii) to divest in fossil fuels

and to reinvest and invest in renewable energy, (iv) to conserve sinks

-such as old growth forests and bogs, to strengthen conservation of biodiversity,

(v) to abandon false solutions such as nuclear, geo-engineering and biofuels

which would all violate principles within the UNFCCC

(vi) to compensate for historical emissions, and (vi) to institute a fair and just

transition for workers affected negatively by the new vision. and (vii) to promote nature

based solutions and socially equitable and environmentally sound such as solar,

wind, tidal, and geothermal.

Last Updated on Friday, 10 November 2017 18:26

438 readings

[understanding civil resistance and songs of resistance](#)

Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 31 October 2017 12:33

Wednesday, Nov. 22 @ 7:30 pm

Victoria Event Centre, 1415 Broad Street

[Join & Share on Facebook](#)

You're invited to Songs of Resistance, a night of music and solidarity, featuring radical troubadour David Rovics with a special appearance by Swedish artist Elona Planman.

Tickets available in advance for \$15 at: [songs of resistance David Rovics in concert tickets](#) or \$20 at the door. No one turned away. Don't miss the discussion prior to the concert, starting at 6:30 pm, on the topic "Understanding Civil Resistance".

Please help spread the word & see you on November 22nd!!

Last Updated on Saturday, 11 November 2017 19:42

1035 readings

[Site C: Canada's Interpretation of Free prior Informed Consent is out of Sync with the International Interpretation](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 26 September 2017 09:31

by Joan Russow PhD

Global Compliance Research Project



INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE PRINCIPLE OF OBTAINING
FREE PRIOR INFORMED CONSENT

As affirmed in International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Canada has an affirmative obligation to “promote the realization of the right of self-determination, and ... respect that right, in conformity with the provisions of the Charter of

the United Nations.” UN treaty bodies and other diverse entities require or support the standard of Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC). These include: UN General Assembly and specialized agencies, as well as regional human rights bodies.

In 2011, the International Finance Corporation announced: “For projects with potential significant adverse impacts on indigenous peoples, IFC has adopted the principle of ‘Free, Prior, and Informed Consent’ informed by the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.”

The UN Development Programme (UNDP) “will not participate in a Project that violates the human rights of indigenous peoples as affirmed by Applicable Law and the United Nations Declaration”. UNDP added: “FPIC will be ensured on any matters that may affect the rights and interests, lands,

resources, territories (whether titled or untitled to the people in question) and traditional livelihoods of the indigenous peoples concerned.”

In March 2016, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recommended that Canada “fully recognize the right to free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples in its laws and policies and apply it in practice.” In particular, the Committee added that: ... the State party establish

effective mechanisms that enable meaningful participation of indigenous peoples in decision-making in relation to development projects being carried out on, or near, their lands or territories ... [and] that the State party effectively engage indigenous peoples in the formulation of legislation that affects them.

In July 2015, the UN Human Rights Committee urged Canada to “consult indigenous people ... 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."

FPIC is also highlighted in The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of

Indigenous Peoples: A Manual for National Human Rights Institutions: “indigenous peoples have the right to determine their own economic, social and cultural development and to manage, for their own benefit, their own natural resources. The duties to consult with indigenous peoples and to obtain their free, prior and informed consent are crucial elements of the right to self-determination.”

In addition to the right of self-determination, the UN Declaration includes a number of provisions that refer to FPIC. No specific provision should be interpreted in isolation, but rather in the context of the whole Declaration and other international human rights law. For example, such approach would apply to

article 32(2): States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with

the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources. In the Handbook for Parliamentarians on the UN Declaration, 51 the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) emphasizes the importance of Indigenous peoples’ “consent”:

When parliamentarians consider draft legislation on matters that directly or indirectly affect indigenous peoples, it is important for them to understand and carry out their duty to obtain indigenous peoples’ consent, to ensure that such laws not only reflect the views of the non-indigenous communities concerned, but can also be implemented without detrimentally affecting the rights of indigenous communities.

I believe that Ms. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, the current UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples would concur with the necessity to obtain free, prior and informed consent:

I also regret that there are still conflicting interpretations among key actors about how indigenous rights should be applied in specific situations, especially when competing rights and interests are at stake. I continue to observe that discrepancies in interpretation exist especially in relation to rights to lands

and resources and the application of the duty of States to consult with and seek the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples before the adoption of measures that affect them. As part of my mandate to promote good practices in this regard, I have provided technical advice through dialogue

with Governments on issues such as consultation and consent, indigenous jurisdiction and access to justice for indigenous peoples, particularly indigenous women.

IN NO WAY COULD BC HYDRO CLAIM THAT THEY HAVE OBTAINED FREE PRIOR INFORMED CONSENT FROM TREATY 8 TO PROCEED WITH THE SITE C DAM.

THE UN RAPPOORTEUR WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY CONCUR ESPECIALLY, IF THE UN RAPPOORTEUR WERE TO BE INVITED TO VISIT THE TREATY 8 TERRITORY AND EXAMINE THE SITE C PROPOSAL

BACKGROUND TO RELEVANT SECTION IN THE LEGALLY BINDING INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS AND TO THE HISTORY OF ADOPTION OF UNDRIP IN CANADA AND TRC

Canada will not normally become a party to an international agreement which requires implementing legislation until the necessary legislation has been enacted [cite references, including 1982 document circulated by External Affairs "Canadian Reply to Questionnaire on Parliaments and the Treaty-making power"]

The full context of this statement comes from the "Canadian Reply to Questionnaire on Parliaments and the Treaty-making Power". It is an External Affairs Department communiqué which was put together in 1982 to assist the External Affairs Officers in explaining the division of powers and constitutional conventions in Canada in relation to International obligations:

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.

In concluding this section which was referred to by John Hunter, Green, makes a very significant remark, which suggests that Canada is bound by the treaty prior to the enactment into national law:

The fact that a treaty has been signed and ratified but not yet enacted into national law does not preclude the international liability of the signatory under the treaty.

While the previous Conservative government proclaimed- “consent does not really mean consent, and the Federal and former provincial Liberals through their actions appear to perpetuate this notion.

Article 31, however, in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties states:

General rule 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 language “consent” means consent.

HISTORY OF THE ADOPTION OF RELEVANT DOCUMENTS TO THE FREE PRIOR AND INFORMED CONSENT

*I was in the United Nations in New York, in 2007 when Canada was shamed for refusing to adopt the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Also at that time, **Grand Chief Edward John**, a Representative to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, had an opportunity*

to speak forcefully reprimanding Canada’s refusal,

In April 2009, the Australian Government, reversing its previous refusal, adopted the declaration in Parliament. At that point, given that almost all states from all continents representing the full range of legal systems had adopted the Declaration, UNDRIP began to embody peremptory norms. Peremptory norms

*(often cited as *jus cogens*) are said to possess a universal character in that no state may derogate from them, despite the will of the state to do so.*

Not only has the UNDRIP become an international norm, it has been finally adopted in Canada and in British Columbia

After years of reluctance, by the Conservative government, to adopt the Declaration, on May 10, 2016 the Federal Liberal government adopted the UNDRIP.

Now on September 7 2017, Premier **John Horgan, Grand Chief Edward John, and other officials opened the B.C. Cabinet and First Nations Leaders' Gathering in Vancouver with the major announcement.**

The B.C. government will be governing the province according to principles embodied in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

During the 2015 election, Trudeau proclaimed that he would abide by the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

And on September 7 2017, Premier Horgan also affirmed that the provincial government will implement the 94 Calls to Action in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report.

In the UNDRIP is Article 19 which 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.**

As well 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

Thus, Federal and BC governments both incurred the obligation to abide by the principle of free prior informed consent.

Given the years of First Nation's being deprived of their own means of subsistence through resource extraction, and given years of inadequate economic support, from Federal and Provincial governments, for the satisfaction of First Nations basic needs; First Nations are vulnerable to corporate attempts to buy

their consent for projects that are not in their long term health and financial interests. Consent that arises through playing on First Nations vulnerabilities does not fulfill the requirements of free prior informed consent.

At a lecture given, at the University of Victoria, by Robert Morales, a member of Cowichan Tribes specializing in the areas of First Nations, compared UNDRIP to the legally binding international Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ratified by Canada in 1976

For example,

Article 1 of the legally binding International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states the following:

In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence.

In the UNDRIP. Under Article 20;

Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and develop their political, economic and social systems or institutions, to be secure in the enjoyment of their own means of subsistence and development, and to engage freely in all their traditional and other economic activities.

As well, Article 43

The rights recognized herein constitute the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world

While the previous Conservative government proclaimed: "consent does not

really mean consent, and the Federal and former provincial Liberal governments, through their actions appear to perpetuate this notion.

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General rule of interpretation:

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In ordinary language “consent” means consent.

Bc hydro has not obtained the free prior and informed consent from Treaty 8.

The Site C Dam must be cancelled.

Even the UN Panel called for a halt

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/site-c-un-panel-august-2017-1.4266109>

The Canadian Press Posted: Aug 28, 2017 6:04 PM PT Last Updated: Aug 28, 2017 6:04 PM PT



Indigenous protesters camped out near the Site C dam project in northern B.C for several A United Nations panel says the construction of British Columbia's \$8.8-billion Site C dam should be halted until there is a full review of how it would affect Indigenous land.

The recommendation is contained in a report by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which has completed its periodic review of how Canada complies with the world body's treaty to end racial discrimination.

The recommendation comes three weeks after British Columbia's NDP government requested a review of what had been a signature megaproject for former premier Christy Clark.

- [B.C. asks utilities commission to review \\$8.8-billion Site C dam megaproject](#)
- [First Nations land occupation aims to stop Site C](#)

The government asked the B.C. Utilities Commission to determine the economic viability of the massive hydroelectric dam on the Peace River and issue a final report by Nov. 1.

Site C has become controversial after the previous provincial Liberal government's clean-energy laws allowed some projects to bypass a review by the regulatory agency.



The location of the Site C dam in northeastern B.C., currently under construction. (The Point of No Return/Amnesty International)

UN calls for 'concrete action plan'

The UN panel says a full review should be conducted in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples to "identify alternatives to irreversible destruction of Indigenous lands."

The committee heard testimony from a variety of groups on a wide range of topics related to racism and discrimination, but the recommendations on Indigenous issues are especially timely.

They come as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has announced a cabinet shuffle aimed at ultimately resetting how his government will handle Indigenous affairs, including the creation of two new ministries.

The UN body calls on the federal Liberals to "develop a concrete action plan" to implement the 94 recommendations of the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#).

- [Truth and Reconciliation offers 94 'calls to action'](#)
- [Up to society' to make reconciliation reality: Senator Murray Sinclair](#)

The committee also says it is "deeply concerned" about the land rights of Indigenous Peoples and focuses on Site C, saying "environmentally destructive decisions for resource development" are taking place.

It says construction began "despite vigorous opposition of Indigenous Peoples affected by this project, which will result in irreversible damage due to flooding of their lands, leading to elimination of plant medicines, wildlife, sacred lands

and gravesites."

B.C. Energy Minister Michelle Mungall said recently it was wrong for the previous Liberal government to refuse "to allow our independent energy watchdog to examine the project to determine if it was in the public interest."months in 2015 and 2016. (Yvonne Tupper)

Last Updated on Wednesday, 15 November 2017 18:58

237 readings

Pope Francis, in change from predecessors, condemns nuclear arsenals for deterrence

Peace News

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 12 November 2017 06:59

By Philip Pullella, Reuters, Nov 10 2017

<http://tinyurl.com/yb9vfw23>

VATICAN CITY (Reuters) - Pope Francis appeared to harden the Catholic Church's teaching against nuclear weapons on Friday, saying countries should not stockpile them even for the purpose of deterrence.

His remarks, at the start of a disarmament conference that brought 11 Nobel Peace Prize winners to the Vatican, appeared to go further than previous popes. They have said that while nuclear weapons should never be used, holding arsenals solely to deter other countries from

using them could be morally acceptable as a step toward achieving a nuclear-free world.

Addressing the group in the 16th century frescoed Clementine Hall of the Vatican's Apostolic Palace, Francis spoke of "the catastrophic humanitarian and environmental effects of any employment of nuclear

devices”.

He added: “If we also take into account the risk of an accidental detonation as a result of error of any kind, the threat of their use, as well as their very possession, is to be firmly condemned.”

As tensions between the United States and North Korea have increased, the pope has often warned that a nuclear conflict would destroy a good part of humanity and called for a third country to mediate the dispute.

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He added: “If we also take into account the risk of an accidental detonation as a result of error of any kind, the threat of their use, as well as their very possession, is to be firmly condemned.”

As tensions between the United States and North Korea have increased, the pope has often warned that a nuclear conflict would destroy a good part of humanity and called for a third country to mediate the dispute.

He also said international laws against proliferation of nuclear weapons had not kept new states from acquiring them. Money used to develop or modernize weapons should instead be spent on helping the poor and

protecting the environment.

Douglas Roche, Canada's former Ambassador for Disarmament and a former senator, told the conference the pope's remarks against possession of nuclear weapons were "historic" and asked national conferences of Catholic bishops to work to make it known.

Another participant suggested the pope should write an encyclical letter addressed to all Catholics on the moral imperative to ban nuclear weapons.

Among those who met the pope were Beatrice Fihn, executive director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and Mohamed El Baradei, director general emeritus of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Fihn, whose group won the Nobel this year, told Reuters she asked the pope to lead all 1.2 billion Catholics around the world in prayer for an end to the threat of nuclear weapons on Sunday, December 10, when her group is due to collect the prize.

"Tensions are really high and the risks for nuclear weapons' use is higher than at the height of the Cold War, the Cuban missile crisis. I think that's really serious and we need to urgently do something about this," she said.

El Baradei, who won the peace prize in 2015, was asked how he would respond to U.S. President Donald Trump's threat to use unprecedented "fire and fury" against North Korea if it threatened the United States.

"I go to pray," he said.

320 readings

**Urgent! Request from Musgamagw
Dzawada'enuxw
Justice News**



Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 12 November 2017 10:49

Forwarded at the request of the Gathering Our Voices Society / Musgamagw Dzawada'enuxw Warriors

It's Time! Please invite your kayaking friends.

The brave Musgamagw Dzawada'enuxw Cleansing Our Waters warriors occupying Marine Harvest's Midsummer Island farm have requested that all willing and able kayakers make their way with boats to Alert Bay as swiftly as possible to standby and assist in the prevention of the restocking of the farm with young Atlantic Salmon. Marine Harvest will attempt to begin restocking as early as Monday. The first main action is most likely to take place Tuesday morning.

A land-based kayak campsite has been set up in close proximity to the farm for camping. Support boats will be standing by to shuttle kayaks and kayakers from Alert Bay to Midsummer Island throughout the weekend and the coming week. Please be self-sufficient in terms of food, shelter, and gear, with the awareness that liveaboard support vessels will be close at hand to assist. Kayaking in this area/season is NOT suitable for beginner kayakers. Support kayakers are expected to have some experience paddling in winter weather and in tidal currents. This said, the distance between the fish farm and the kayak campsite is only a few hundred metres in sheltered waters, and no exposed crossings need to be made to assist with the occupation now that we have adequate support boats and shuttles.

Cell service is available and phone calls can be made from the site.

Please bring adequate safety gear and supplies including:

Recommended:

- Cold water Immersion gear (wetsuit / drysuit)
- VHF

Mandatory:

- PFD
- lights
- lots of warm clothing
- buoyant heaving line

If you're a descendant of settlers (if you aren't an indigenous person) please show your understanding of your own privilege and how the theft of indigenous peoples' lands and the ongoing assault on their land and communities contributes to this privilege, and make reference to your responsibilities today as a person who possesses wealth and privilege gained by the violence of the residential schools and the ongoing colonization process. Please show your understanding of what it means to be an ally to Indigenous people, or be willing to learn about it before you come join the campaign. Please come expecting to learn from the folks you are supporting. Folks camped out on these farms have a lot to deal with already, and we want to make sure that all supporters are caring and thoughtful in

how they carry themselves.

Please contact [Gathering Allies Society on Facebook](#) or at gatheringallies@riseup.net with questions or to confirm participation. Please know that this is a time-sensitive action and that organizers are doing all they can to respond to supporters in a timely manner. Please do your best to self-organize for rides to Alert Bay and other logistics. We will take care of things once you are here.

Last Updated on Sunday, 12 November 2017 10:53

385 readings

The heat is on over Site C, says Horgan, as consultations begin

Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 12 November 2017 12:18

The fate of the Site C hydroelectric dam will be the focus of intense scrutiny this week as cabinet ministers travel north for consultations.



The Canadian Press

Published on: November 12, 2017 | Last Updated: November 12, 2017 10:41 AM PST <http://vancouver.sun.com/news/local-news/the-heat-is-on-over-site-c-says-horgan-as-consultations-begin>

VICTORIA — The fate of the largest public project in British Columbia's history, the Site C hydroelectric dam, will be the focus of intense scrutiny this week as provincial cabinet ministers travel north for last-minute consultations.

The New Democrats promised to decide Site C's fate by the end of the year after a review by the B.C. Utilities Commission, the province's independent energy regulator, concluded the dam is over budget and behind schedule.

Construction work on the \$8.3-billion project began near Fort St. John in the northeastern part of the province more than two years ago.

The heat is on, said Premier John Horgan, who is sending his ministers of Indigenous relations and energy to the region for consultations with First Nations and community representatives this week.

Horgan said he will continue to crunch numbers and try to decide what's best for taxpayers.

“This is not an easy choice. This is not an easy decision,” he said. “We’re going to be grappling with it for the next couple of weeks. I’m not underestimating the challenge ahead of me.”

Deciding the project’s future is the first major test of the minority New Democrats, who have said it will impact the entire province. Site C has been marked by environmental, economic, technological and Indigenous rights concerns that have become the front lines of political battles in the province.

[Vaughn Palmer: Hydro president admits cracks in Site C costs, contracts Site C: Read here Deloitte’s unredacted bombshell report to the B.C. Utilities Commission](#)

I, now as the leader of the government, have to look at what the consequences are of what our decision will be going forward,” Horgan said.

Environmental studies expert Karen Bakker said the utilities commission’s recent report shows the project’s cost could grow to \$12 billion, all to provide energy that isn’t required.

“It’s a very expensive project,” said Bakker, who led a team at the University of British Columbia that produced five reports on Site C. “That’s the conundrum the province is facing. This could be a huge money sink for the province.”

The utilities commission was asked by the NDP government to confirm whether Crown-owned BC Hydro is on target to complete construction of Site C on budget and by 2024. It was also asked to provide advice on three possible outcomes: proceeding with the project, suspending construction until 2024 or terminating it.

The commission concluded suspending and restarting the project in 2024 is the least attractive option, and would add at least \$3.6 billion to the price tag.

The review didn’t make a recommendation on whether the province should proceed with or cancel the dam, but said terminating Site C would cost \$1.8 billion while completing it could cost more than \$10 billion.

The commission also said there are viable alternative energy sources, including wind, geothermal and industrial curtailment, that could provide similar benefits with an equal or lower cost.

“The commission’s report is very clear that there are high economic risks,” Bakker said.

She said the project also faces potential lawsuits from Indigenous groups.

But Liberal Mike Bernier, who represents the Dawson Creek area near the dam, said killing Site C would result in the province losing \$4 billion, with nothing to show for its investment.

He said more than 2,000 people are currently working on the dam and their jobs are now under threat.

“Site C is a generational opportunity to help the province grow, give us cheap renewable power and have opportunities for my kids and everybody else’s kids,” Bernier said. “To me that’s why this project is something I’m fighting for because I see the opportunities of building our province.”

He said six of eight Indigenous groups near the dam site have signed benefits agreements with B.C. Hydro.

Indigenous Relations Minister Scott Fraser said he will speak with supporters and opponents of Site C when he visits northeastern B.C. this week.

“We will be meeting with all of the nations regardless of their take on the project or their involvement in any benefits agreements or their opposition,” he said. “It’s to listen because we don’t know what we are going to do.”

Chief Roland Willson of the West Moberly First Nation, which is opposed to the dam, had a message for the government during a recent protest at the legislature. "It's not this government that approved this project, but it is this government that has the ability to stop this thing," he said.

Vaughn Palmer: Hydro president admits cracks in Site C costs, contracts

Site C: Read here Deloitte's unredacted bombshell report to the B.C. Utilities Commission

COMMENT

Andy Sinats ·

Victoria, British Columbia

Revelstoke Dam needs a sixth turbine now not 2024. It will add half the capacity of Site C with zero emissions, and employ the installers. A floating solar array on the reservoir runs more efficiently due to cooling and decreases evaporation, plus the transmission lines are already in place. Floating solar can be retro-fitted on all reservoirs behind dams, with no loss of farmland. The climate is changing; it makes no sense to destroy the micro-climate of the Peace River Valley as a way of fixing climate problems. We need new agriculture in the North to take advantage of longer growing season. A federal Agriculture Research Station to research on

new crops is needed to repurpose the disruptions along the Peace River now. Fort St. John has similar climate and insolation as Dauphin, Manitoba where most of Candian hemp is grown, an excellent value-added crop for the North, as good a source of protein and Omega 3/6 as fish, and it is Vegan.

Last Updated on Sunday, 12 November 2017 12:25

265 readings

Norway sued over Arctic oil exploration plans

Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 14 November 2017 08:39

The case, led by Greenpeace, claims Norwegian government has violated constitutional right to a healthy environment and contravenes Paris agreement

By the Guardian Environment

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/nov/14/norway-sued-over-arctic-oil-exploration-plans>



Greenpeace activists hold banners during a protest next to Statoil's Songa Enabler oil rig in the Barents sea, Norway, July 2017. Photograph: Will Rose/Greenpeace/Reuters

The Norwegian government is being sued by climate activists over a decision to open up areas of the Arctic Ocean for oil exploration, a move they say endangers the lives of existing and future generations.

The plaintiffs, led by environmental organisations Greenpeace and Youth and Nature, will on Tuesday claim that the Norwegian government **has violated a constitutional environmental law** which guarantees citizens' rights to a healthy environment.

The law, known as Section 112, states: "Everyone has the right to an environment that safeguards their health and to nature where production ability and diversity are preserved. Natural resources must be managed from a long-term and versatile consideration which also upholds this right for future generations."

"We have for years tried to stop the **expansion of Norway's oil extraction**, from both local and global considerations," said Truls Gulowsen, head of Greenpeace Norway. "As far as granting concessions for the Arctic is concerned, not only have our objections been ignored and overrun, but the state has also paid no heed to the guidelines from their own appointed advisers,

such as the polar institute and the environment agency, who both recommended

that the majority of concessions in this area be turned down.”

In fighting the case, **Greenpeace** is relying on the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which states that to meet the goals set out in the 2015 Paris accord, oil production must be wound down, not escalated. The state rejects this argument, claiming that all their preliminary assessments of the potential environmental impact have been

conducted satisfactorily.

But according to supreme court attorney Pål W Lorentzen, who heads environmental group Norsk Klimastiftelsen, “the government has already violated Section 112 by granting concessions which will make it impossible for the country to meet **the targets agreed upon in the Paris accord**. For every intervention [in terms of oil exploration], thorough pre-assessments

and evaluations must be carried out and made public, and the state has failed on both accounts,” he said.

Advertisement

The state is expected to focus on the interpretation of the law, stating in its closing submission that “Section 112 has not been formulated to provide individual rights in the traditional sense. Instead, the first and second paragraphs express societal aims with regard to environment, conservation of nature and management of natural resources ... **Norway** does not have a

legal responsibility for emissions from its oil and gas exports.”

Norway’s attorney-general, Fredrik Sejersted, told the Guardian: “The state considers this case important in the sense of it concerning important societal issues and the interpretation of an important constitutional law paragraph

“At the same time, we don’t regard it as particularly challenging in legal terms, as in our opinion it is pretty clear that the Norwegian authorities have fulfilled all their obligations to the constitution, and that Norway has complied with and will continue to comply with all their international environmental and climate obligations.”

The case is brought not only on the grounds of harm inflicted on the local environment, but on the contribution any oil extraction will make to global warming. Norway is already the seventh largest CO2 emission exporter in the world, **according to a recent report**.

Gulowsen believes Greenpeace’s case is strong. “We were motivated by climate litigation in countries such as the Netherlands, the US, Switzerland and New Zealand that has shown that when the gulf between science and political decisions becomes too wide, the courts play an increasingly important part in taking charge of the long-term perspectives of societal development,

" he said

"In times when politicians are wavering and non-committal, it demands courage from the courts to overrule political decisions in order to safeguard our future."

"Our present government seems to be obsessed with giving the oil industry free pickings from the top shelf, conveniently ignoring any connection between the 2015 Paris accord which the authorities were so proud of being one of the first signees to, and the actual oil policy that is being executed," said Gulowsen.

The case is being heard at Oslo district court, and is scheduled to last two weeks

Last Updated on Tuesday, 14 November 2017 08:51

244 readings

In Pitch-Perfect Retort, New Zealand PM Told Trump: 'No One Marched When I Was Elected'

Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 17 November 2017 17:30

Published on

Friday, November 17, 2017

by

Common Dreams



The new leader was among the New Zealanders who marched against Trump in January—and she didn't back down when the two recently met for the first time by

Julia Conley, staff writer

25 Comments



U.S. President Donald Trump and New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern during a group photo last week with fellow APEC leaders in Da Nang, Vietnam. (Photo: EPA)

New Zealand's progressive new Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern strongly rejected President Donald Trump's assessment of her recent rise to power, according to her **account** of their first in-person meeting at the East Asia Summit last week.

After Trump said Ardern's win had "upset" many New Zealanders, the Labor Party leader remarked that "nobody marched" in response to her victory, as millions did all over the globe when Trump was inaugurated in January.

Ardern **offered** a full account of her meeting with Trump to New Zealand's Newsroom:

I was waiting to walk out to be introduced at the East Asia Summit gala dinner, where we all paraded and while we were waiting, Trump in jest patted the person next to him on the shoulder, pointed at me and said, 'This lady caused a lot of upset in her country,' talking about the election.

I said, 'Well, you know, only maybe 40 per cent,' then he said it again and I

said, 'You know,' laughing, 'no one marched when I was elected.'

At 37, Ardern became New Zealand's second-youngest and third female prime minister in October, just three months after becoming the leader of the center-left party, when the head of the New Zealand First party announced he would support Ardern in a coalition government.

A month earlier, New Zealand's election had **resulted** in a hung parliament, with the left-leaning contingent winning 54 seats and the center-right National Party gaining 56—falling short of the 61 needed for a parliamentary majority.

Many were surprised when the anti-immigration New Zealand First party, which won nine seats, threw its support behind Ardern's leadership, giving her enough seats to become prime minister.

During her election campaign earlier this year, Ardern focused largely on childhood poverty, environmental protection, and affordable housing.

Ardern has **advocated** for a drop in immigration to New Zealand by 20,000 to 30,000 per year, citing insufficient infrastructure and housing for a large influx of new arrivals. Currently, the country accepts about 70,000 annually. However, Ardern also **plans** to double the country's refugee quotas and offered to resettle 150 refugees currently in detention centers on Australia's

Manus Island, on humanitarian grounds.

The new prime minister was one of thousands of New Zealanders who participated in the Women's March the day after Trump's inauguration.

Last Updated on Friday, 17 November 2017 17:35

283 readings

Burns Bog Conservation Society Petitions



Federal Government

Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 21 November 2017 14:53

PETITION TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED

We, the undersigned citizens of Canada, draw the attention of the House to the following:

Whereas, there are species at risk on the lands owned by MK Delta Lands Group (7007 Highway 91, 7969 Highway 91 Connector, 7949 104 Street, 10770 72nd Avenue, et al, Delta, British Columbia) and Pineland Peat (5224-88 Street,

Delta, British Columbia).

Whereas, these species at risk include: the Red-listed Dim Skipper Butterfly, the Red-listed Pacific Water Shrew, Red-listed Trowbridge's Shrew, the Red-listed Sandhill crane and Red-listed Southern Red-backed vole. Red-listed Black-Crowned Night Heron, the Red-listed Olympic shrew, the Blue-listed Autumn Meadowhawk, the Blue-listed Northern Red-legged frog, Blue-listed

Barn Owl, Blue-listed Western Screech Owl, Blue-listed Green Heron and the Blue-listed Black Swift are either resident or migrate to these areas annually.

Whereas, these lands are in an unprotected area of the Burns Bog peatland in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. Burns Bog is the largest raised peatland on the west coast of North America. It is at the mouth of the Fraser River.

Whereas, the location of Pineland Peat is next to the Burns Bog Conservation Area. This development poses risks to the conservation area through impacts on its water table, Red-listed and Blue-listed wildlife, and its ability to regenerate itself successfully. Regenerated peatlands are known to become 90% as efficient in storing carbon as when they were undisturbed.

Peatlands store ten times more carbon than rainforests. Protecting them is essential in reducing climate change, meeting Canada's Climate Action goals and saving endangered wildlife.

Whereas, MK Delta's project will affect fish and fish habitat of Coastal Cutthroat trout, Coho salmon fry and Chum fry. Burns Bog is at the mouth of the Fraser River. It is the largest salmon-bearing river in the world.

Whereas, the House of Commons has set the precedent by acting to protect species at risk in Quebec on private land by invoking the Species At Risk Act.

Therefore, your petitioners call upon the House of Commons, to enact the Species At Risk Act on these unprotected Burns Bog lands.

<p>Signatures</p> <p>(Sign your Own Name, Do Not print)</p>	<p>Addresses</p> <p>(Full home address, or City and province, or province and postal code)</p>
-------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Last Updated on Tuesday, 21 November 2017 14:58

158 readings

Media Erase NATO Role in Bringing Slave Markets to Libya



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 30 November 2017 18:24

NOVEMBER 28, 2017

Media Erase NATO Role in Bringing Slave Markets to Libya

BY BEN NORTON FAIR.ORG

[HTTP://FAIR.ORG/HOME/MEDIA-NATO-REGIME-CHANGE-WAR-LIBYA-SLAVE-MARKETS/](http://FAIR.ORG/HOME/MEDIA-NATO-REGIME-CHANGE-WAR-LIBYA-SLAVE-MARKETS/)



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Twenty-first century slave markets. Human beings sold for a few hundred dollars. Massive protests throughout the world.

The American and British media have awakened to the grim reality in Libya, where African refugees are for sale in open-air slave markets. Yet a crucial detail in this scandal has been downplayed or even ignored in many corporate media reports: the role of the North Atlantic

Treaty Organization in bringing slavery to the North African nation.

In March 2011, NATO launched a war in Libya expressly aimed at toppling the government of longtime leader Muammar Qadhafi. The US and its allies flew some [26,000 sorties](#) over Libya and launched hundreds of cruise missiles, destroying the government's ability to resist rebel forces.

US President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton,

along with their European counterparts, insisted the military intervention was being carried out for humanitarian reasons. But political scientist Micah Zenko (**Foreign Policy**, 3/22/16) used NATO's own materials to

show how "the Libyan intervention was about regime change from the very start."

NATO supported an array of rebel groups fighting on the ground in Libya, many of which were dominated by Islamist extremists and harbored violently racist views. Militants in the NATO-backed rebel stronghold of Misrata even [referred](#) to themselves in 2011 as "the brigade for

purging slaves, black skin"—an eerie foreshadowing of the horrors that were to come.

The war ended in October 2011. US and European aircraft attacked Qadhafi's convoy, and he was brutally murdered by extremist rebels—sodomized with a bayonet. Secretary Clinton, who played a [decisive role](#) in the war, declared live on **CBS News** (10/20/11), "We came, we saw,

he died!" The Libyan government dissolved soon after.

In the six years since, Libya has been roiled by chaos and bloodshed. Multiple would-be governments are competing for control of the oil-rich country, and in some areas there is still no functioning central authority. Many thousands of people have died, although the true numbers

are impossible to verify. Millions of Libyans have been displaced—a staggering number, nearly one-third of the population, had [fled](#) to neighboring Tunisia by 2014.

Corporate media, however, have largely forgotten about the key role NATO played in destroying Libya's government, destabilizing the

country and empowering human traffickers.

Moreover, even the few news reports that do acknowledge NATO's complicity in the chaos in Libya do not go a step further and detail the well-documented, violent racism of the NATO-backed Libyan rebels who ushered in slavery after ethnically cleansing and committing brutal

crimes against black Libyans.

O NATO, Where Art Thou? (Youtube Link not available)

Exclusive report

People for sale

Where lives are auctioned for \$400



CNN (11/14/17) does not bring up the US role in allowing people to be sold.

CNN (11/14/17) published an explosive story in mid-November that offered a firsthand look at the slave trade in Libya. The media network obtained terrifying video that shows young African refugees being auctioned, "big strong boys for farm work," sold for as little as \$400.

The flashy CNN multimedia report included bonuses galore: two videos, two animated gifs, two photos and a chart. But something was missing: The 1,000-word story made no mention of NATO, or the 2011 war that destroyed Libya's government, or Muammar Qadhafi, or any kind

of historical and political context whatsoever.

Despite these huge flaws, the **CNN** report was widely celebrated, and made an impact in a corporate media apparatus that otherwise cares little about North Africa. A flurry of media reports followed. These stories overwhelmingly spoke of slavery in Libya as an apolitical and

timeless human rights issue, not as a political problem rooted in very recent history.

In subsequent stories, when Libyan and United Nations officials announced they would launch an investigation into the slave auctions, **CNN** (11/17/17, 11/20/17) again failed to mention the 2011 war, let alone NATO's role in it.

One **CNN** report (11/21/17) on a UN Security Council meeting noted, "Ambassadors from Senegal to Sweden also blamed trafficking's root causes: unstable countries, poverty, profits from slave trading and lack of legal enforcement." But it failed to explain why Libya is unstable.

Another 1,200-word **CNN** follow-up article (11/23/17) was just as obfuscatory. It was only in the 35th paragraph of this 36-graf story that a Human Rights Watch researcher noted, "Libyan interim authorities have been dragging their feet on virtually all investigations they

supposedly started, yet never concluded, since the 2011 uprising." NATO's leadership in this 2011 uprising was, however, ignored.

An **Agence France-Presse** news wire that was published by **Voice of America** (11/17/17) and other websites similarly failed to provide any historical context for the political situation in Libya. "Testimony collected by **AFP** in recent years has revealed a litany of rights abuses at

the hands of gang leaders, human traffickers and the Libyan security forces," the article said, but it did not recount anything that happened

before 2017.

AFRICA

Sale of Migrants as Slaves in Libya Causes Outrage in Africa and Paris

By NOUR YOUSSEF NOV. 19, 2017



A **New York Times** story ([11/19/17](#)) was exceptional in connecting the rise in Libyan slavery to Muammar Qadhafi's overthrow—yet it failed to mention the US's leading role in that overthrow.

Reports by the **BBC** ([11/18/17](#)), the **New York Times** ([11/20/17](#)), **Deutsche Welle** (reprinted by **USA Today**, [11/23/17](#)) and the **Associated Press** (reprinted by the **Washington Post**, [11/23/17](#)) also failed to mention the 2011 war, let alone NATO's role in it.

Another **New York Times** story ([11/19/17](#)) did provide a bit of context:

Since the Arab Spring uprising of 2011 ended the brutal

rule of Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi, Libya's coast has become a hub for human trafficking and smuggling. That has fueled the illegal migration crisis that Europe has been scrambling to contain since 2014. Libya, which slid into chaos and civil war after the revolt, is now divided among three main factions.

Yet the **Times** still erased NATO's key place in this uprising of 2011.

In an account of the large protests that erupted outside Libyan embassies in Europe and Africa in response to reports of slave auctions, **Reuters** (11/20/17) indicated, "Six years after the fall of Muammar Gaddafi, Libya is still a lawless state where armed groups compete for land

and resources and people-smuggling networks operate with impunity." But it did not provide any more information about how Qadhafi was toppled.

A report in the **Huffington Post** (11/22/17), later republished by **AOL** (11/27/17), did concede that Libya is "one of the world's most unstable [sic], mired in conflict since dictator Muammar Gaddafi was ousted and killed in 2011." It made no mention of NATO's leadership in that

ousting and killing.

Part of the problem has been the unwillingness of international organizations to point out the responsibility of powerful Western governments. In his statement on the reports of slavery in Libya, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres (11/20/17) did not mention

anything about what has happened politically inside the North African nation in the past six years. The **UN News Centre** report (11/20/17) on Guterres' comments was just as contextless and uninformative, as was the press release (11/21/17) on the issue from the

International Organization

for Migration.

Al Jazeera (11/26/17) did cite an IOM official who suggested, in **Al Jazeera**'s words, that "the international community should pay more attention to post-Gaddafi Libya." But the media outlet provided no context as to how Libya became post-Qadhafi in the first place. In fact,

Al Jazeera's source went out of his way to make the issue apolitical: "Modern-day slavery is widespread around the world and Libya is by no means unique."

While it is true that slavery and human trafficking happen in other countries, this widespread media narrative depoliticizes the problem in Libya, which has its roots in explicit political decisions made by governments and their leaders: namely, the choice to overthrow Libya's

stable government, turning the oil-rich North African nation into a failed state ruled by competing warlords and militias, some of which are involved in and profit from slavery and trafficking.

SELECTIVE ATTENTION TO NATO'S AFTERMATH IN LIBYA

Corporate media reporting on Libya largely mirrors reporting on Yemen (**FAIR.org**, 11/20/17, 8/31/17, 2/27/17), Syria (**FAIR.org**, 4/7/17, 9/5/15) and beyond: The role of the US government and its allies in creating chaos abroad is minimized, if not outright ignored.

Strikingly, one of the only exceptions to this overwhelming media trend came back in April from, of all places, the **New York Times** editorial board. The **Times** editorial (4/14/17) did not mince words, directly linking the US-backed military operation to the ongoing catastrophe:

None of this would be possible if not for the political chaos in Libya since the civil war in 2011, when — with the involvement of a NATO coalition that included the United States — Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi was toppled. Migrants have become the gold that finances Libya's warring factions.

This is a significant reversal. Immediately after NATO launched its war in Libya in March 2011, the **Times** editorial board (3/21/11) cheered on the bombing, effusing, "Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi has long been a thug and a murderer who has never paid for his many crimes." It

waxed poetic on the "extraordinary," "astonishing" military intervention, and hoped for Qadhafi's imminent downfall.

The April 2017 **Times** editorial stopped far short of a being a mea culpa, yet it was still a rare admission of truth.



Migrants from west Africa being 'sold in Libyan slave markets'

UN migration agency says selling of people is rife in African nation that has slid into violent chaos since overthrow of Gaddafi

This **Guardian** piece (4/10/17) cites “the overthrow of autocratic leader Muammar Qadhafi,” but does not say that the US (or Britain) was instrumental in overthrowing him.

At the time this surprisingly honest editorial was written, there had briefly been a bit of media attention to Libya. The International Organization for Migration had just conducted an investigation into slavery in post-regime change Libya, leading to a string of news reports in the **Guardian** (4/10/17) and elsewhere. Practically as soon as this appalling story got the interest of corporate media, however, it quickly died out. Attention shifted back to Russia, North Korea and the bogeymen of the day.

When Western governments were hoping to militarily intervene in the country in the lead-up to March 19, 2011, there was a constant torrent of media reports on the evils of Qadhafi and his government—including a healthy dose of fake news (**Salon**, 9/16/16). Major newspapers staunchly supported the NATO intervention, and made no secret of their pro-war editorial lines.

When the US government and its allies were preparing for war, the corporate media apparatus did what it does best, and helped sell yet another military intervention to the public.

In the years since, on the other hand, there has been exponentially less interest in the disastrous aftermath of that NATO war. There will be short spikes of interest, as there was in early 2017. The most recent spurt of press coverage was inspired by the publication of **CNN's**

shocking video footage. But the coverage invariably rapidly peaks and goes away.

THE EXTREME RACISM OF LIBYAN REBELS

The catastrophe Libya might endure after the collapse of its state had been predictable at the time. Qadhafi himself

had [warned](#) NATO member states, while they were waging war against him, that they were going to unleash chaos throughout the region. Yet Western leaders—

Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton in the US, David Cameron in the UK, Nicolas Sarkozy in France, Stephen Harper in Canada—ignored Qadhafi’s admonition and violently toppled his government.

Even from the small number of media reports on slavery in Libya that do manage to acknowledge NATO’s responsibility for destabilizing the country, nevertheless, something is still missing.

Looking back at Libya’s anti-Qadhafi rebels, both during and after the 2011 war, it is very clear that hardline anti-black racism was widespread in the NATO-backed opposition. A 2016 investigation by the British House of Common’s Foreign Affairs Committee

([Salon](#), [9/16/16](#)) acknowledged that “militant Islamist militias played a critical role in the rebellion from February 2011 onwards.” But many rebels were not just fundamentalist; they were also violently racist.

It is unfortunately no surprise that these extremist Libyan militants later enslaved African refugees and migrants: They were hinting at it from the very beginning.

Most American and European media coverage at the time of NATO’s military intervention was decidedly pro-rebel. When reporters got on the ground, however, they began publishing a few more nuanced pieces that hinted at the reality of the opposition. These were insignificant

in number, but they are enlightening and worth revisiting.

Three months into the NATO war, in June 2011, the **Wall Street Journal’s** Sam Dagher ([6/21/11](#)) reported from Misrata, Libya’s third-largest city and a major hub for the opposition, where he noted he saw rebel slogans like “the brigade for purging slaves, black skin.”

Dagher indicated that the rebel stronghold of Misrata was dominated by "tightly knit white merchant families," whereas "the south of the country, which is predominantly black, mainly backs Col. Gadhafi."

Other graffiti in Misrata read "Traitors keep out." By "traitors," rebels were referring to Libyans from the town of Tawergha, which the **Journal** explained is "inhabited mostly by black Libyans, a legacy of its 19th-century origins as a transit town in the slave trade."

Dagher reported that some Libyan rebel leaders were "calling for the expulsion of Tawerghans from the area" and "banning Tawergha natives from ever working, living or sending their children to schools in Misrata." He added that predominately Tawergha neighborhoods in Misrata

had already been emptied. Black Libyans were "gone or in hiding, fearing revenge attacks by Misratans, amid reports of bounties for their capture."

The rebel commander Ibrahim al-Halbous told the **Journal**, "Tawergha no longer exists, only Misrata."

Al-Halbous would later reappear in a report by the **Sunday Telegraph** (9/11/11), reiterating to the British newspaper, "Tawarga no longer exists." (When Halbous was injured in September, the **New York Times**—9/20/11—portrayed him sympathetically as a martyr in the heroic

fight against Qadhafi. The Halbous brigade has in the years since become an [influential](#) militia in Libya.)

Like Dagher, the **Telegraph**'s Andrew Gilligan drew attention to the slogan painted on the road between Misrata and Tawergha: "the brigade for purging slaves [and] black skin."

Gilligan reported from Tawergha, or rather from the remnants of the majority-black town, which he noted had "been emptied of its people, vandalized and partly burned by rebel forces." A rebel leader said of the

dark-skinned residents, "We said if they didn't go, they would be

conquered and imprisoned. Every single one of them has left, and we will never allow them to come back."

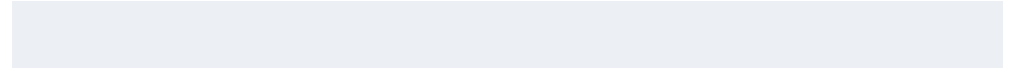
Gilligan noted "a racist undercurrent. Many Tawargas, though neither immigrants nor Gaddafi's much-ballyhooed African mercenaries, are descended from slaves, and are darker than most Libyans."

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization assisted these virulently racist rebels in Misrata. NATO forces frequently launched [air attacks](#) on the city. [French fighter jets](#) shot down Libyan planes over Misrata. The [US and UK](#) fired cruise missiles at Libyan government targets, and the

US launched Predator drone strikes. The [Canadian air force](#) also attacked Libyan forces, pushing them out of Misrata.

In a public relations video NATO published in May 2011, early in the Libya war, the Western military alliance openly admitted that it intentionally allowed "Libyan rebels to transport arms from Benghazi to Misrata." Political scientist Micah Zenko ([Foreign Policy](#), [3/22/16](#)) pointed out

the implications of this video: "A NATO surface vessel stationed in the Mediterranean to enforce an arms embargo did exactly the opposite, and NATO was comfortable posting a video demonstrating its hypocrisy."


Human Rights Watch ([9/4/11](#)) documented racist persecution in post-Qadhafi Libya.

Throughout the war and after, Libyan rebels continued carrying out racist sectarian attacks against their black compatriots. These attacks have been well documented by mainstream human rights organizations.

Human Rights Watch's longtime executive director [Kenneth Roth](#) cheered on NATO intervention in Libya in 2011, calling the UN

Security Council's unanimous endorsement of a no-fly zone a "remarkable" confirmation of the so-called "responsibility to protect" doctrine.

Roth's organization, however, could not ignore the crimes anti-Qadhafi militants committed against dark-skinned Libyans and migrants.

In September 2011, when the war was still ongoing, Human Rights Watch [reported](#) on Libyan rebels' "arbitrary arrests and abuse of African migrant workers and black Libyans assumed to be [pro-Qadhafi] mercenaries."

Then in October, the top US human rights organization noted that [Libyan militias](#) were "terrorizing the displaced residents of the nearby town of Tawergha," the majority-black community that had been a stronghold of support for Qadhafi. "The entire town of 30,000 people

is abandoned—some of it ransacked and burned—and Misrata brigade commanders say the residents of Tawergha should never return," HRW added. Witnesses "gave credible accounts of some Misrata militias shooting unarmed Tawerghans, and of arbitrary arrests and beatings

of Tawerghan detainees, in a few cases leading to death."

In 2013, HRW reported further on the [ethnic cleansing](#) of the black community of Tawergha. The human rights organization, whose chief had so effusively supported the military intervention, wrote: "The forced displacement of roughly 40,000 people, arbitrary detentions, torture

and killings are widespread, systematic and sufficiently organized to be crimes against humanity."

These atrocities are undeniable, and they lead a path straight to the enslavement of African refugees and migrants. But to acknowledge NATO's complicity in empowering these racist extremist militants, corporate media would have to acknowledge NATO's role in the 2011

regime

change war in Libya in the first place.

Comment written,by Joan Russow, in 2011 before the Invasion

Two Parallel Crimes Against humanity: US and its allies on Afghani and Iraqi citizens and Libya, on its own citizens.

written and posted in 2011

Is there a difference in kind or in degree between what Kaddafi is doing to his citizens and what the US and its allies have been doing to citizens in Afghanistan and Iraq. The US has been allowed by the international community to engage in illegal and aggressive acts of war with

citizens in both countries being designated as ``collateral damage``.

Yet, engaging in an illegal and aggressive war, by US and its allies is not deemed to be a crime against humanity and in Max Boot's term is only a savage war of peace or in Obama's term, a just war

Undoubtedly there will be set up an International Tribunal on war crimes to try Gadhafi, but will there ever be an International Tribunal to

try Bush, Blair, Rumsfeld, Cheney

-

There Parallel Crimes Against Humanity: US and its allies on Afghan and Iraqi citizens, and Libya, on its Citizens
101

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There is difference in kind or in degree between what Gadhafi is doing to his citizens and what the US and its allies have been doing to citizens in Afghanistan and Iraq. The US has been allowed by the international community to engage in illegal and aggressive acts of war with citizens in both countries being designated as collateral damage.

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4552 readings

[Approving Kinder Morgan Expansion would impact on climate change and jeopardize the future conservation projects in the Salish Sea and the rights of future generations and the rights of indigenous peoples](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 30 September 2016 07:57

By Joan Russow

Global Compliance Research Project



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

1. Kinder Morgan expansion would contribute to the undermining of Canada's
2. 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 2016 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."

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 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 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 15% below 1990 by 2017, 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 levels by 2035 and 100% below 1990 emissions by 2040, and reaching Decarbonization with 100% socially equitable ecologically sound renewable energy,

In addition the expansion of the Kinder Morgan 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.

This principle is also contained in the 1992 Convention on Biological Biodiversity, the

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 the

Kinder Morgan expansion

1. The expansion of Kinder Morgan could jeopardize future conservation projects
2. in the Salish Sea, and violate the rights of future generations and the rights of indigenous peoples

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.

Kinder Morgan 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,

With the approval of Kinder Morgan expansion, the Trudeau 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.

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>)

Expansion of Kinder Morgan 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 Kinder Morgan 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.

LEAGACY 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 2016.²

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 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 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

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 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 V. Campbell River, BC.¹⁰ Canadian tugs have suffered a similar fate. In 2015 alone, W. 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;

Salish Sea item: <http://www.foe.org/projects/oceans-and-forests/oceangoing-vessels/tar-sands-report>

In conclusion, If the Kinder Morgan 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 tar-sands 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”.

Approving the Kinder Morgan would demonstrate to the world that Canada is still not serious about reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Proceeding with the Kinder Morgan 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 Kinder Morgan expansion in the sensitive waters of the Salish Sea:

Proceeding with the approval if the Kinder Morgan Expansion would also show that Canada disregards commitments to heritage, to the rights of future generations and to the rights of First Nations and ignores dire warning and social licence.

Last Updated on Wednesday, 16 November 2016 10:35

117 readings

US Nuclear Waste Dump Threatened rising Sea Levels Putting Entire Pacific at Risk



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

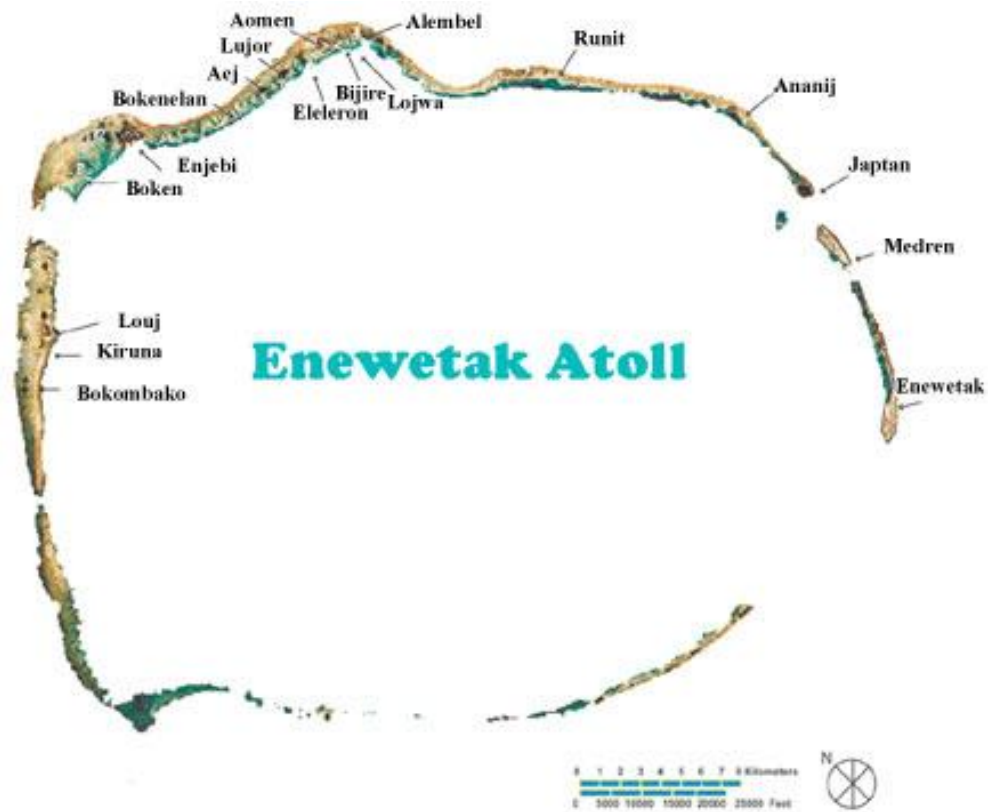
Sunday, 03 December 2017 18:58

November 29th, 2017 by **Steve Hanle**

<https://cleantechnica.com/2017/11/29/us-nuclear-waste-dump-threatened-rising-sea-levels-putting-entire-pacific-risk/>

Some things are so serious, all you can do is laugh. **ABC News** in Australia is reporting rising sea levels are threatening a nuclear waste dump left behind by the United States on Runit Island — part of the Enewetak Atoll. The dump is now leaking radioactive material into the Pacific Ocean, threatening

every man, woman, and child living on its edge. That is quite a few folks, if you stop to think about it.



Americans like to brag about the economic miracle the country brought to the world through the globalization of capitalism, but it is fair to say the foundation of American power began on August 6, 1945 when it dropped an atomic bomb blast that vaporized Hiroshima — killing more than 40,000 human beings instantly. Many more would perish in the days, weeks, and months to come.

The ethics of using nuclear weapons on the civilian population of Japan has been the subject of vigorous debate ever since. With the perspective that history provides, many now question the wisdom of Harry Truman's decision to use nuclear weapons, but there is no question that once the awesome

power of “The Bomb” became apparent, every other nation on earth wanted one.

Satirist Tom Lehrer made a career out of writing songs filled with biting social commentary. A mathematician by trade, he was an accomplished pianist. At the height of his career, when the protest song was popular, he once described his piano as an “88 string guitar.” One of his songs is called “Who’s

In the 1950s, you were considered cool if you knew how to spell Enewetak, the atoll in the Marshall Islands used to test advanced versions of nuclear bombs. Unconcerned about the effects the testing would have on the native people or the land they called home, the US decided both could be sacrificed To obtain a greater good — continued American dominance of nuclear weapons technology.

Following an underground explosion on the tip of Runit Island, the US military brought all the nuclear wastes created by its Pacific testing — during which 42 bombs were exploded — to the crater left behind, dumped them in, and then capped the festering cesspit with a concrete dome two feet thick.

Mission accomplished. Everyone go about your business. Nothing to see here, move along.

A half century later, that Pandora’s Box of nuclear horrors is being re-opened, not by humans but by rising sea levels. Global warming is unraveling the tomb once thought to be impregnable, and releasing a toxic stew into the Pacific Ocean. A 2013 **study** by the US Department of Energy found that the site was leaking its contents into the surrounding water. Another **study** a year

later found traces of the radioactive isotopes buried on Runit Island as far away as the Pearl River Estuary in China's Guangdong province, according to a report from [**The Guardian**](#) published in July of 2015.

The problem is, the floor of the crater was supposed to be lined with concrete before the toxic waste was dumped in. But the US government decided doing so would be too expensive, so the work was never done. "The bottom of the dome is just what was left behind by the nuclear weapons explosion," says Michael Gerrard, the chair of Columbia University's Earth Institute in New York. "It's permeable soil. There was no effort to line it. And therefore, the seawater is inside the dome." That toxic seawater is then finding its way back into the ocean.

"That dome is the connection between the nuclear age and the climate change age," says Marshall Islands climate change activist Alson Kelen. "It'll be a very devastating event if it really leaks. We're not just talking the Marshall Jack Niedenthal has been helping the people living on Bikini Atoll — where 23 of the nuclear test explosions were conducted — fight for compensation. In talking about The Dome on Enewetak, he says, "To me, it's like this big monument to America's giant fuck up. This could cause some really big problems for the rest of mankind if all that goes underwater, because it's plutonium and cement."

According to the ABC News report, some of the debris buried beneath the dome includes plutonium-239. An isotope used in nuclear warheads, it is one

of the most toxic substances on earth and has a radioactive half-life of 24,100 years.

There is a lot of talk these days about making America great again but no one seems to be able to articulate exactly when that golden age occurred. Was it when the US could blithely order people to leave their homes so it could blow up the islands they live on? Was it when taking rudimentary precautions to prevent massive contamination from nuclear wastes was deemed too expensive? Some people seem to confuse arrogance with greatness.

Nuclear arms are very much on the mind of Americans these days, as North Korea continues ratcheting up its **saber rattling**. The other day, the annual Christmas catalog from Hammacher Schlemmer arrived in my mailbox.

That reminded me of the ditty penned by one of America's greatest satirist, Yip Harburg, the fellow who wrote the lyrics for "Over The Rainbow". Years ago, the department store featured a bomb shelter for its most affluent clients.

Hammacher Schlemmer is selling a shelter,
worthy of Kubla Khan's Xanadu dome;
Plushy and swanky, with posh hanky panky
that affluent Yankees can really call home.

Hammacher Schlemmer is selling a shelter,
a push-button palace, fluorescent repose;
Electric devices for facing a crisis
with frozen fruit ices and cinema shows.

Hammacher Schlemmer is selling a shelter
all chromium kitchens and rubber-tiled dorms;
With waterproof portals to echo the chortles
of weatherproof mortals in hydrogen storms.

What a great come-to-glory emporium!
To enjoy a deluxe moratorium,
Where nuclear heat can beguile the elite

in a creme-de-la-creme crematorium.

Perhaps one day, when America is truly great again, Hammacher Schlemmer will offer a similar shelter to protect wealthy humans from an overheated planet and rising seas containing radioactive isotopes. Or maybe that's what Elon Musk's proposed **colony on Mars** is really for.

210 readings

Stand against the US immoral move to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of the Zionist state of Israel



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 08 December 2017 12:53

Join us at:
2pm Saturday, Dec. 9 at the Cenotaph in front
of the Legislature
(corner of Belleville & Government)

Once again the United States has violated the mandate of the UN, the multiple resolutions issued for more than six decades, the right of the heroic Palestinian people and International Law, by designating the city of Jerusalem as the capital of the Zionist state of Israel and move the headquarters of the US embassy to that city.

This unilateral, arbitrary and colonial declaration will raise the tensions in the Middle East to an unprecedented degree and in fact represents a brutal provocation.

Our Victoria Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid & the Victoria Friends of Cuba with so many other organizations and people around the world strongly rejects the decision adopted by the Trump administration that

violates the right of the Palestinian people to their sacred land with East Jerusalem as its capital.

For almost three decades negotiations have been carried out to reach a solution that satisfies the existence of two States. In that time the demands have remained the same; the Palestinian people's right to return to their land, the creation of an independent, free and sovereign Palestinian State, the freedom of the thousands of political prisoners in prisons in Israel, and that East Jerusalem is the capital of the Palestinian people.

The United States stands up with impunity as the master of the world, offending the historic culture and religion of the Arab and Muslim peoples while putting the region on the verge of serious destabilization and pushes back the negotiation process.

Trump is not crazy, Trump is the extreme right embodied in power. His government represents the American military complex of which the Zionist State of Israel is an integral part.

Humanity cannot remain silent before this new barbarity by the current tenant of the White House who threatens countries right and left. In Latin America he perversely blocks Cuba and Venezuela, seeks to install compliant governments throughout the region while mocking the UN and Peace that humanity so desperately needs.

We need to raise our voices from every corner of the planet in support of the heroic Palestinian people and let Trump know loud and clear that we do NOT accept his unilateral decision. We do not accept US interference in Palestine. No to Zionism, No to fascism.

We stand together with the actions that are taking place around the globe and most of all with the Palestinians people who are living under Israeli occupation and fighting to reclaim their independent and free homeland.

Victoria Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid & Friends of Cuba

250 readings

Trump's threats against North Korea



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 08 December 2017 12:59

Statement by Francis Boyle, Professor of International Law at the Univ of Illinois School of Law, on the illegality of Trump's threats against North Korea

November 11, 2017 by [Refuse Fascism](#)

To be read at Refuse Fascism protests on November 11

The US government threats of "preventive warfare" against DPRK are illegal and criminal. The Nuremberg Tribunal in their Judgment of 1946, which the US helped organize, condemned "preventive war" when the lawyers for the Nazis made the argument on their behalf. This is an illegal and criminal threat in violation of international law. According to the World Court in its Advisory Opinion (1996) on the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons, the legality vel non of a threat stands or falls on the same legal grounds as if the threat were carried out.

The repeated US government threats to "destroy" or "annihilate" DPRK are an international crime under the 1948 Genocide Convention to which the United States is a party. These genocidal threats are also illegal and criminal under the rationale of the 1996 World Court Advisory Opinion mentioned above.

The United States has an absolute obligation under UN Charter article 2(3) and article 33 to open "negotiation" with DPRK in good faith in order to produce a peace resolution of this dispute. Instead, the US government has repeatedly rejected these obligations under the UN Charter.

The proposal by Russia and China for a "dual-freeze" is an excellent basis to produce good faith and direct negotiations between USA and DPRK as required by the UN Charter.

The United States is deliberately provoking DPRK, ratcheting up these provocations in the hope that they will provoke the DPRK to commit an act of

aggression against the United States that the USA can then use as a pretext for war. Pursuant to the terms of their mutual self-defense treaty, China has stated that if the US attacks first it will defend DPRK, but that if DPRK strikes first, China will remain out of any war. So the United States is trying to provoke DPRK into striking first.

It is an extremely dangerous situation. It is really up to the United States to take the first step down the Ladder of Escalation that it has constructed here.

Instead it appears that the Trump administration is going to escalate up the Ladder of Escalation in the hope and expectation that DPRK will capitulate.

This is what International Political Scientists call a Game of Chicken— with cosmic consequences. Who will blink first? Anything can go wrong.

Thank you so much for being here today to prevent World War III.

Francis A. Boyle

Professor of Law

University of Illinois College of Law

SEE ALSO HIS INTERVIEW ON TALK RADIO ABOUT HOW TO IMPEACH BUSH

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5k1cQ_vLj3I

VIDEO INTERVIEW WTH Francis Boyle on how to impeach Trump

Last Updated on Saturday, 16 December 2017 15:45

310 readings

Statement from Grand Chief Stewart

Phillip on

Human Rights Day

Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 10 December 2017 11:27

Public Statement

December 10, 2017

Statement from Grand Chief Stewart Phillip on Human Rights Day

(Unceded Coast Salish Territory / Vancouver, B.C. – December 10, 2017)

December 10 is the day 70 years ago in 1948 when the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights officially recognizing that states voted in favour of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration). The Harper Government was one of four states to



vote against the UN Declaration. The Trudeau Government formally endorsed Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) issued the following statement to mark the United Nations' Human Rights Day:

“Indigenous Rights are human rights. On the 70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights we call on federal, provincial and municipal governments to truly commit to the true spirit and intent of the UN Declaration as a fundamental international human rights instrument to advance human rights for Indigenous peoples as a framework for justice and “Canada’s own legal and constitutional frameworks must adapt to the UN Declaration, especially Indigenous peoples’ free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) based on our inherent and inalienable rights pursuant to our Indigenous laws and authorities. FPIC is the right to say yes and the right to say

no to development on our lands and territories in order to safeguard the land

“It is crucially important our inherent Title, Rights and Treaty Rights are recognized and affirmed in all processes Canada and BC engages in with Indigenous peoples. When our inherent Title, Rights and Treaty Rights are entirely disregarded or domestically diluted, governments are liable.

“We gratefully acknowledge today is also the 5th Anniversary of the Idle No More movement and December 11 will be the 20th Anniversary of the historic Delgamuukw/Gisday’wa Supreme Court Decision. We raise our hands in appreciation to the leadership of the hereditary Chiefs and grassroots for their continuing fight for our human rights.

“In closing, we call on Premier Horgan to remember the members of Treaty 8 who are defending their land and way of life against BC Hydro’s destructive Site C project. In the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Declaration, their Treaty 8 rights are human rights.”

Last Updated on Sunday, 10 December 2017 11:31

VOW Condemns Decision to Recognize

Jerusalem as Israel’s Capital

Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow



Monday, 11 December 2017 12:17

VOWs in Toronto join demonstration Hands off Jerusalem. December 9, 2017
for immediate release-

Canadian Voice of Women for Peace strongly opposes the Trump administration's decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital, and begin the process of relocating its embassy to Jerusalem. VOW believes that the world's governments should not recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital until Israel has reached a mutually agreed upon peace settlement with the Palestinians.

"The status of Jerusalem is one of the most sensitive issues in the Israel-Palestine conflict, and Israel is in violation of international law on several counts vis-à-vis Jerusalem," stated Canadian for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) President Thomas Woodley.

"Trump's announcement is needlessly provocative and inflammatory," Woodley added. CJPME points out that Trump's decision breaks with decades of US policy on Israel, and will prevent the Trump administration from presenting itself as a neutral arbiter in any future negotiations.

As a sign of world opinion on the matter, the UN General Assembly last week voted overwhelmingly that "any actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the Holy City of Jerusalem are illegal and therefore null and void and have no validity whatsoever."

The silence from the Canadian government to this inflammatory act is disappointing. VOW urges Prime Minister Trudeau to condemn Trump's declaration equivocal

401 readings

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

link to

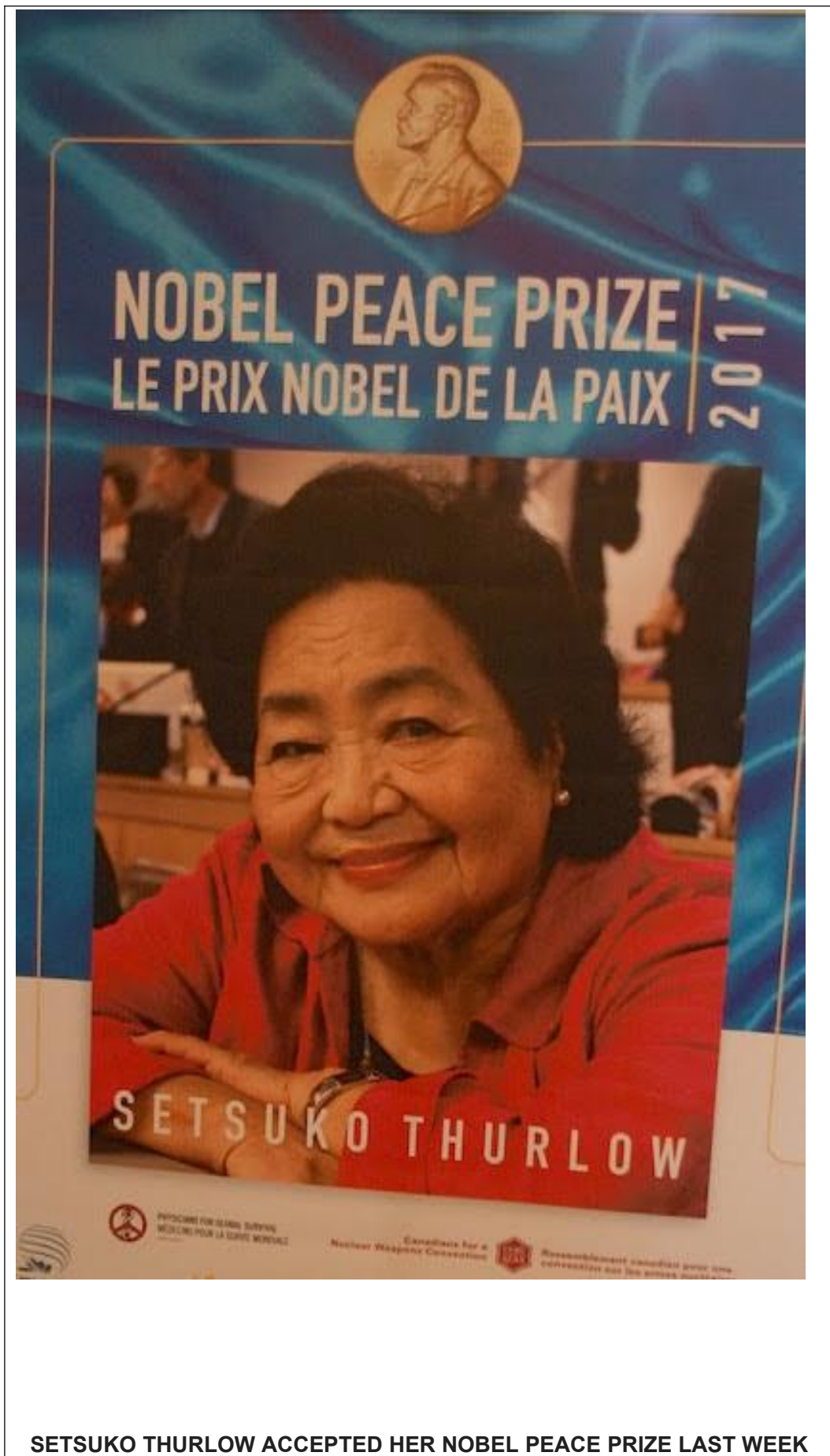


video CELEBRATION

Peace News

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 11 December 2017 17:37



SETSUKO THURLOW ACCEPTED HER NOBEL PEACE PRIZE LAST WEEK

IN STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN. WATCH THE POWERFUL VIDEO [HERE](#).

Last Updated on Tuesday, 12 December 2017 07:06

411 readings

NOBEL PEACE ICAN PRESENTATION



Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 11 December 2017 17:41

Award Ceremony Speech

Presentation Speech by Berit Reiss-Andersen, Chair of the **Norwegian**

Nobel Committee, Oslo, 10 December 2017.

Your Majesties, Your Royal Highnesses, Distinguished Representatives of the

Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies

and Gentlemen,

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 2017. On behalf of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, I take great pleasure in congratulating ICAN on this award.

ICAN is receiving the award for its work to draw attention to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and for its groundbreaking efforts to achieve a treaty-based prohibition of such weapons. ICAN's efforts have given new momentum to the process of abolishing nuclear weapons.

This year's Peace Prize follows in a tradition of awards that have honoured efforts against the proliferation of nuclear weapons and for nuclear disarmament. Twelve Peace Prizes have been awarded, in whole or in part, for this type of peace work. The first went to **Philip Noel-Baker** in 1959, and the most recent was awarded to **Barack Obama** in 2009. And now, this year, to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN).

On two days in August 1945, the world experienced the terrible destructive force of nuclear weapons for the first time. The bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki instantly killed at least 140,000 people, the vast majority of whom were civilians. Hiroshima was utterly destroyed and large sections of Nagasaki were laid in ruins. But death was

not finished with Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. The death toll continued to rise significantly in the years that followed, and survivors are still suffering from the effects of radiation today.

The devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki has taught us that nuclear weapons are so dangerous, and inflict so much agony and death on civilian populations, that they must never, ever, be used again.

Today's nuclear weapons are tremendously more destructive than the bombs that were dropped on Japan in 1945. A nuclear war could kill millions of people, dramatically alter the climate and the environment for much of the planet, and destabilise societies in a way never before seen by humanity. The notion of a limited nuclear war is an illusion.

Nuclear weapons do not distinguish between military and civilian targets. Used in war, they would impact disproportionately on the civilian population, inflicting vast, unnecessary suffering. It is virtually impossible for civilians to protect themselves against the catastrophic effects of a nuclear attack. The use of nuclear weapons – or even the threat of using them – is therefore unacceptable on any grounds, whether humanitarian, moral or legal.

Despite all this, it remains the case that the global balance of military power is maintained by nuclear weapons. The logic of this balance of terror rests on the proposition that nuclear weapons are such a deterrent that no one would dare attack a nuclear-armed state. The deterrent effect is said to be so strong that it alone has prevented war between the nuclear powers for the last 70 years. The empirical basis for this assumption is highly debatable. It cannot be claimed with any certainty that deterrence has worked as intended. It is also worth keeping in mind that nuclear deterrence requires a credible threat to actually use nuclear weapons. The weapons exist so that they can, if necessary, be deployed.

A number of international agreements and treaties have been entered into which limit the possession and development of nuclear weapons. The most important of these is the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, or NPT. It takes considerable military and political insight to fully understand all the treaties, agreements and international legal instruments that regulate disarmament and arms control. The views that dominate the political debate are those of the great powers and powerful alliances.

ICAN arose as a protest against the established order. Nuclear weapon issues are not solely a question to be addressed by governments, nor a matter for experts or high-level politicians. Nuclear weapons concern everyone, and everyone is entitled to an opinion. ICAN has succeeded in generating fresh engagement among ordinary people in the campaign against nuclear weapons. The organisation's acronym is perhaps not a coincidence: I CAN.

ICAN's main message is that the world can never be safe as long as we have nuclear weapons. This message resonates with millions of people who perceive that the threat of nuclear war is greater than it has been for a long time, not least due to the situation in North Korea.

Another major concern of ICAN is that the current international legal order is inadequate to deal with the nuclear weapons problem.

The entry into force of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1970 was a historic breakthrough. It gave formal status to the nuclear powers of the day – the United

States, the Soviet Union, the UK, France and China – as states with the legal right to possess nuclear weapons. All other countries that acceded to the treaty pledged, in so doing, not to acquire such weapons. In return, the legally recognized nuclear-weapon states undertook to begin negotiations in good faith to seek nuclear disarmament. This dual pledge is the very core of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and both sides of it must be honoured to maintain the treaty's legitimacy.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is no exaggeration to say that the nuclear-weapon states have only to a limited degree honoured the disarmament commitment they made in the NPT. Let me remind you that in 2000 the NPT's Review Conference stated that the treaty calls for "an unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon states to accomplish the total elimination of their arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament". From an international law perspective, the five legally recognized nuclear-weapon states and their allies have thus assumed a responsibility to help achieve disarmament and a world free of nuclear weapons. If the disarmament process had been carried out as intended, ICAN's struggle for a treaty-based ban on nuclear weapons would have been unneeded. It is the lack of progress towards nuclear disarmament that has made it necessary to supplement the Non-Proliferation Treaty with other international legal initiatives and commitments.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty applies only to the countries that have acceded to it. India, Pakistan and Israel, which all have nuclear weapons, are not NPT members. Moreover, North Korea, which has carried out six nuclear test explosions, has withdrawn from the treaty. Global nuclear disarmament cannot take place without these countries, too, participating. Yet they reserve for themselves the same right to nuclear weapons as the five states that had acquired such weapons prior to 1970. The five legally recognized nuclear-weapon states, for their part, cite the nuclear arsenals of these other countries as one of several arguments for not yet being able to comply with the NPT's nuclear disarmament requirements.

It is in part to break this vicious cycle that ICAN has advocated a universal, treaty-based ban on nuclear weapons.

ICAN does not accept that the lack of progress towards nuclear disarmament is a realpolitik necessity. ICAN's premise is humanitarian, maintaining that any use of nuclear weapons will cause unacceptable human suffering. Binding international prohibitions have already been established for chemical weapons, biological weapons, land mines and cluster weapons, precisely because of the unacceptable harm and suffering that these weapons inflict on civilian populations. It defies common sense that nuclear weapons, which are far more dangerous, are not subject to a comparable ban under international law.

Pointing out this legal gap was a crucial first step on the road to a prohibition treaty. Another important step was the Humanitarian Pledge initiated by the Austrian Government in December 2014. The Pledge is a voluntary national commitment to seek to stigmatise, prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons. ICAN has worked resolutely to muster broad international support for the Humanitarian Pledge. To date, 127 states have signed on to this commitment.

ICAN has also been a driving force in efforts to secure a binding international ban of nuclear weapons. On 7 July 2017, a final draft treaty was endorsed by 129 UN member states. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was opened for signature this autumn, and has been signed so far by 56 states. When 50 or more states have also ratified the treaty, it will become binding under international law for the signatory states.

ICAN is a young organisation, founded in 2007 on the initiative of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, which won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1985. ICAN is a loose coalition of 468 NGOs from more than 100 countries. It is impressive that ICAN is able to unite so many different groups in support of a common goal and give a voice to millions of people who are convinced that nuclear weapons do not provide security, but insecurity.

In awarding this year's Peace Prize to ICAN, the Norwegian Nobel Committee seeks to honour this remarkable endeavour to serve the interests of mankind.

The Nobel Committee believes that an international ban on nuclear weapons will be an important, possibly decisive, step on the road to a world without nuclear weapons. Such a goal is fully consistent with the essence of Alfred Nobel's will.

Ladies and gentlemen, ICAN's support for a global ban on nuclear weapons is not uncontroversial. We must acknowledge that the treaty has powerful opponents, but the idea of prohibiting and abolishing nuclear weapons is neither naïve nor new. As early as 1946, in the UN General Assembly's very first resolution, the United Nations called for nuclear disarmament and an international nuclear weapons control regime.

At the Reykjavik Summit in 1986, **Mikhail Gorbachev** and Ronald Reagan tried to halt the spiralling nuclear arms race between the two superpowers, and came close to concluding an agreement to abolish all long-range nuclear missiles. A year and a half earlier, President Reagan had addressed the people of the United States and the Soviet Union directly, saying:

"A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. The only value in our two nations possessing nuclear weapons is to make sure they never will be used. But then, would it not be better to do away with them entirely?"

Today it is more important than ever to support this vision. While the global community may trust that no responsible head of state would ever order another nuclear attack, we have no guarantees that it will not happen. Despite international legal commitments, irresponsible leaders can come to power in any nuclear-armed state and become embroiled in serious military conflicts that veer out of control.

Ultimately, nuclear weapons are controlled by human beings. In spite of advanced security mechanisms and control systems, technical and human errors can occur, with potentially catastrophic consequences. Can we be sure that the control systems of the nuclear powers will not someday be sabotaged by hackers acting on behalf of hostile states, terrorists or extremists?

In short, nuclear weapons are so dangerous that the only responsible course of action is to work for their removal and destruction.

Many people think that the vision of a nuclear weapon-free world, a Global Zero, is utopic, or even irresponsible.

Similar arguments were once used to oppose the treaties banning biological and chemical weapons, cluster weapons and land mines. Nonetheless, the prohibitions became reality and most of these weapons are far less prevalent today as a result. Using them is taboo.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Norwegian Nobel Committee is aware that nuclear weapons disarmament presents far greater challenges than disarmament of the types

of weapons I just mentioned. But there is no getting around the fact that the nuclear weapon states have committed, through the Non-Proliferation Treaty, to work towards disarmament. This is the ultimate objective of the treaty. Through its efforts, ICAN has reminded the nuclear weapon states that their commitment entails a genuine obligation, and the time to honour it is now!

In his [Nobel lecture](#) in 1959, Philip Noel-Baker took issue with the widely held opinion that complete nuclear disarmament is impossible to achieve in the real world. He quoted another Peace Prize laureate, Fridtjof Nansen:

"The difficult is what takes a little while; the impossible is what takes a little longer."

The people of ICAN are impatient and visionary, but they are not naïve. ICAN recognizes that the nuclear-armed states cannot eliminate their nuclear weapons overnight. This must be achieved through a mutual, gradual and verifiable disarmament process. But it is the hope of ICAN and the Norwegian Nobel Committee that an international legal ban, and broad popular engagement, will put pressure on all nuclear-armed states and expedite the process.

Ladies and gentlemen, there are two persons on the podium today who, each in their way, are outstanding representatives of the ICAN movement.

Madam Setsuko Thurlow, you were 13 years old when you experienced the bombing of Hiroshima. You have devoted your life to bearing witness to the events of 6 August 1945. You see it as your mission to describe the suffering, fear and death inflicted on your city. No one was spared. Little children, their parents, brothers and sisters, schoolmates and grandparents were killed. You say that war cannot be waged in this way, and that it must never happen again. You do not allow us to forget.

Beatrice Fihn, you are the Executive Director of ICAN and have the challenging task of uniting different organisations and interest groups in pursuit of a common goal. You are a splendid representative of the multitude of idealists who forgo an ordinary career and instead devote all of their time and skills to the work of achieving a peaceful world.

It is an honour to have you here as our guests, and we wish to express our deep and heartfelt gratitude for the work that you do. Our tribute also goes to all the individuals and organisations that you represent.

The decision to award the Nobel Peace Prize for 2017 to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons has a solid grounding in Alfred Nobel's will. The will specifies three different criteria for awarding the Peace Prize: the promotion of fraternity between nations, the advancement of disarmament and arms control and the holding and promotion of peace congresses. ICAN works vigorously to achieve nuclear disarmament. ICAN and a majority of UN member states have contributed to fraternity between nations by supporting the Humanitarian Pledge. And through its inspiring and innovative support for the UN negotiations on a Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty, ICAN has played an important role in bringing about what in our day and age is equivalent to an international peace congress.

In closing, I would like to quote His Holiness Pope Francis, who recently declared: "Weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, create nothing but a false sense of security. They cannot constitute the basis for peaceful coexistence between members of the human family, which must rather be inspired by an ethics of solidarity."

The Norwegian Nobel Committee shares this view. Moreover, it is our firm conviction that ICAN, more than anyone else, has in the past year given the efforts to achieve a world without nuclear weapons a new direction and new vigour.

Thank you.

387 readings

Trump's Lethal Decision on Jerusalem

Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 12 December 2017 13:29

nn

President Trump has won praise from Christian Zionists and many staunch supporters of Israel for declaring Jerusalem Israel's capital, but critics say it only makes peace a more distant goal, reports Dennis J Bernstein.

By Dennis J Bernstein Interview with Francis Boyle

Protests have broken out across the Middle East against President Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital — and Western critics complain that the move adds one more brick in the wall against the prospects for peace.

Professor Francis Boyle, who teaches international law at the University of Illinois College of Law and served as a long-time legal adviser to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), calls Trump's announcement a "symbolic but still critical step in Israeli designs to control not just Jerusalem, but all of historic Palestine." I spoke

with Boyle on Dec. 6.

Graffiti on Israel's wall in Bethlehem, West Bank. April 16, 2011. (Flickr Montecruz Foto)

Graffiti on Israel's wall in Bethlehem, West Bank. April 16, 2011. (Flickr Montecruz Foto)

Dennis Bernstein: What was your initial response to the announcement by President Trump that the United States will be moving its embassy to Jerusalem?

Francis Boyle: It is always a sad day when you know that people are going to die. It is a defeat for the human spirit. In the last intifada [September 2000-February 2005], about 3,000 Palestinians died and 1,000 Israelis. I don't know what will happen this time. The Palestinians have called for "three days of rage." Trump could very well set off a third intifada here.

Dennis Bernstein: Trump says this doesn't get in the way of the US being an honest broker, that the vision is for peace. From the legal perspective, how do you see this?

Francis Boyle: First of all, the United States has never been an honest broker here. I was legal advisor to the Palestinian delegation to the Middle East Peace Negotiations from 1991, when they began, to the signing of Oslo. It was very clear that the United States was always serving as Israel's lawyer. You had Miller, Ross, and

Kurtzer, all three American Jews, two of them orthodox.

The Palestinians had to go hat-in-hand to present their case to American Jews. Nothing has changed: We now have Kushner, Greenblatt and Friedman, all three of whom are orthodox Jews. The whole thing has been preposterous from the beginning. We have always been in favor of Israel, using lies, threats and intimidation to force the Palestinians to accept whatever the Israelis are giving them. That is international diplomacy for you, conducted by the United States, not only in the Middle East but all over the world.

Dennis Bernstein: Would you say that what is going on here is not just Israel trying to control Jerusalem but all of Palestine?

Francis Boyle: That has always been Israel's policy. I had a conversation with the chair of the Palestinian Delegation to the Middle East peace negotiations. He told me that the Zionists have not changed their position since the Basel Convention of 1897. They want all of Palestine. What is happening now in Jerusalem is a step in that direction.

If you look at the recently leaked so-called peace plan that was presented to [Palestinian President Mahmoud] Abbas in Saudi Arabia, he was basically given an ultimatum to either accept some tiny bantustan or forget it. It is very clear that they want all of Palestine, all of the West Bank, all of Jerusalem. They want the Golan Heights and maybe even some more of Syria.

President Donald J. Trump and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel at the United Nations General Assembly (Official White House Photo by Shealah Craighead)

Dennis Bernstein: We have revelations now that Jared Kushner, our chief peace negotiator in the Middle East, failed to disclose in ethics

filings his role as director of a family foundation that funded Israeli settlements. Do you think that is a problem?

Francis Boyle: Of course, because basically he is aiding and abetting war crimes and crimes against humanity in Palestine.

Dennis Bernstein: Is the United States participating in illegal actions in Israel, or doesn't it matter anymore?

Francis Boyle: For most of the Arab and Muslim world, it matters. Here in the United States, apart from the BDS movement, we have basically thrown in our lot with the Israeli government. Congress has been bought and paid for by the Israel lobby. During his campaign, Trump made explicit promises in order to secure Jewish funding and votes.

We arm, equip, supply and train Israel. What is going on in Gaza right now is a form of genocide. They are being strangled to death. The 1948 Genocide Convention, to which both Israel and the United States are parties, says that "deliberately inflicting on a people conditions of life calculated to bring about their physical destruction

in whole or in part" is genocide. That is exactly what is going on in Gaza today.

Dennis Bernstein: How would you assess the situation now? Is a two-state solution at all viable?

Francis Boyle: That is for the Palestinians to decide. Their right of self determination is at stake here. As of today, their official position is two states with their capital in East Jerusalem. There have been hints that they might go back to the one-state solution, which was their position before the Palestinian Declaration of

Independence of December 15, 1988, when they officially accepted a two-state solution. Since then they have gotten nothing. Every day Israel just steals more land and drives out more Palestinians.

Dennis Bernstein: Are there any options for the Palestinians in the international arena, for example, at the United Nations?

Francis Boyle: I have advised them to invoke the "Uniting for Peace" resolution adopted by the general assembly in 1950, so that they can be admitted to the UN General Assembly as a full-fledged UN member state, recognizing their capital as East Jerusalem. And, as you know, after Palestine became a UN observer state, you and

I discussed the concept of a "legal intifada" that the Palestinians could pursue.

Israel Defense Force soldiers patrolling Nablus during the Second Intifada in 2002. (Photo credit: Israel Defense Forces)

My advice to the Palestinians is a full-court press in all specialized United Nations agencies and affiliated organizations, using all available legal mechanisms. This would include suing Israel at the International Court of Justice, which I have offered to do for them. And of course they have filed a complaint against Israel for war

crimes and crimes against humanity before the International Criminal Court. According to press reports, they are meeting right now to decide what to do and President Abbas will soon be addressing the Palestinian

people.

Dennis Bernstein: I suppose it is important to emphasize the fact that this could turn very violent.

Francis Boyle: I am afraid so. This could turn into the third intifada. The First Intifada, which took place in 1987, was spontaneous. The Second Intifada [September 2000-February 2005] was provoked when Ariel Sharon went to the Al-Aqsa mosque with a couple hundred soldiers. Eventually, about 3,000 Palestinians lost their lives as a result.

Now we have Trump provoking the situation. His people, including Bannon and Flynn, know exactly what they are doing. They believe in Sam Huntington's concept of "the clash of civilizations." They truly believe that they are leading a crusade against the Muslim world. This is being done very deliberately.

Dennis J Bernstein is a host of "Flashpoints" on the Pacifica radio network and the author of [Special Ed: Voices from a Hidden Classroom](#). You can access the audio archives at www.flashpoints.net.

375 readings

[Peace Valley Solidarity Initiative Sets Date for Accountability Summit on NDP's Reckless Decision to Proceed with Site C](#)

Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 12 December 2017 13:45

By Peace Valley Solidarity Initiative

<http://www.marketwired.com/press-release/peace-valley-solidarity-initiative-sets-date-accountability-summit-on-ndps-reckless-2243055.htm>

December 11, 2017 19:31 ET

VICTORIA, BC--(Marketwired - December 11, 2017) - Today the Peace Valley Solidarity Initiative (PVSII) announced that an Accountability Summit on Site C will be held in Vancouver on January 20 - 21, 2018, to hold the NDP government to account for its unconscionable decision to

complete construction of the Site C hydroelectric dam project. The Premier and Cabinet, as well as people from all political parties and walks of life concerned with the Site C decision and how it was made, are invited to attend.

PVSI is asking the NDP to provide all the data, analysis and excel spreadsheets underlying their decision before Christmas so the province's business case for proceeding with Site C can be analyzed before the summit.

"The expert evidence we presented to Cabinet to cancel Site C was completely ignored," says Rob Botterell legal counsel to PVLA and PVEA. "Robert McCullough, an independent energy expert with 40 years of experience, was never contacted to provide more detail of his expert analysis to the Cabinet, after November

30, 2017. The silence was deafening. Clearly the decision has been made for some time. At least with Premier Christy Clark, my clients were not promised an open, fair and transparent process as was promised by Premier Horgan and Finance Minister Carole James. That turned out to be a sham."

In a news conference earlier today, Premier Horgan stated that if Site C were to be cancelled electricity rates would go up by 12% "almost immediately," foregoing the ability to fund very important capital projects like schools and hospitals, bridges and transit. He also stated that the BC NDP would not be able to deliver on

their election promises of making services available to people when and where they need it. These statements are 100% in contradiction to Robert McCullough's testimony to Cabinet and the BC Utilities Commission.

"The NDP has not brought us the change we expected from them; today's announcement proclaims business as usual in Victoria," says Dr. Steve Gray, Chair, Peace Valley Solidarity Initiative. "Everyone in the province is affected financially by this decision. We are heartbroken for First Nations who have laboured to

build relationships with government based on respect and trust, and now find that their rights are again being negotiated behind closed doors." He adds, "The loss of agricultural land is unprecedented and very bad news for our food security in the face of climate change. Once we hear from the Premier and Cabinet on January

20

and 21, we will decide how to hold this government accountable. Everything is on the table. Surely, not all NDP MLA's support or condone this decision. This fight for the Peace River is not over."

Additional information:

- Video from today's earlier news conference in Victoria can be viewed here: <https://www.facebook.com/peacevalleylandownerassoc/videos/1676791342342989/>
- Please see attached fact sheet: Site C: Fact vs. Fiction
- For all other reports, fact sheets and letters please visit <http://www.peacevalleyland.com/siteinquiry>

Please note: the Peace Valley Solidarity Initiative (PVSI) a separate entity from the Peace Valley Landowner Association (PVLA) and Peace Valley Environment Association (PVEA). PVSI supports the work that has been done by the PVLA and PVEA in favour of the cancellation of the Site C dam project.

Attachment

Available: http://www.marketwire.com/library/MwGo/2017/12/11/11G148691/Site_C_Dam_-_Fact_or_Fiction-846ec796b3fda1f89968730b9480f2a0.pdf

CONTACT INFORMATION

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For more information regarding the Site C Accountability Summit please contact:

Dr. Steve Gray
778-679-9011

-

Last Updated on Tuesday, 12 December 2017 13:52

390 readings

Herbicide illegally sprayed along CN rail lines throughout BC, wild salmon at risk

Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 14 December 2017 07:36

by Erica Stahl, Staff Lawyer

Luanne asked the Province to investigate, and she hired an independent environmental consultant to analyze the sprayed area. Her environmental consultant found evidence of glyphosate on plants directly overhanging salmon habitat. BC's Pest Management Regulation states that generally, a **2- to 5-metre** pesticide-free zone must be maintained when spraying glyphosate close to a fish-bearing river or stream.

Glyphosate is an active ingredient in many commercial herbicides, including Roundup. It is an extremely potent and indiscriminate agent – it will damage or kill any plant it comes into contact with (unless that plant has been genetically modified to withstand glyphosate application).

While there are conflicting opinions from credible scientific sources about the effects of glyphosate exposure on humans and the environment, it is certainly a situation where the **precautionary principle** should apply: glyphosate is **listed as a carcinogen** in the state of California, a probable carcinogen by the **International Agency for Research on Cancer**, and the

European Union, while not viewing it as a carcinogen, recognizes it as **toxic to aquatic life**. The Province of BC has recognized that glyphosates are **highly**

toxic to amphibians.

One **aquatic toxicology specialist, commenting on CN's spraying**, noted that with exposure to glyphosate "fish could experience changes to their ability to smell, micro and macroscopic changes to their tissues and possible mutations to their blood."



The rail line, seen here just before spraying began, is located within habitat for grizzly bears and other wildlife. (Photo: Luanne Roth)

As if this weren't bad enough, CN did not have legal authority to spray herbicides while this work was done. The company used to have a legally-required Pest Management Plan (PMP), but it expired on May 3rd, 2017 and CN did not renew it.

Pest Management Plans as a form of regulation are rather weaker than we'd like – the provincial government generally does not even review them. **Nonetheless, without a PMP**, CN is only allowed to spray 20 hectares of its railway infrastructure with herbicides. The provincial investigations begun as a result of Luanne's complaint found that over 1800 hectares of CN Rail's

right of way were sprayed with herbicides in the course of this work, and there were numerous other instances of non-compliance on the part of the contractor.

But here's the real kicker. The Pest Management Plan that CN Rail allowed to expire, the one that would have permitted the spraying of herbicide along the Prince Rupert-Terrace rail line, was for the entire province. The Provincial investigation revealed that spraying on CN rail lines has been taking place all around the province this summer, after CN's PMP had expired.

Some of the places identified in the Provincial report as having been sprayed without a PMP were Fort Nelson, Fort St. John, Dawson Creek, Prince George, Nechako, Bulkley, Telkwa, Skeena, and Lillooet. If CN rail lines or rail yards were sprayed with herbicides in your area after May 2017, it is likely that the spraying was illegal.

Luanne received support from our **Environmental Dispute Resolution Fund**(EDRF) to look into options for legal action against unpermitted activities on the CN rail line. If you think herbicides were applied illegally in your area after

May 3rd 2017, you can contact Luanne or the EDRF to learn more about your options.

Luanne Roth, North Coast Energy Campaigner
T. Buck Suzuki Environmental Foundation
LuanneRoth2@gmail.com
250-621-4201 or 778-884-5888 (cell)

Erica Stahl, EDRF Liaison Lawyer
West Coast Environmental Law
estahl@wcel.org
604-684-7378 (or toll-free at 1-800-330-9235)

Top photo: Dead vegetation along the CN rail line, within 5 metres of the Skeena River, on riprap which drains directly into salmon habitat. (Luanne Roth)

Erica Stahl, Staff Lawyer

Last Updated on Saturday, 16 December 2017 15:25

373 readings

B.C. First Nations Call For Injunction on Site C as They Prepare Civil Suit

Justice News

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 15 December 2017 20:46

By Carol Linnitt • Monday, December 11, 2017 - 12:32

The West Moberly and Prophet River First Nations will seek an injunction against the Site C dam, which **received a green-light** from the B.C. government Monday.

The project, which will now cost an estimated \$10.7 billion, has been vigorously fought by both nations, whose traditional territory will be flooded by the Site C reservoir.

In addition to a court-sponsored injunction, the nations also announced they will pursue a civil case against the project for treaty infringement.

“It was John Horgan’s NDP that demanded a Site C inquiry by the B.C. Utilities Commission, and the results they received from it were clear: no need for the power, better alternatives once we do, and no advantage to ratepayers to proceed,” Chief Roland Willson said in a statement. “With those findings, the only responsible choice was to immediately

stop destroying the Peace River valley.”

A three-month investigation by the **B.C. Utilities Commission found** unresolved questions remained regarding Site C construction and the infringement of treaty rights.

Under Treaty 8, the government of Canada promised to guarantee the rights of local First Nations to hunt, trap, fish and continue their traditional way of life on their land. Although the two nations have brought and lost legal challenges in B.C. courts, the commission found the question of rights infringement is far from settled, saying the Crown would ultimately bear the risk of civil litigation should the province decide to continue with Site C.

Financial compensation would not be without precedent. The James Bay and Northern Quebec Final Agreement awarded \$225 million (nearly \$1 billion today) to Indigenous groups affected by hydro development there. The B.C. First Nations **warned** they would pursue a similar settlement if Site C were approved.

During a press conference Premier John Horgan said he recognized First Nations stand opposed to Site C and said his government remains committed to reconciliation and the principles of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

BREAKING: Two B.C. First Nations are asking for an injunction against **#SiteC** as they prepare a civil suit <https://t.co/tBahBKIEUU> pic.twitter.com/HihVgS5R3O

— DeSmog Canada
(@DeSmogCanada) **December**
11, 2017

“When it comes to reconciliation or working with Indigenous leadership, look there has been over 150 years of disappointment in British Columbia. I am not the first person to stand before you and disappoint Indigenous peoples,” Horgan said.

“But I am the first, I think, to stand before you and said that I am going to do my level best to make amends for a whole host of decisions, that previous governments have made to put Indigenous peoples in an unwinnable situation. To talk about resource sharing when all the resources are gone is not true reconciliation.”

“We have a lot of work to do. This is a very divisive issue,”

Horgan said.

“They have more than what they need in front of them to stop this project,” West Moberly First Nations chief Roland Willson told DeSmog Canada.

Willson said his nation “saw the writing on the wall” when Horgan declined to stop construction of Site C pending an independent review of the project by the watchdog B.C. Utilities Commission.

“I don’t think they had any intention of cancelling it,” he said. “I was hoping for so much more.”

“This province doesn’t have billions of dollars to waste on a make-work boondoggle for power we don’t even need,” Chief Lynette Tsakoza of Prophet River First Nation said in a statement.

She pointed to a filmed interview with Horgan’s from 2014 as indication of her nation’s legal standing.

“First Nations in the region have entrenched constitutional rights,” Horgan stated in that interview. “Not just the requirement for consultation and accommodation — which we always hear about when we’re talking about resource projects — but they have entrenched constitutional rights to practice hunting and fishing as before.”

“And that’s going to be violated by this dam.”

Under Horgan the B.C. government made a commitment to embrace and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which calls for “free, prior and informed” consent.

On September 13, 2017, the 10th anniversary of the declaration, Horgan said “Our government understands the enormous responsibility we have to Indigenous peoples, in the face of historical wrongs that have never been made right and in the wake of inaction by government after government.”

With files from Sarah Cox.

361 readings

NDP Government’s Site C Math a Flunk,
Say Project Financing Experts 

Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 17 December 2017 10:37

By Sarah Cox • Friday, December 15, 2017 - 12:01 Desmog

<https://www.desmog.ca/2017/12/15/ndp-government-s-site-c-math-flunk-say-project-financing-experts>



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The NDP government's arithmetic on **Site C** cancellation costs is "deeply flawed," has "no logic at all," and is "appalling," according to three project financing experts.

Eoin Finn, a retired partner of KPMG, one of the world's largest auditing firms, said Premier John Horgan's claim that terminating Site C would result in an almost immediate 12 per cent hydro rate hike is the "worst rationale I've heard since 'the dog ate my homework'" excuse.

"I expected better when the new government came in," said Finn. "They've just continued what [former premier] Christy Clark did to hide the true costs of Site C and hope that they get re-elected before the next generation finds out."

"This is the stupidest capital decision ever made by a B.C. premier. I don't know who is giving them accounting advice."

Rob Botterell, legal counsel for the **Peace Valley Landowner Association**, representing 70 landowners who will lose homes and property to the Site C dam,

called on the NDP government to disclose who advised Cabinet on hydro rate increases in the event that Site C were terminated.

"We call on you and your colleagues in Cabinet and Caucus to publicly release the detailed, un-redacted, information and advice and analysis on which you based this finding," Botterell wrote to Attorney General David Eby and Environment Minister George Heyman.

On Thursday, the landowner association and the Peace Valley Environment Association hand-delivered a letter to B.C. Auditor General Carol Bellringer, asking her to launch an "urgent examination" of the government's Site C termination and completion cost figures.

The letter also asked Bellringer to verify the cash impact of both scenarios on British Columbians.

The Auditor General's office was in the midst of investigating Site C's finances last summer when the new NDP government asked the watchdog B.C. Utilities Commission to review the project, which will flood the traditional homeland of Treaty 8 **First Nations**, violate basic **human rights**, force farming and ranching families from their **homes**, and destroy critical habitat for

rare and endangered **species**.

The **BCUC review** disclosed that Site C is over budget, behind schedule, beset with geotechnical issues and embroiled in legal and financial challenges with its main civil works contractor, which lost its Canadian partner earlier this year when Petrowest Corporation slid into receivership.

NDP Not Following Standard Accounting Practices, Experts Say

Horgan told reporters Monday that the only recourse if Site C were cancelled would be to hit BC Hydro customers almost immediately with a 12 per cent rate increase to cover the project's \$2.1 billion in sunk costs and \$1.8 billion in reclamation costs.

But Finn, along with U.S. energy economist Robert McCullough and Harry Swain, a retired bank president with expertise in project financing, told DeSmog Canada that standard accounting practice for utilities like BC Hydro is to write off the costs of a discontinued project over many years.

"What's appalling about this is that Cabinet has been advised by some people who simply don't understand how the finance system works," said Swain, the former CEO of Hambros Canada Inc. and a former board member of Hambros Bank Ltd. of London.

"I can't believe that their arithmetic is that bad," said Swain, who chaired the **Joint Review Panel** on Site C for the federal and provincial governments. "It's all very depressing."

McCullough, a former officer for a large hydroelectric facility in Portland, Oregon, said Site C's sunk costs — mainly accrued as former Premier Christy Clark attempted to push the project past the "point of no return" — can be amortized over the 70 years that Site C was expected to produce electricity, in keeping with

standard procedure for North American utilities.

"Ratepayers should not be punished for the utility making the correct policy decision, and nor would they be in any normal circumstance," said McCullough, who was hired by the Peace Valley Landowner Association to provide expert testimony for the BCUC review.

"It's not at all unusual for a project to stop and start for good reason," McCullough said, adding that one common reason for terminating an energy project is a change in policy.

Swain said Site C's sunk costs could be paid off over 30 years "without any heavy breathing at all."

Finn called the government's claim that terminating Site C would immediately incur up to \$150 million a year in new debt service charges "pure financial fiction," pointing out that BC Hydro has already borrowed the money and is paying interest on it so cancelling Site C will not make any difference.

What About Site C's Reclamation Costs?

McCullough said the reclamation costs could be dealt with swiftly if the government declared the disturbed area of the Peace River Valley a park, making it a provincial asset and removing remediation costs from Site C's books.

The cost of remediating the valley area already disturbed by clear cutting and bull-dozing for Site C is a matter of contention.

West Moberly First Nations chief Roland Willson has said the NDP's stated \$1.8 billion reclamation cost is greatly exaggerated. He urged BC Hydro and the government to make Site C's construction site safe and "go home," allowing natural regeneration of the boreal forest.

Even assuming that \$1.8 billion in reclamation costs is factored into the equation, cancelling Site C will result in a 4.9 per cent hydro rate hike starting in 2024, McCullough said.

But that compares very favourably to the 12.4 per cent rate hike that will hit hydro customers that same year if Site C continues, he pointed out.

And that's top of 30 per cent hydro rate increases already projected by the NDP government over the next 10 years, and also assuming that Site C's cost does not escalate further.

Site C was announced as a \$6.6 billion project in 2010. The price tag jumped to \$7.9 billion by 2013, then to \$8.8 billion in 2014.

On Monday, the NDP government revealed that the cost has soared to \$10.7 billion just two years into a nine-year construction schedule, raising questions about whether Site C will become a boondoggle like Labrador's **Muskrat Falls** dam, which will add an average \$1,800 to the annual hydro bills of every household in that province.

What Happened to That

Independent BCUC Oversight?

The NDP continues to criticize the former Liberal government for failing to send Site C to the BCUC for review before it decided to proceed with the Peace River project.

Yet, according to the three project financing experts, Cabinet neglected to follow proper procedure and allow the BCUC — an independent regulator that makes decisions based on the best financial interests of hydro customers — to decide how Site C's termination costs could be best distributed to avoid a rate shock.

Swain called the matter an "ordinary regulatory decision," while Finn said it is "not the government's business" to decide how Site C's termination costs would be allocated.

"The government has no right to make that judgment," said Finn, adding that the only way Cabinet can override BCUC oversight is to pass an Order in Council.

"They're side-stepping the legal obligation under the Utilities Act to involve the BCUC. They never asked the B.C. Utilities Commission."

Horgan's office confirmed to DeSmog Canada on Thursday that Cabinet did not pass an Order in Council.

In puzzling logic, Eby said in a public statement on Thursday that the recovery period for Site C's costs would only be subject to an independent BCUC review "if, and when these costs are incurred," meaning that the BCUC would only be able to make that decision after Cabinet decided to cancel Site C.

McCullough, whose testimony to a U.S. Senate Committee helped spark the criminal investigation into Enron, said recovery of an energy project's termination cost is "a very common practice in the utility business and is addressed in every utility's annual report."

What About B.C.'s Credit Rating?

McCullough also pointed out that B.C.'s triple A credit rating has just been confirmed.

Contrary to statements made by the NDP, cancelling Site C does not put the province's credit rating in jeopardy because Site C's sunk costs have already been financed with 30-year bonds, he said.

On the other hand, spending at least \$8 billion more to complete Site C when its power can be replaced for only \$4 billion, "may concern the bond raters," McCullough wrote in a December 11 memorandum for the landowner association.

He pointed out that the same issue was a factor in the **downgrading of Newfoundland** and **Manitoba's credit ratings** as both provinces grappled with huge cost overruns on large hydro dam projects.

"Even if the inflated \$1.8 billion in termination costs are added, cancelling Site C will save ratepayers at least \$266 million [a] year or \$123 [per] household in 2024," McCullough wrote in comments the landowner association submitted to Bellringer's office.

Image: Premier John Horgan announces his government's plans to proceed with the Site C dam, December 11, 2017. Photo: [Province of B.C.](#) via Flickr



The NDP government's arithmetic on [Site C](#) cancellation costs is "deeply flawed," has "no logic at all," and is "appalling," according to three project financing experts.

Eoin Finn, a retired partner of KPMG, one of the world's largest auditing firms, said Premier John Horgan's claim that terminating Site C would result in an almost immediate 12 per cent hydro rate hike is the "worst rationale I've heard since 'the dog ate my homework'" excuse.

"I expected better when the new government came in," said Finn. "They've just continued what [former premier] Christy Clark did to hide the true costs of Site C and hope that they get re-elected before the next generation finds out."

"This is the stupidest capital decision ever made by a B.C. premier. I don't know who is giving them accounting advice."

Rob Botterell, legal counsel for the [Peace Valley Landowner Association](#), representing 70 landowners who will lose homes and property to the Site C dam, called on the NDP government to disclose who advised Cabinet on hydro rate increases in the event that Site C were terminated.

"We call on you and your colleagues in Cabinet and Caucus to publicly release the detailed, un-redacted, information and advice and analysis on which you based this finding," Botterell wrote to Attorney General David Eby and Environment Minister George Heyman.

On Thursday, the landowner association and the Peace Valley Environment Association hand-delivered a letter to B.C. Auditor General Carol Bellringer, asking her to launch an "urgent examination" of the government's Site C termination and completion cost figures.

The letter also asked Bellringer to verify the cash impact of both scenarios on British Columbians.

The Auditor General's office was in the midst of investigating Site C's finances last summer when the new NDP government asked the watchdog B.C. Utilities Commission to review the project, which will flood the traditional homeland of Treaty 8 [First Nations](#), violate basic [human rights](#), force farming and ranching

families from their **homes**, and

destroy critical habitat for rare and endangered **species**.

The **BCUC review** disclosed that Site C is over budget, behind schedule, beset with geotechnical issues and embroiled in legal and financial challenges with its main civil works contractor, which lost its Canadian partner earlier this year when Petrowest Corporation slid into receivership.

NDP Not Following Standard Accounting Practices, Experts Say

Horgan told reporters Monday that the only recourse if Site C were cancelled would be to hit BC Hydro customers almost immediately with a 12 per cent rate increase to cover the project's \$2.1 billion in sunk costs and \$1.8 billion in reclamation costs.

But Finn, along with U.S. energy economist Robert McCullough and Harry Swain, a retired bank president with expertise in project financing, told DeSmog Canada that standard accounting practice for utilities like BC Hydro is to write off the costs of a discontinued project over many years.

"What's appalling about this is that Cabinet has been advised by some people who simply don't understand how the finance system works," said Swain, the former CEO of Hambros Canada Inc. and a former board member of Hambros Bank Ltd. of London.

"I can't believe that their arithmetic is that bad," said Swain, who chaired the **Joint Review Panel** on Site C for the federal and provincial governments. "It's all very depressing."

McCullough, a former officer for a large hydroelectric facility in Portland, Oregon, said Site C's sunk costs — mainly accrued as former Premier Christy Clark attempted to push the project past the "point of no return" — can be amortized over the 70 years that Site C was expected to produce electricity, in keeping with standard procedure for

North American utilities.

"Ratepayers should not be punished for the utility making the correct policy decision, and nor would they be in any normal circumstance," said McCullough, who was hired by the Peace Valley Landowner Association to provide expert testimony for the BCUC review.

"It's not at all unusual for a project to stop and start for good reason," McCullough said, adding that one common reason for terminating an energy project is a change in policy.

Swain said Site C's sunk costs could be paid off over 30 years "without any heavy breathing at all."

Finn called the government's claim that terminating Site C would immediately incur up to \$150 million a year in new debt service charges "pure financial fiction," pointing out that BC Hydro has already borrowed the money and is paying interest on it so cancelling Site C will not make any difference.

What About Site C's Reclamation Costs?

McCullough said the reclamation costs could be dealt with swiftly if the government declared the disturbed area of the Peace River Valley a park, making it a provincial asset and removing remediation costs from Site C's books.

The cost of remediating the valley area already disturbed by clear cutting and bull-dozing for Site C is a matter of contention.

West Moberly First Nations chief Roland Willson has said the NDP's stated \$1.8 billion reclamation cost is greatly exaggerated. He urged BC Hydro and the government to make Site C's construction site safe and "go home," allowing natural regeneration of the boreal forest.

Even assuming that \$1.8 billion in reclamation costs is factored into the equation, cancelling Site C will result in a 4.9 per cent hydro rate hike starting in 2024, McCullough said.

But that compares very favourably to the 12.4 per cent rate hike that will hit hydro customers that same year if Site C continues, he pointed out.

And that's top of 30 per cent hydro rate increases already projected by the NDP government over the next 10 years, and also assuming that Site C's cost does not escalate further.

Site C was announced as a \$6.6 billion project in 2010. The price tag jumped to \$7.9 billion by 2013, then to \$8.8 billion in 2014.

On Monday, the NDP government revealed that the cost has soared to \$10.7 billion just two years into a nine-year construction schedule, raising questions about whether Site C will become a boondoggle like Labrador's **Muskrat Falls** dam, which will add an average \$1,800 to the annual hydro bills of every household in that province.

What Happened to That Independent BCUC Oversight?

The NDP continues to criticize the former Liberal government for failing to send Site C to the BCUC for review before it decided to proceed with the Peace River project.

Yet, according to the three project financing experts, Cabinet neglected to follow proper procedure and allow the BCUC — an independent regulator that makes decisions based on the best financial interests of hydro customers — to decide how Site C's termination costs could be best distributed to avoid a rate shock.

Swain called the matter an "ordinary regulatory decision," while Finn said it is "not the government's business" to decide how Site C's termination costs would be allocated.

"The government has no right to make that judgment," said Finn, adding that the only way Cabinet can override BCUCoversight is to pass an Order in Council.

"They're side-stepping the legal obligation under the Utilities Act to involve

the BCUC. They never asked the B.C. Utilities Commission.”

Horgan’s office confirmed to DeSmog Canada on Thursday that Cabinet did not pass an Order in Council.

In puzzling logic, Eby said in a public statement on Thursday that the recovery period for Site C’s costs would only be subject to an independent BCUC review “if, and when these costs are incurred,” meaning that the BCUC would only be able to make that decision after Cabinet decided to cancel Site C.

McCullough, whose testimony to a U.S. Senate Committee helped spark the criminal investigation into Enron, said recovery of an energy project’s termination cost is “a very common practice in the utility business and is addressed in every utility’s annual report.”

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342 readings

“Only Our Youth Can Save the Planet” – Kumi Naidoo



Earth News

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 20 December 2017 13:32

“Only Our Youth Can Save the Planet” – Kumi Naidoo

By [Pascal Laureyn](#) Reprint |



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Kumi Naidoo

SUVA, Fiji, Dec 20 2017 (IPS) - “Today’s youth should think of new solutions for old problems like climate change and social injustice.”

That’s the strong message of the South African activist Kumi Naidoo. The former executive director of Greenpeace says young people need to be more innovative and visionary, “because the solutions of my generation have failed.”

After battling apartheid in South Africa, Kumi Naidoo led numerous global campaigns to protect human rights.

Among other organizations, he headed CIVICUS, an alliance for citizen participation. It was at the International Civil Society Week (ICSW), organized by CIVICUS in Fiji in December, that Naidoo spoke out on youth and innovation.

“My advise for young people is: don’t put any faith in the current leaders. They are the biggest bunch of losers you are going to find. Because they are unwilling to accept that they have got us into this mess,” says Naidoo.

“Basically, we are using old solutions that have never worked in the past

anyway,” Naidoo continues.

Albert Einstein said: ‘the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, expecting to get different results.’ If humanity continues to do what we always did, we will get what always got: inequality, unsustainability and environmental destruction.”

How can young people steer the planet away from insanity?

“The most valuable role that they can play, is bringing fresh lenses to old problems. And not to be scared to be called romantic, unrealistic or idealistic. The so called realistic solutions to today’s problems are ineffective.”

“In terms of innovation, I really think that the best solutions in the world – even on a small scale – are coming from young people. For example: Four years ago, a group of young schoolgirls in Zambia designed a generator that could run for five hours on one liter of human urine.”

Can local innovation change the whole world?

“We are obsessed with big infrastructure. We have to break out of that. In Africa, the rural population is short of energy. Big power plants are not going to help those people. Politics get in the way. And lots of energy gets lost in the transmission process. The solution is simple: small grids. All we need is 20 solar panels and connect them to 50 homes. It can be done quickly, it’s

not rocket

science.”

You have been a vocal critic of global bodies like the World Economic Forum. You proposed a system re-design. What do you mean by that?

“We are heading towards irreversible and catastrophic climate change. It’s one of the worst cases of cognitive dissonance. All the facts are telling us we have to change. Over the last 10 years, there has been an increase of 100 percent of extreme weather. But nothing is done. Therefore, I believe that innovation will not come from people who are trained in an old system.”

“I’m inspired by my daughter. She was in her early teens when she said that my generation is contaminated by decades of bad experiences. She was right. The current generation has run out of fresh ideas. Young people will learn more easily, they are essential to innovation. Like the founders of Google, how old were they?”

What’s your dream for the future?

“That young people could recalibrate our values and convince the world that excessive consumption does not lead to happiness. I hope that they take us back to basics: a sense of community, sharing and equity. I hope that young people will be able to take us from a polluting economy to one that is based on green and renewable energy. And that extreme poverty will

be completely eradicated.”

“My final message to our youth is: you have to resist the old wisdom that young people are the leaders of tomorrow. If you wait until tomorrow, there might not be a tomorrow to exercise it.”

This article is part of a series about the activists and communities of the Pacific who are responding to the effects of climate change. Leaders from climate and social justice movements from around the world met in Suva, Fiji, 4 December through 8 December 2017 for International Civil Society Week.