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Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 09 January 2019 09:56

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E-MAIL: registry@ohchr.org REFERENCE: CERD/EWUAP/Canada-Site C dam/2018/JP/ks 14 December 2018 Excellency,

I would like to inform you that in the course of its 97th Session, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination considered information received related to Site C dam and its impact on affected indigenous peoples in the Province of British Columbia, in Canada.

According to the information received, the provincial government of British Columbia announced, in December 2017, that construction of the Site C dam would continue.

In this regard, the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) has launched a civil suit against the construction of the dam and asked for an interim injunction, subsequently denied, to halt construction until the case is settled.

The Committee is concerned about the alleged lack of measures taken to ensure the right to consultation and free, prior and informed consent with regard to the Site C dam, considering its impact on indigenous peoples control and use of their lands and natural resources.

The Committee is further concerned that the realization of the Site C dam without free, prior and informed consent, would permanently affects the land rights of affected

indigenous peoples in the Province of British Columbia.

Accordingly, it would infringe indigenous peoples' rights protected under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The Committee would like to recall paragraph 20 of its 2017 concluding observations (CERD/C/CAN/CO/21-23), and requests the State party to provide information on the steps taken to suspend the Site C dam until free, prior and informed consent is obtained, following the full and adequate discharge of the duty to consult. Her Excellency Ms. Rosemary McCarney Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations Office Geneva Email: genev-gr@international.gc.ca PAGE 2 In this regard, the Committee encourages the State party to consider engaging with the United Nations Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) that is mandated by the Human Rights Council (resolution 33/25, paragraph 2), to provide States with technical advice on the rights of indigenous peoples and facilitate dialogue between States, indigenous peoples and/or the private sector. In accordance with article 9 (1) of the Convention and article 65 of its Rules of Procedure, the Committee requests the State party to submit its response before 8 April 2019. Allow me, Excellency, to reiterate the wish of the Committee to continue to engage in a constructive dialogue with the Government of Canada, with a view to ensuring the effective implementation of the Convention. Yours sincerely, Nouredine Amir Chair Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

1004 readings

[United Nations instructs Canada to suspend Site C dam construction over Indigenous rights violations](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 10 January 2019 13:56

United Nations instructs Canada to suspend Site C dam construction over Indigenous rights violations

The world's foremost racial discrimination committee says Canada must work with Indigenous communities to find an alternative to the \$10.7 billion hydro project in B.C.

Sarah Cox Jan 9, 2019

<https://thenarwhal.ca/united-nations-instructs-canada-to-suspend-site-c-dam-construction-over-indigenous-rights-violations/>In a rare rebuke, the United Nations has instructed Canada to suspend construction of the Site C dam on B.C.'s Peace River until the project obtains the "free, prior and informed consent" of Indigenous peoples.

Canada has until April 8 to report back to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination outlining steps it has taken to

halt construction of the hydro project, which would flood 128 kilometres of the Peace River and its tributaries in the heart of Treaty 8 traditional territory.

The unusual request from one of the world's top human rights bodies was made by committee chair Noureddine Amir in a December 14 letter to Canada's UN Ambassador Rosemary McCarney.

It comes as Canada vies for a coveted seat on the UN Security Council and two Treaty 8 First Nations await a court date to determine if the Site C project unjustifiably infringes on their constitutionally protected treaty rights, as they claim in civil actions filed last January.

“The Committee is concerned about the alleged lack of measures taken to ensure the right to consultation and free, prior and informed consent with regard to the Site C dam, considering its impact on indigenous peoples' control and use of their lands and natural resources,” wrote Amir, an Algerian law professor and former diplomat.

“The Committee is further concerned that the realization of the Site C dam without free, prior and informed consent, would permanently affect the land rights of affected indigenous peoples in the Province of British Columbia. Accordingly, it would infringe indigenous peoples' rights protected under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.”

Canada missed an August 2018 deadline to report back to the committee on the Site C project, which was approved by the federal government in 2014 and green-lighted by B.C.'s new NDP government in December 2017.

Amnesty International spokesperson Craig Benjamin told The Narwhal that the federal and B.C. governments “misinterpreted” the UN committee's 2017 recommendation that work on the Site C project be suspended, pending a full review in collaboration with Indigenous peoples that includes identifying alternatives to the irreversible destruction of Indigenous lands.

Both governments “took far too casual an approach” to the

committee' s languishing request for an update, he said.

“That was very much reflective of their view that they could get away with that, that they could ride on their reputation as a human rights defender and that the committee wouldn' t take them to task,” said Benjamin, Amnesty Canada' s campaigner for the human rights of Indigenous peoples.

“They' re discovering now just how seriously the committee takes this issue.”

Grand Chief Edward John, a lawyer and hereditary chief of Tl' azt' en First Nation in B.C.' s northern interior, pointed out that the Trudeau government has repeatedly committed to forging a new relationship with Indigenous peoples and to upholding international human rights standards.

“If that' s the case then there needs to be action on this matter,” said John, a former member of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

“Canada can' t condemn China on its human rights record while at the same time a UN body is questioning its ability to deal with human rights issues dealing with Indigenous peoples in this country,” John said in an interview.

Both the federal and B.C. governments have pledged to uphold the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which states that resource projects like the Site C dam must have the free, prior and informed consent of affected Indigenous communities.

Roland Willson, chief of West Moberly First Nations, one of the nations challenging the legality of the Site C dam, has called the project “cultural genocide.”

Among many other impacts, the dam' s reservoir would flood dozens of places of cultural and spiritual significance for Treaty 8 nations, including Indigenous gravesites. It would also destroy traditional hunting and trapping grounds, poison bull trout and other fish with methylmercury and eliminate habitat for more than 100 species vulnerable to extinction.

Benjamin pointed out that the committee is not asking Canada for any more information about its decision to approve the Site C dam and to

issue multiple permits for the 9-year construction project, whose price tag has soared from \$6.6 billion to \$10.7 billion.

“There’s really no room here for Canada to respond and offer excuses.”

The UN committee sent the letter to the Trudeau government following a 5-page letter it received from the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs noting Canada’s failure to report back to the committee and asking the committee to elevate the status of the case.

“We are gravely concerned at Canada’s disregard for the CERD [Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination] recommendations and the rights of Indigenous peoples in general,” said the November 20 letter from the UBCIC executive, a copy of which was shared with The Narwhal.

The letter also noted that First Nations were denied an interim injunction to halt work on Site C until their civil suits could be heard. The UBCIC said it is concerned that “irreparable harm will be done before the court is able to rule on this crucial outstanding issue of the impact on Treaty Rights.”

Amir’s letter encourages Canada to seek expert UN advice on the rights of Indigenous peoples through a mechanism that provides states with technical advice and helps facilitate dialogue with Indigenous peoples — a mechanism Canada has strongly supported in the international arena.

“That’s a huge, good piece of advice for Canada and the provincial government,” commented Chief Judy Wilson, secretary treasurer of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs.

“I think the letter is timely, seeing that we have not only Site C but the Taseko mine and the Wet’suwet’en [standoff over construction of oil and gas pipelines] and… the TransMountain pipeline,” said Wilson, who attended a meeting of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in Geneva in 2017 and spoke to committee members about the Site C project and other issues of pressing importance to Indigenous communities in B.C.

“Clearly the nations are saying they have not given their consent

and they' re still ploughing through with major projects through territories,” Wilson told The Narwhal. “Canada has not responded to that. In all of their reconciliation talks and announcements they' re largely ignoring that.”

Benjamin called the letter a “pretty serious blow to the complacency of the federal and provincial governments.”

The B.C. government has taken the view that ignoring treaty rights obligations and continuing with business as usual is “perfectly okay” while the fundamental issue of constitutionally protected rights is still before the courts, Benjamin said.

“Here we have one of the world' s top human rights bodies, the body specifically established to address racial discrimination, not only contradicting this view [and] saying this is not okay but elevating it to this level of urgency.”

Global Affairs Canada requested e-mailed questions from The Narwhal that, once received, were left unanswered.

Wilson said the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs sent a letter to the federal government this week asking them to respond to the UN committee' s request to suspend Site C dam construction.

“The federal government signed those conventions, those covenants,” she said. “The human rights one is a major one and the UN declaration [on the rights of Indigenous peoples] is the global human rights standard.”

601 readings

[Indigenous People, the First Victims of Brazil' s New Far-Right Government](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 12 January 2019 09:51

INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

Indigenous People, the First Victims of Brazil's New Far-Right Government



"We are fighting for the demarcation of our territory," reads a banner in a march of indigenous women who came to Rio de Janeiro from the communities of the 305 native peoples of Brazil, to demand respect for the rights recognised by the constitution, which far-right President Jair Bolsonaro began to ignore as soon as he was sworn in. Credit: Mario Osava/IPS

RIO DE JANEIRO, Jan 10 2019 (IPS) - "We have already been decimated and subjected, and we have been victims of the integrationist policy of governments and the national state," said indigenous leaders, as they rejected the new Brazilian government's proposals and measures focusing on indigenous peoples.

In an open letter to President Jair Bolsonaro, leaders of the Aruak, Baniwa and Apurinã peoples, who live in the watersheds of the Negro and Purus rivers in Brazil's northwestern Amazon jungle region, protested against the decree that now puts indigenous lands under the Ministry of Agriculture, which manages interests that run counter to those of native peoples.

Indigenous people are likely to present the strongest resistance to the offensive of Brazil's new far-right government, which took office on Jan. 1 and whose first measures roll back progress made over the past three decades in favor of the 305 indigenous peoples registered in this country.

Native peoples are protected by article 231 of the Brazilian constitution, in force since 1988, which guarantees them "original rights over the lands they traditionally occupy," in addition to recognising their "social organisation,

customs, languages, beliefs and traditions.”

To this are added international regulations ratified by the country, such as [Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples](#) of the [International Labor Organisation](#), which defends indigenous rights, such as the right to prior, free and informed consultation in relation to mining or other projects that affect their communities.

It was indigenous people who mounted the stiffest resistance to the construction of hydroelectric dams on large rivers in the Amazon rainforest, especially Belo Monte, built on the Xingu River between 2011 and 2016 and whose turbines are expected to be completed this year.

Transferring the responsibility of identifying and demarcating indigenous reservations from the National Indigenous Foundation (Funai) to the Ministry of Agriculture will hinder the demarcation of new areas and endanger existing ones.

There will be a review of the demarcations of Indigenous Lands carried out over the past 10 years, announced Luiz Nabhan García, the ministry’s new secretary of land affairs, who is now responsible for the issue.

García is the leader of the Democratic Ruralist Union, a collective of landowners, especially cattle ranchers, involved in frequent and violent conflicts over land.

Bolsonaro himself has already announced the intention to review Raposa Serra do Sol, an Indigenous Land legalised in 2005, amid legal battles brought to an end by a 2009 Supreme Court ruling, which recognised the validity of the demarcation.



Hamilton Lopes and his daughter, members of the Guarani indigenous community, stand in front of their hut, where their family lives a precarious existence on land that has not been demarcated, where they face threats of expulsion, on Brazil’s border with Paraguay. Large landowners seize the lands of the Guarani, the second-largest native community in the country, causing a large number of murders and suicides of indigenous people. Credit: Mario Osava/IPS

This indigenous territory covers 17,474 square kilometers and is home to some 20,000 members of five different native groups in the northern state of Roraima, on the border with Guyana and Venezuela.

In Brazil there are currently 486 Indigenous Lands whose demarcation process is complete, and 235 awaiting demarcation, including 118 in the identification phase, 43 already identified and 74 “declared”.

“The political leaders talk, but revising the Indigenous Lands would require a constitutional amendment or proof that there has been fraud or wrongdoing in the identification and demarcation process, which is not apparently frequent,” said Adriana Ramos, director of the [Socio-environmental Institute](#), a highly respected non-governmental organisation involved in indigenous and environmental issues.

“The first decisions taken by the government have already brought setbacks, with the weakening of the indigenous affairs office and its responsibilities. The

Ministry of Health also announced changes in the policy toward the indigenous population, without presenting proposals, threatening to worsen an already bad situation,” she told IPS from Brasilia.

“The process of land demarcation, which was already very slow in previous governments, is going to be even slower now,” and the worst thing is that the declarations against rights “operate as a trigger for violations that aggravate conflicts, generating insecurity among indigenous peoples,” warned Ramos.

In the first few days of the new year, and of the Bolsonaro administration, loggers already invaded the Indigenous Land of the Arara people, near Belo Monte, posing a risk of armed clashes, she said.

The indigenous Guaraní people, the second largest indigenous group in the country, after the Tikuna, who live in the north, are the most vulnerable to the situation, especially their communities in the central-eastern state of Mato Grosso do Sul.

They are fighting for the demarcation of several lands and the expansion of too-small areas that are already demarcated, and dozens of their leaders have been murdered in that struggle, while they endure increasingly precarious living conditions that threaten their very survival.



Karioca Cupobo Indians are painted and armed for combat before participating in a demonstration for indigenous rights in Rio de

Janeiro, Brazil. Credit: Mario Osava/IPS

“The grave situation is getting worse under the new government. They are strangling us by dividing Funai and handing the demarcation process to the Ministry of Agriculture, led by ruralists – the number one enemies of indigenous people,” said Inaye Gomes Lopes, a young indigenous teacher who lives in the village of Ñanderu Marangatu in Mato Grosso do Sul, near the Paraguayan border.

Funai has kept its welfare and rights defence functions but is now subordinate to the new Ministry of Women, Family and Human Rights, led by Damares Alves, a controversial lawyer and evangelical pastor.

“We only have eight Indigenous Lands demarcated in the state and one was annulled (in December). What we have is due to the many people who have died, whose murderers have never been put in prison,” said Lopes, who teaches at a school that pays tribute in indigenous language to Marçal de Souza, a Guarani leader murdered in 1982.

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- [Large Landowners Jeopardise Indigenous Revival in Brazil](#)

“We look for ways to resist and we look for ‘supporters’, at an international level as well. I’m worried, I don’t sleep at night,” she told IPS in a dialogue from her village, referring to the new government, whose expressions regarding indigenous people she called “an injustice to us.”

Bolsonaro advocates “integration” of indigenous people, referring to assimilation into the mainstream “white” society – an outdated idea of the white elites.

He complained that indigenous people continue to live “like in zoos,” occupying “15 percent of the national territory,” when, according to his data, they number less than a million people in a country of 209 million inhabitants.

“It’s not us who have a large part of Brazil’s territory, but the big landowners, the ruralists, agribusiness and others who own more than 60 percent of the national territory,” countered the public letter from the the Aruak, Baniwa and Apurinã peoples.

Actually, Indigenous Lands make up 13 percent of Brazilian territory, and 90 percent are located in the Amazon rainforest, the signatories of the open letter

said.

“We are not manipulated by NGOs,” they replied to another accusation which they said arose from the president’s “prejudices.”

A worry shared by some military leaders, like the minister of the Institutional Security Cabinet, retired General Augusto Heleno Pereira, is that the inhabitants of Indigenous Lands under the influence of NGOs will declare the independence of their territories, to separate from Brazil.

They are mainly worried about border areas and, especially, those occupied by people living on both sides of the border, such as the Yanomami, who live in Brazil and Venezuela.

But in Ramos’ view, it is not the members of the military forming part of the Bolsonaro government, like the generals occupying five ministries, the vice presidency, and other important posts, who pose the greatest threat to indigenous rights.

Many military officers have indigenous people among their troops and recognise that they share in the task of defending the borders, she argued.

It is the ruralists, who want to get their hands on indigenous lands, and the leaders of evangelical churches, with their aggressive preaching, who represent the most violent threats, she said.

The new government spells trouble for other sectors as well, such as the quilombolas (Afro-descendant communities), landless rural workers and NGOs.

Bolsonaro announced that his administration would not give “a centimeter of land” to either indigenous communities or quilombolas, and said it would those who invade estates or other properties as “terrorists.”

And the government has threatened to “supervise and monitor” NGOs. But “the laws are clear about their rights to organise,” as well as about the autonomy of those who do not receive financial support from the state, Ramos said.

664 readings

[Climate Change Forces Central American Farmers to Migrate](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 12 January 2019 09:54



Gilberto Gómez stands next to the cow he bought with the support of his migrant children in the United States, which eases the impact of the loss of his subsistence crops, in the village of La Colmena, Candelaria de la Frontera municipality in western El Salvador. This area forms part of the Central American Dry Corridor, where increasing climate vulnerability is driving migration of the rural population. Credit: Edgardo Ayala/IPS

CANDELARIA DE LA FRONTERA, El Salvador, Jan 2 2019 (IPS) - As he milks his cow, Salvadoran Gilberto Gomez laments that poor harvests, due to excessive rain or drought, practically forced his three children to leave the country and undertake the risky journey, as undocumented migrants, to the United States.

Gómez, 67, lives in La Colmena, in the municipality of Candelaria de la Frontera, in the western Salvadoran department of Santa Ana.

The small hamlet is located in the so-called Dry Corridor of Central America, a vast area that crosses much of the isthmus, but whose extreme weather especially affects crops in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.

“They became disillusioned, seeing that almost every year we lost a good part of our crops, and they decided they had to leave, because they didn’t see how they could build a future here,” Gómez told IPS, as he untied the cow’s hind legs after milking.

He said that his eldest son, Santos Giovanni, for example, also grew corn and beans on a plot of land the same size as his own, “but sometimes he didn’t get anything, either because it rained a lot, or because of drought.”

The year his children left, in 2015, Santos Giovanni lost two-thirds of the crop to an unusually extreme drought.

“It’s impossible to go on like this,” lamented Gómez, who says that of the 15

families in La Colmena, many have shrunk due to migration because of problems similar to those of his son.

The Dry Corridor, particularly in these three nations, has experienced the most severe droughts of the last 10 years, leaving more than 3.5 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, [a report](#) by the United Nations [Food and Agriculture Organisation](#) (FAO) warned as early as 2016.

Now Gómez's daughter, Ana Elsa, 28, and his two sons, Santos Giovanni, 31, and Luis Armando, 17, all live in Los Angeles, California.

"Sometimes they call us, and tell us they're okay, that they have jobs," he said.

The case of the Gómez family illustrates the phenomenon of migration and its link with climate change and its impact on harvests, and thus on food insecurity among Central American peasant families.

La Colmena, which lacks piped water and electricity, benefited a few years ago from a project to harvest rainwater, which villagers filter to drink, as well as reservoirs to water livestock.

However, their crops are still vulnerable to the onslaught of heavy rains and increasingly unpredictable and intense droughts.



Domitila Reyes pulls corn cobs from a plantation in Ciudad Romero, a rural settlement in the municipality of Jiquilisco, in eastern El Salvador. The production of basic grains such as corn and beans has been affected by climate change in large areas of the country. Credit: Edgardo Ayala/IPS

In addition to the violence and poverty, climate change is the third cause of the exodus of Central Americans, especially from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, according to the new [Atlas of Migration in Northern Central America](#).

The report, released Dec. 12 by the [Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean](#) (ECLAC) and FAO, underscores that the majority of migrants from these three countries come from rural areas.

Between 2000 and 2012, the report says, there was an increase of nearly 59 percent in the number of people migrating from these three countries, which make up the so-called Northern Triangle of Central America. In Guatemala, 77 percent of the people living in rural areas are poor, and in Honduras the proportion is 82 percent.

In recent months, waves of citizens from Honduras and El Salvador have embarked on the long journey on foot to the United States, with the idea that it would be safer if they travelled in large groups.

Related IPS Articles

- [Climate Change Drives Up Rural Poverty in Latin America](#)
- [Central American Farmers Face Climate Change Without Insurance](#)

Travelling as an undocumented migrant to the United States carries a series of risks: they can fall prey to criminal gangs, especially when crossing Mexico, or die on the long treks through the desert.

Another report published by FAO in December, [Mesoamerica in Transit](#), states that of the nearly 30 million international migrants from Latin America, some four million come from the Northern Triangle and another 11 million from Mexico.

The study adds that among the main factors driving migration in El Salvador are poverty in the departments of Ahuachapán, Cabañas, San Vicente and Sonsonate; environmental vulnerability in Chalatenango, Cuscatlán, La Libertad and San Salvador; and soaring violence in La Paz, Morazán and San Salvador.

And according to the report, Honduran migration is strongly linked to the lack of opportunities, and to high levels of poverty and violence in the northwest of the country and to environmental vulnerability in the center-south.

With respect to Guatemala, the report indicates that although in this country migration patterns are not so strongly linked to specific characteristics of different territories, migration is higher in municipalities where the percentage of the population without secondary education is larger.

In Mexico, migration is linked to poverty in the south and violence in the west, northwest and northeast, while environmental vulnerability problems seem to be cross-cutting.

“The report shows a compelling and comprehensive view of the phenomenon: the decision to migrate is the individual’s, but it is conditioned by their surroundings,” Luiz Carlos Beduschi, FAO Rural Development Officer, told IPS from Santiago, Chile, the U.N. organisation’s regional headquarters.

He added that understanding what is happening in the field is fundamental to understanding migratory dynamics as a whole.

The study, published Dec. 18, makes a “multicausal analysis; the decision to stay or migrate is conditioned by a set of factors, including climate, especially in the Dry Corridor of Central America,” Beduschi said.

For the FAO expert, it is necessary to promote policies that offer rural producers “better opportunities for them and their families in their places of origin.”

It is a question, he said, “of guaranteeing that they have the necessary conditions to freely decide whether to stay at home or to migrate elsewhere,” and keeping rural areas from expelling the local population as a result of poverty, violence, climate change and lack of opportunities.

In the case of El Salvador, while there is government awareness of the impacts of climate change on crops and the risk it poses to food security, little has been done to promote public policies to confront the phenomenon, activist Luis González told IPS.

“There are national plans and strategies to confront climate change, to address the water issue, among other questions, but the problem is implementation: it looks nice on paper, but little is done, and much of this is due to lack of resources,” added González, a member of the Roundtable for Food Sovereignty, a conglomerate of social organisations fighting for this objective.

Meanwhile, in La Colmena, Gómez has given his wife, Teodora, the fresh milk they will use to make cheese.

They are happy that they have the cow, bought with the money their daughter sent from Los Angeles, and they are hopeful that the weather won’t spoil the coming harvest.

“With this cheese we earn enough for a small meal,” he said.

1099 readings

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Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 15 January 2019 16:39



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[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 16 January 2019 09:37

By [Thalif Deen](#)



António Guterres takes the oath of office for his five-year term as UN Secretary-General. Credit: UN Photo/Mark Garten

UNITED NATIONS, Jan 14 2019 (IPS) - The world's developing countries, comprising over two-thirds of the 193 UN member states, are complaining they are not being adequately represented in the higher echelons of the world body — despite competent candidates with strong professional and academic qualifications vying for these jobs.

The 134-member Group of 77, the largest single coalition of developing countries, says “persistent imbalances in equitable geographic representation in the UN Secretariat are a major concern.”

While the UN is being commended for ensuring equitable representation of women in recent years, it still stands accused of neglecting qualified nationals of developing countries, including from Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean.

The high-level jobs go mostly to nationals of either Western nations, big donors or the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (P-5), namely, the US, UK, France, Russia and China.

“Every Secretary-General, with no exception, caves into the demands of big powers,” one Asian diplomat told IPS, “These countries think high-ranking UN jobs are their political birthright”.

Addressing the UN's Administrative and Budgetary Committee (Fifth Committee), and speaking on behalf of the G77 and China, Karim Ismail of Egypt, told delegates last November that equitable geographic representation is key to ensuring the Organization's international character and its Member States.

Urging the Secretariat to expedite efforts in this direction, including the

representation of troop- and police-contributing countries (TCCs/PCCs), he called for more transparency in how geographical representation is measured and the basis for such assessment.

“The Assembly needs more complete and easily understandable information on how gender parity and geographical representation are reflected in the 38,000 posts across the Secretariat,” he added.

The high-level posts include Under Secretaries-Generals (USGs), Assistant Secretaries-Generals (ASGs), Directors (categorized as D-1s and D-2s), heads of UN peacekeeping missions overseas, mostly based in Africa, and Special Envoys of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

According to a system of geographical balance, when the secretary-general is from a Western nation, the deputy secretary-general is from the developing world, and vice versa. Currently, Amina Mohammed from Nigeria, holds the second highest ranking job in the world body, next in command to Guterres, a former Prime Minister of Portugal.

Ian Richards, president of the 60,000-strong Coordinating Committee of the UN’s International Staff Unions and Associations (CCISUA), told IPS: “The current situation in which staff from developing countries are less likely to make it to the top is unacceptable and unfortunately mirrors political and financial influence in the system.”

An organization cannot talk about putting performance at the heart of human resources management and selection, if nationality continues to be a key consideration at senior levels, he pointed out.

Linked to this, he said, is the ongoing revolving door between the General Assembly and senior staff positions, for which there is no cooling-off period, and which undermines the independence of the UN.

“Guterres needs to have a frank discussion on this,” declared Richards. Otherwise, he warned, the UN’s much-touted reforms will be an exercise in futility— and will not mean much.

The biggest contributors to the UN’s regular budget, who stake their claims for top jobs, include: the US, China, Japan, Germany, France, UK, Italy and Russia. Amongst Asian countries, China (a member of the G77) and Japan (although Asian, but not a G77 member, still wielding economic clout as a major donor) are both favoured in senior UN appointments.

But Asia is not merely China, Japan or India, one of the world’s most populous nations.

Jayantha Dhanapala, a former Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, told IPS it is widely known that the UN adopts a pro-active policy towards recruiting Japanese by sending head-hunting teams to Japan acknowledging the major financial contribution Japan makes.

“This needs to be done with others too so that talent can be spotted. There are major gaps in Human Resource recruitment within the UN, with the West getting the plum jobs, although progress has been made with regard to the

recruitment of women redressing the imbalances of the past”, he added.

Asked who should be blamed for the continued under-representation—whether it should be Guterres or member states, former UN Assistant Secretary-General Dr Ramesh Thakur, emeritus professor in the Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University, told IPS: “Both— but mainly member states”.

He said Asian countries need to do two things. (1) lobby for their own nationals, and, (2) lobby for the Asian group as a whole.

For example, he said, they could demand that, as the UN University is the only part of the UN system that has its global headquarters in Asia, the Rector (USG rank) must always be an Asian.

In point of fact, only one Rector has been Asian, one Latin American, zero African, and four from West European and Other States (as categorized by the UN).

Dr Thakur said there should be a demand by member states for a report, every two years, by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) on regional representation in the ranks of USG, ASG and D2.

“The very fact of having to provide this documentation will make the Secretary-General and the UN system much more sensitive to the inequitable representation,” he declared.

Samir Sanbar, a former Assistant Secretary-General and one-time head of the Department of Public Information, told IPS that “equitable geographical representation by developing members –as required by the U.N. Charter– has been eroding consistently over the last two decades, despite the availability of qualified candidates.”

In the current unusual situation, he pointed out, two UK citizens now head two Secretariat Departments (Humanitarian Affairs and Global Communications) while a citizen of New Zealand heads Management, Portugal heads the office of legal affairs, France keeps heading the Peacekeeping Department (since 1996) and China holds Economic/Social Affairs. The US traditionally heads the Department of Political Affairs, and Russia heads the UN office in Vienna, after earlier heading the office in Geneva.

Initially, appointments from key countries were made selectively by the Secretary-General based on the merit of presented candidates.

Sanbar also pointed out there were some illustrious USGs—irrespective of their nationalities— because of their superlative credentials.

For example, he said, Brian Urquhart was the most distinguished head of the Peacekeeping Department regardless of his solid U.K. citizenship. So was Bernard Miyet of France.

Similarly, were other heads of departments from developing countries like Sergio Vieira de Mello (Brazil), Jayantha Dhanapala (Sri Lanka) and Nitin Desai (India), said Sanbar, who served under five different secretaries-

general during his career at the UN.

So is Guterres' highly regarded Chef de Cabinet

“Our inspiring Dag Hammarskjold reportedly quipped: The U. N. needs the big powers to survive and small powers to succeed,” declared Sanbar.

Meanwhile, the 53-member Asia Pacific Group accounts for about 27 percent of UN member states and over half the world's population– but still constitutes only around 17 per cent of the Secretariat's international staff.

Pointing out these discrepancies, Mahesh Kumar of India told the Administrative and Budgetary that while the UN Charter puts equitable geographical representation at the heart of human resources management, challenges continue to persist.

He said out of a total UN Secretariat staff of 38,000, less than 10 per cent are covered by the system of desirable ranges. Even for these 3,600 posts, 64 countries are listed as un-represented or under-represented and 50 of these 64 are developing countries.

Further, the number of member states in the category of un-represented or under-represented continues to increase since 2014.

In addition, nearly 60 more developing countries are close to the lower level of their desirable range of representation and remain at risk of slipping into the under-represented category, he said.

“These numbers paint a very stark picture of the current inequitable representation,” he said.

He complained that regional disparity remains especially stark at senior level positions, adding that in peacekeeping positions too, the regional disparity is glaring.

Nearly half of the Force commanders — six out of 14 – are from Western European and Others Group, comprising only 14% of total member states.

Currently, the five biggest troop-contributors to the 90,000-strong UN peacekeeping force overseas include: Ethiopia (7,597 troops), Bangladesh (6,624), Rwanda (6,528), India (6,445) and Nepal (6,098).

In contrast, among the P-5 countries, China is the 10th largest troop contributor with 2,515 troops, France ranks 31 with 729, UK ranks 36 with 618, Russia ranks 68 with 85 and the US ranks 77 with 51 troops.

The writer can be contacted at thalifdeen@ips.org

[Argentina's Indigenous People Fight for Land Rights](#) 

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 16 January 2019 09:51

By Daniel Gutman



A group of Wichí children play in the mud in the indigenous community of El Quebracho, in northern Argentina. This country's laws recognise the right to bilingual support in the education of native children, but in practice the rule is not enforced and children suffer discrimination when they speak their native languages. Credit: Daniel Gutman/IPS

TARTAGAL, Argentina , Jan 12 2019 (IPS) - Nancy López lives in a house made of clay, wood and corrugated metal sheets, on private land dedicated to agriculture. She is part of an indigenous community of 12 families in northern Argentina that, like almost all such communities, has no title to the land it occupies and lives under the constant threat of eviction.

A widow and mother of nine, she has heard stories of better times. "My father told me that before they come and go and stay wherever they wanted. There was no talk of private land, no soybeans, no barbed wire. They felt free. Today they call us usurpers," she told IPS.

López belongs to the Wichí people, one of the most numerous indigenous group of

the 31 registered in Argentina. According to official data, native people represent 2.38 percent of the population of this South American country of 44 million people, although experts and indigenous leaders consider that the real percentage is much higher.

"The indigenous people who live on the outskirts of the cities are refugees who have been displaced from their place in the forest over the past 100 years by non-indigenous farmers who arrived with their cows and, in recent decades, by agribusiness." -- John Palmer

Today, indigenous people in Argentina are struggling to preserve their way of life in a scenario made complex mainly due to conflicts over land.

Ninety-two percent of the communities do not have title to the land they live on, according to a survey published in 2017 by the National Audit Office, an oversight that depends on the legislative branch.

The scope of the conflict is huge. Approximately half of the 1,600 native communities in the country have carried out or are carrying out the process of surveying their lands that the State began more than 10 years ago, and they lay claim to eight and a half million hectares – a total area larger than the country of Panama.

The backdrop is the pattern of discrimination that persists in Argentina despite advances made on paper, as then UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples James Anaya reported after a visit to the country in 2011.

"There are still legacies from the colonial era and the history of exclusion is still highly visible," Anaya wrote in his report.

Nancy López, a leader in her community, says children no longer want to speak Wichí, because if they do, they suffer discrimination at school, which must have a bilingual assistant teacher, according to the National Education Law in effect since 2006.

"The bilingual assistant is given jobs like making photocopies or running errands. He barely translates to the kids what the homework is. There's a lot of racism," Lopez said, as local children from the community played with mud in the rain.



Nancy López sits next to her house built of mud, wood and corrugated metal sheets in the Wichí community of El Quebracho, Salta province, northern Argentina. The indigenous community lives on privately owned agricultural land, to which they returned after being evicted in a major police operation. Credit: Daniel Gutman/IPS

Her community, El Quebracho, is one of dozens located near Tartagal, a city of 80,000 people in the province of Salta, on route 86, which is actually just a dirt road that leads to the Paraguayan border.

López explains that the families in her community settled six years ago in the countryside where they now live, without the owner's permission, "because this used to be uncleared forest."

The Wichí and other indigenous peoples of the area, who are hunter-gatherers, have historically depended on the forest for food, medicine, or wood to build their houses.

But every day there are fewer forests. Along with neighboring Santiago del Estero, Salta is the Argentine province that has suffered the greatest deforestation in recent years, due to the expansion of the agricultural frontier, pushed mainly by transgenic soy, which today occupies more than half of the area planted in the country.

"As the city of Tartagal grew, they pushed our indigenous communities out, so we go wherever we can," explains López, who says that a couple of years ago they were

evicted in an operation in which some 200 police officers participated.

“We stayed on the side of the road for about two months, until the policemen left and we went back in. We have nowhere else to go. This used to be all forest. Today we are surrounded by soy,” she says.

Since Argentina became a nation in 1853, one of its main goals was to exclude or assimilate indigenous people.

In fact, the constitution that went into effect that year called for “the preservation of peaceful treatment for the Indians, and the promotion of their conversion to Catholicism”, while, on the other hand, it imposed on the government the obligation to encourage European immigration.



Posters at the entrance to an indigenous community in the province of Salta say the State has already carried out a survey recognising the land as ancestrally occupied by native people. But no progress has been made in the titling of community property in this area of northern Argentina. Credit: Daniel Gutman/IPS

The directive on the original population was still in force until just 25 years ago. Only in 1994, during the last constitutional reform, was it replaced by an article that recognises “the ethnic and cultural pre-existence of indigenous peoples” and “community possession and ownership of the lands they traditionally occupy.”

However, according to then rapporteur Anaya, the constitutional change did not modify a reality marked by “the historical dispossession of large tracts of land by ranchers and by the presence of agricultural, oil and mining companies that operate on

lands claimed by indigenous communities.”

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In 2006, Congress passed the Indigenous Communities Act, which declared indigenous lands in an emergency situation, ordered surveys of ancestrally occupied land and suspended evictions, even in cases with a judicial ruling, for a period of four years.

Since then, however, the survey has not even begun to be carried out in half of the communities, despite the fact that the law has been extended three times. And the great majority of the communities where the survey has been conducted still have no community property titles.

Today it is also reported that evictions are still being carried out, although the law in force prohibits them until 2021.

According to [Amnesty International](#), which in 2017 released [a study](#) that detected 225 unresolved conflicts throughout the country, it is not surprising that the vast majority of the conflicts involving indigenous people in Argentina are over land.

“Some provinces have granted property titles, but there are no institutional mechanisms for access to indigenous community property in Argentina. We need a national law,” attorney Gabriela Kletzel, of the [Center for Legal and Social Studies](#) (CELS), told IPS.

This non-governmental organisation brought before the [Inter-American Commission on Human Rights](#) (IACHR) the case of a group of communities whose ownership of 400,000 hectares was recognised by the government of the province of Salta in 2014.

“However, these communities are not yet able to take control of the land because they do not have title to it. And they still can’t get white families to take their cattle off their land, which destroys the natural resources that are the foundation of indigenous life,” Kletzel said.

John Palmer, an English anthropologist who arrived in Salta more than 30 years ago and married a Wichí indigenous woman, told IPS: “The indigenous people who live on the outskirts of the cities are refugees who have been displaced from their place in the forest over the past 100 years by non-indigenous farmers who arrived with their cows and, in recent decades, by agribusiness.”

“The destruction of the forests has wiped out all of the resources that their economy is based on. So, like many animals that no longer have anything to eat, they came to the cities,” concluded Palmer, who lived for years in a rural Wichí community until he moved to Tartagal with his wife and their five children.

Last Updated on Friday, 18 January 2019 14:31

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Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 17 January 2019 22:08

By Tharanga Yakupitiyage



A desalination plant. Across 177 countries, there are now 16,000 desalination plants, many of which are concentrated in the Middle East and North Africa where water scarcity is already a reality. As desalination plants continue to pop up, so does a hypersaline, chemical by-product known as brine. Credit: RoPlant

UNITED NATIONS, Jan 16 2019 (IPS) - As the threat of water scarcity increasingly grows, many have turned to the Earth's plentiful oceans for a solution. However, this has created a new risk threatening public and environmental health: brine.

In a new [study](#), the United Nations University’s Institute for Water, Environment, and Health (UNU-INWEH) assessed the state of desalination around the world as countries increasingly convert sea water into freshwater for its citizens.

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“There is an increasing level of water scarcity across the globe, but there are hot spots of water scarcity like those in the Middle East and parts of Africa. They really need an additional supply of water that they can use to meet the requirements of their population,” one of the report’s authors Manzoor Qadir told IPS.

Across 177 countries, there are now 16,000 desalination plants, many of which are concentrated in the Middle East and North Africa where water scarcity is already a reality.

As desalination plants continue to pop up, so does a hypersaline, chemical by-product known as brine.

In fact, for every litre of freshwater a plant produces, 1.5 litres of brine is produced, a figure that is 50 percent more than previously estimated.

Globally, desalination plants produce enough brine in one year to cover all of Florida in one foot of the waste.

“Historically what we used to see was the equal volumes of brine versus desalinated water—that is not true...there is more brine produced than desalinated water. It really needs efficient management,” Qadir said.



Countries are increasingly turning to the oceans as a solution to water scarcity. Pictured here is Sri Lanka's southern coast near Hikkaduwa town. Credit: Amantha Perera/IPS

The study, which is the first to quantify brine production across the world, found that just four countries are responsible for 55 percent of global brine: Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, and Qatar.

Almost 80 percent of brine is produced in plants near the ocean and are often discharged back into the ocean, posing major risks to ocean life and marine ecosystems.

According to the UNU-INWEH report, untreated brine increases both the temperature and salt concentration of sea water. Together, these conditions decrease the water's oxygen levels, impacting sea organisms and the food chain.

The desalination process also uses toxic chemicals such as copper and chlorine, polluting oceans when released.

As desalination plants are predicted to increase in number, the assessment highlighted the need for improved brine management strategies to avoid further and future environmental damage.

The report's authors pointed to the various economic opportunities to use brine including in the irrigation of salt tolerant crops, electricity generation, and even aquaculture.

"Using saline drainage water offers potential commercial, social and environmental gains. Reject brine has been used for aquaculture, with increases in fish biomass of 300 percent achieved," Qadir said.

"There is a need to translate such research and convert an environmental problem

into an economic opportunity,” he added.

But first and foremost, countries need to minimise the volume of brine produced including the adoption of more efficient modern technologies, Qadir noted.

“[Middle Eastern countries] especially need to take concrete action just to make sure that there is an environmentally feasible management of brine,” he told IPS, while also acknowledging the importance of desalination.

UNU-INWEH found that eight countries including the Maldives, Singapore, Antigua and Barbuda and Qatar can meet all their water needs through desalination. And it is predicted that more and more countries will rely on such plants for their water needs.

“We need to raise the importance of global water scarcity and the key contributions of desalinated water, but at the same time we should not just ignore the other part of desalinated technology which is brine production,” Qadir concluded.

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Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 21 January 2019 16:38

By [Tharanga Yakupitiyage](#)



A plantain farm on the outskirts of Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. Current food production is among the largest sources of environmental degradation across the world. Credit: Friday Phiri/IPS

UNITED NATIONS, Jan 21 2019 (IPS) - While the modern agricultural system has helped stave off famines and feed the world's 7 billion residents, the way we eat and produce food is posing a threat to future populations' food security.

With an expected increase in population to 10 billion in 2050, ensuring food security is more important than ever.

However, current food production is among the largest sources of environmental degradation across the world.

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If such production and consumption patterns continue, we will soon exceed our planetary boundaries such climate change and land use needed to survive and thrive.

"It was quite dramatic to see how much those planetary boundaries would be exceeded if we don't do anything," said Marco Springmann, one of the authors of a [report](#) examining the impact of the food system on the environment

"The food system puts pressure on land management, in particular deforestation. If you knock down too many forests, you basically really mess up the regulating system of the ecosystem because forests store carbon

dioxide but they also are habitats for wild species and biodiversity reservoirs,” he added.

Over 40 percent of the world’s land has been converted or set aside for agriculture alone. This has resulted in the loss of more than half of the world’s forests.

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) notes that commercial agriculture is a key driver, especially the production of beef, soy beans, and palm oil.

This can be seen in the Amazon where trees have been cut down and land converted to make way for agricultural activities such as cattle ranching and soy cultivation, much of which is used as animal feed rather than for human consumption.

In fact, half of the planet’s usable land surface is devoted to livestock or the growing of feed for those animals, an area equivalent to North and South America combined.

The intensive use of fertilisers has further diminished land productivity, leading to degradation and even desertification.

Moreover, such actions have contributed significantly to greenhouse gas emissions (GHG).

According to the “[Options for keeping the food system within environmental limits](#)” report, published in the Nature journal, the food system emitted over 5 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide in 2010 alone.

The study also estimates that the environmental effects of the food system could increase by 50-90 percent without any targeted measures, beyond the “safe operating space for humanity.”

Springmann pointed to three ambitious measures that are necessary in order to stay within environmental limits including technological improvements which can increase sustainable food production and thus decrease the demand for more cropland.

Another measure seems to be even more daunting: shifting to a plant-based diet.

“If you go even more plant-based that would be even better for greenhouse gas emissions, and also it is more well-balanced and better for your health...the estimates are such that we would reduce the pressure on land use if we changed our diets,” Springmann told IPS.

The Nature report found that dietary changes towards healthier diets could help reduce GHG emissions and other environmental impacts by almost 30 percent.

A new [report](#) from the EAT-Lancet Commission also highlighted the need for dietary changes for environmental sustainability and public health.

“The food we eat and how we produce it determines the health of people and the planet, and we are currently getting this seriously wrong,” says one of the

commission authors Tim Lang.

“We need a significant overhaul, changing the global food system on a scale not seen before in ways appropriate to each country’s circumstances. While this is uncharted policy territory and these problems are not easily fixed, this goal is within reach....the scientific targets we have devised for a healthy, sustainable diet are an important foundation which will underpin and drive this change,” he added.

EAT-Lancet Commission’s recommended planetary health diet requires the consumption of red meat to be cut by half, while vegetables, fruit, and nuts must double.

North America has one of the highest meat consumption rates in the world. In 2018, American meat consumption hit a record high as the average consumer ate over 222 pounds of red meat and poultry.

If they are to follow the planetary health guidelines, North Americas would have to cut their consumption of red meat by 84 percent and eat six times more beans and lentils.

While plant-based diets have gained popularity in the region, seen through the success of the Beyond Meat and Impossible Burger companies, Springmann noted that information alone may not be enough to promote dietary changes.

“Of course everyone can change their diet and it would be great if they can do that. But if it is not made easy for the average consumer to do that then many people won’t do it,” he said.

Springmann suggested changing the prices of food products to include health and environmental impacts.

Beef for example would need to cost 40 percent more on average due to its contribution to GHG emissions.

This provides governments with potential revenue to invest in other areas such as the subsidisation of healthier products.

In addition to dietary changes, the EAT-Lancet Commission state that zero loss biodiversity, net zero expansion of agricultural land into natural ecosystems, and improvements in fertiliser and water use efficient are needed.

“The transformation that this Commission calls for is not superficial or simple, and requires a focus on complex systems, incentives, and regulations, with communities and governments at multiple levels having a part to play in redefining how we eat,” said The Lancet’s Editor-in-Chief Richard Horton.

“Our connection with nature holds the answer, and if we can eat in a way that works for our planet as well as our bodies, the natural balance of the planet’s resources will be restored. The very nature that is disappearing holds the key to human and planetary survival,” he added.

[Plastic Cleanup Threatens the Ocean's Living Islands](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 22 January 2019 14:27

Home to vibrantly colored, tiny creatures, the ecosystems floating on the ocean's surface remain all but unknown.

REBECCA HELM - 10:18 AM ET



Blue sea dragons are part of the neuston. SHUTTERSTOCK

Imagine you're on a small boat in the middle of the open ocean, surrounded by what looks like a raft of plastic. Now flip the whole world upside down. You remain comfortably attached to your seat—the abyss towers above you, and all around, stretching up from the water's surface, is an electric-blue meadow of life. What you thought was plastic is actually a living island. This meadow is made up of a diverse collection of animals. The most abundant are blue buttons and by-the-wind sailors, with bright-blue bodies that dot the sky like suns, and deep-purple snails found in patches so dense one scientist described collecting more than 1,000 in 20 minutes.

This is the neuston, a whole ecosystem living at the ocean's surface. I once stumbled upon a raft of neuston when a storm blew it ashore in California. Many neustonic animals are vibrant highlighter colors, and the sand was saturated in bright blues and pale pinks. Together, these small creatures may function like upside-down coral reefs: an oasis of shelter and life far out to sea. As far back as the Cold War era, scientists were describing these colorful and important ecosystems, yet they still remain all but unknown. But now, as efforts to clean the ocean of plastic start up, our ignorance is putting this ecosystem at risk.

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The neuston is home to more than blue buttons and bright snails. Erupting through the lawn of blue are crackling purple, red, gold, and yellow strands. These are Portuguese man o' wars, whose tentacles stretch like lightning from the meadows of blue and pink. And among them, dragons roam.

Small nudibranchs, known as blue sea dragons, feast on blue buttons and man o' wars, using their winglike cerata to grab and hold onto their tentacled prey. There are sea anemones, barnacles, copepods, color-changing crabs, specialized bacteria, even bugs, all living in this inverted reef in the middle of the open ocean. (Organisms that live exclusively by floating at the surface of the water are called pleuston, while neuston is a broader term, referring generally to the sea-surface ecosystem, which is why I chose to use it here.)

Read: When a killer climate catastrophe struck the world's oceans

Just like reefs on the seafloor, this ecosystem does not stand apart from the open ocean around it. The neuston is a nursery for multiple species of larval fish and a hunting ground for paper nautilus octopuses. It supports sunfish, leatherback turtles, and diverse ocean grazers, which frequent these islands, relying on them as a food

source. At night, soft-bodied jellies rise up to join the neuston, sparkling like fireflies. But all of this, from the blue sea dragons to the by-the-wind sailors, is in peril.

When I learned about the Ocean Cleanup project's 600-meter-long barrier with a three-meter-deep net, a wall being placed in the open ocean, ostensibly to collect plastic passively as the currents push water through the net, I thought immediately of the neuston. How will it be impacted? But in the 146 pages of the Ocean Cleanup's environmental-impact assessment, this ecosystem isn't mentioned once.

I was disturbed by this omission. Though the neuston isn't known to many people, it is certainly known to marine biologists. Evidence that the Ocean Cleanup knows about the neuston is clear from a table reporting animals in the vicinity of the Ocean Cleanup deployment area, where both blue buttons and by-the-wind sailors are listed. But the ecosystem itself is never discussed. By omitting the neuston from its assessment, the project is overlooking the habitat it could be impacting most, and there is no sense of what the damage might be. Because the impact report didn't provide any answers, I went looking for my own.

There are few contemporary reviews of whole-ocean neuston ecosystems. I started with smaller studies on specific animals and worked my way through their references. One reference, in Russian Cyrillic, came up again and again. This made sense. I knew the United States and the U.S.S.R. had both developed extensive oceanographic-research programs after World War II, but each region published in its own language, making overlap difficult. I sat with a librarian for nearly an hour, hunting this study down. Finally, we found it: a 1956 study published in the U.S.S.R., in Russian, by an oceanographer named A. I. Savilov. This led us to another study of his from 1968, mercifully translated into English. Savilov spent his career studying the neuston by conducting extensive surveys all across the Pacific and synthesizing this work into a map of the open-ocean surface ecosystems.

Savilov described seven unique neuston meadows in the open ocean, each with its own unique composition of animals. Just as rainforests differ from temperate forests, these neustonic ecosystems are unique. And one of them, Neuston Ecosystem 2, is in exactly the same spots as the "garbage patches" where the Ocean Cleanup plans to operate. This makes sense: The neuston ecosystem is entirely passive—floating just like plastic—and evolved over millions of years to thrive within these regions, where surface-bound objects collect. But these ocean gyres are precisely where the Ocean Cleanup project intends to operate, and where it is currently testing its first system.

A map showing where neuston ecosystems can be found.

Rebecca Helm / National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

The Ocean Cleanup was founded with the vision of clearing the world's ocean of plastic. The project's goals are ambitious, and it plans to launch approximately 60 systems to reduce "the amount of plastic in the world's oceans by at least 90% by 2040." It is starting with what's known as the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, but is already scoping out other targets, too.

Even without an environmental-impact assessment, it's easy to imagine what will happen if the Ocean Cleanup succeeds. Neuston and plastic co-occur: They're in the exact same spots. Cleaning up 90 percent of the plastic using the current method means potentially destroying 90 percent of the neuston.

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This reality is built into the project's design. Plastics mimic the neuston world—it's buoyant, surface bound, and rubbery. When wind and ocean currents sweep neuston through the project's barrier, animals such as blue sea dragons will be corralled and confined in a huge trap, their fragile bodies colliding with hard and jagged surfaces. They cannot sink below or swim around. They will be suffocated, crushed, and hauled to landfills.

The fact that we don't have a solid understanding of the neuston ecosystem is even more worrying: We will have very little "before" data to compare the Ocean Cleanup's impact against. By deploying its system right now, the project could rob the world of an entire ecosystem that we don't understand and may never get back.

The Ocean Cleanup says it wants to protect animals at the ocean's surface from plastic, but neuston is the ecosystem of the ocean's surface. There is a reason turtles and sunfish eat floating surface plastic: It looks like neuston. Using these wall-like barriers to collect plastic in spite of the neuston is like clear-cutting a canopy in the name of helping a forest. There is no point in collecting plastic if by the end there is nothing left to conserve.

I believe that the founders of the Ocean Cleanup mean well and that the engineers involved are passionate about protecting the ocean. When I shared my concerns about the neuston, the organization was responsive, but said that its assessment had already estimated impacts to relevant groups of animals based on the best data it could find. That's far from reassuring. We cannot monitor this ecosystem with our current technology, and millions of animals may die and dissolve before the scale of destruction is fully understood.

Here is one alternative solution: Place a modified design closer to plastic sources—river mouths and bays—to catch plastic before it enters the open ocean. Choose a place where it can be monitored and corrected for environmental impact. It seems too great a risk to disrupt the whole surface ocean ecosystem so severely, when it is also one we barely know. The neuston is an alien world, as bizarre as it is beautiful. It's still possible to avoid destroying this strange ecosystem, wedged between sea and sky.

We want to hear what you think about this article. Submit a letter to the editor or write to letters@theatlantic.com.

Last Updated on Tuesday, 22 January 2019 17:46

1029 readings

[Trump as Russian Operative](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Dragonslayer

Tuesday, 22 January 2019 17:25

Dear Donald ...Please shut down the USA.....thanks in advance Vlad

Dear Vlad....Done

Last Updated on Tuesday, 22 January 2019 17:30

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[Fears of US-Backed 'Coup' in Motion as Trump Recognizes Venezuela Opposition Lawmaker as 'Interim President'](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 23 January 2019 18:38

Published on

Wednesday, January 23, 2019

byCommon Dreams

In response to Trump declaration, President Nicolas Maduro gives diplomats from 'imperialist' U.S. 72 hours to leave the country

byJon Queally, staff writer



Venezuelan opposition leader and head of the National Assembly Juan Guaidó declares self interim president as thousands of people protest against Nicolás Maduro on January 23, 2019 in Caracas, Venezuela. Many countries including the US, Canada and Chile have recognized Guaidó as the legitimate president of Venezuela. (Photo: Edilson Gamez/Getty Images)

President Nicolas Maduro of Venezuela officially cut off dipomatic ties with the U.S. government on Wednesday—and gave American diplomats 72 hours to leave the country—in response to President Donald Trump declaring formal recognition of an opposition lawmaker as the "Interim President" of Venezuela, despite not being elected by the nation's people for that position.

"They intend to govern Venezuela from Washington. Do you want a puppet government controlled by Washington?"

—Venezuela President Nicolas Maduro"Before the people and nations of the world, and as constitutional president," [declared](#) Maduro to a crowd of red-shirted supporters gathered outside the presidential residence in Caracas, "I've decided to break diplomatic and political relations with the imperialist U.S. government."

[According](#) to the *Associated Press*:

Maduro said in his speech the U.S. was making a "grave

mistake" by trying to impose a president on Venezuela and rattled off a long list of countries — Guatemala, Brazil, Chile and Argentina—that saw leftist governments toppled or come under military rule during the Cold War with U.S. support.

In a prepared White House statement earlier in the day, Trump [declared](#) he was "officially recognizing the President of the Venezuelan National Assembly, Juan Guaido, as the Interim President of Venezuela."

In addition to vowing to "use the full weight of United States economic and diplomatic power" to restore what he called "democracy" in the country, Trump also encouraged "other Western Hemisphere governments" to recognize Guaido. Shortly later, *CBC News* [reported](#) that Canada, led by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, was making plans to follow Trump's lead.

In his remarks from Caracas, Maduro told his supporters "the very existence of our Bolivarian republic" was under threat and urged them to resist "at all costs" what he explicitly described as a "coup" attempt by the "interventionist gringo empire" and the "fascist right" within his own country.

"They intend to govern Venezuela from Washington," Maduro [declared](#). "Do you want a puppet government controlled by Washington?"

Critics of U.S. imperialism and its long history of anti-democratic maneuvers in Latin America expressed immediate alarm on Wednesday after Trump's announcement. And what Trump identified as "democracy," critics of the move instead used Maduro's description: "coup."

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[Mexico Opens Its doors to Central American Migrants](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 24 January 2019 19:32

By [Daniela Pastrana](#) Reprint |  Print | [En español](#)



Members of the so-called "caravan of the hungry", coming from Honduras, receive their humanitarian visitor's cards on Jan. 22 in the border city of Tapachula, Chiapas state, which will allow them to live and work in Mexico for at least a year, in what represents a radical change in the country's migration policy. Credit: Ángeles Mariscal/IPS

MEXICO CITY/TAPACHULA, Jan 24 2019 (IPS) - A few months ago, Candelario de Jesús Chiquillo Cruz reached Mexico's southern border and ran into a fence reinforced with barbed wire, while a barrier of police officers sprayed him with gas. Today, he is walking freely over the bridge that crosses the Suchiate River, a natural border with Guatemala.

Chiquillo, a 50-year-old from El Salvador, does not hide his pleasure at the welcome he has received in his new attempt to enter Mexico.

"It's an opportunity that I have sought for a long time," he told IPS on Jan. 22, as he showed the document with the number 0000004155128 issued by the Mexican government's National Migration Institute (INM) in Tapachula, a city in the southern state of Chiapas, on the border with Guatemala.

This document will be exchanged in a few days for a "humanitarian visitor card" that will allow him to live and work in Mexico for a year.

"I congratulate Mexico for the position it has taken, allowing us to legally enter the country without being persecuted as migrants. What we want is an opportunity to work," he says.

Mexico's immigration policy has taken a 180-degree turn under the administration of leftist President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, who took office on Dec. 1.

On Jan. 17, the government opened the border to thousands of migrants coming in a caravan from San Pedro Sula, Honduras, fleeing violence, poverty and repression, and announced that it would issue humanitarian visas for the Central American migrants.

It also announced a new labour plan that incorporates Central American migrants into development projects in the southeast of the country.

The approach runs counter to Mexico's policy in recent years, which focused on stiffening border security and militarising the southern border to keep migrants out.

With the Southern Border Plan of Lopez Obrador's predecessor, the conservative Enrique Peña Nieto, thousands of people were deported and dozens died after resorting to more hazardous routes in the attempt to evade police controls.

The arrival of the new government coincided with an unprecedented immigration crisis that erupted in October. Since then, more than 15,000 Central Americans began a series of massive caravans to reach the United States, crossing almost 3,900 kilometers of Mexican territory on their journey.



In the city of Tapachula and other border towns in southern Mexico, staff from the UNHCR and IOM are accompanying the first stage of the implementation of the migration plan implemented by the government of Andrés Manuel López Obrador, which allows Central American migrants to stay in the country on a one-year, renewable visa. Credit: Ángeles Mariscal/IPS

But this sixth caravan, the third to originate in Honduras since then, have discovered a new policy that, in the words of INM commissioner Tonatihu Guillén López, is aimed at “generating a new paradigm for the treatment of the migrant population.”

It also aims, he said, to give a boost to the joint development of the south of this country and the so-called Central American Northern Triangle, made up of Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala.

On Jan. 18, when the first visitor cards for humanitarian reasons were issued, Guillén explained that the plan has two components: mobility, with the authorisation of the humanitarian visas, and the promotion of development in the region.

That means extending work permits to people from Honduras and El

Salvador, like the ones Mexico already granted to migrants from Belize and Guatemala.

Representatives of the [United Nations Refugee Agency](#) (UNHCR) and the [International Organisation for Migration](#)(IOM) are accompanying the delivery of the cards in the initial stage.

“The IOM is working in close coordination with government institutions, in particular the INM, to improve the conditions of migrants entering the country,” IOM representative in Mexico Christopher Gascón told IPS.

But it is not a simple problem.

According to data from the Mexican government’s [Refugee Assistance Commission](#) (Comar), asylum applications from Central Americans in Mexico climbed from 3,424 in 2015 to 26,566 in 2018.

And now, in the first five days since the open door policy was established, 7,805 migrants – 6,431 adults and 1,374 children and adolescents – have applied for Mexican protection.

Thousands of migrants line up to apply for the card, which is for one year but can be renewed for three more, after which they have a chance of being granted a permanent residence permit in Mexico.

The vast majority (just over 6,000) come from Honduras but there are also applicants from El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and a few from Haiti, Brazil and Cuba.



The arm of a migrant, looking from a bridge over the waters of the Suchiate River, the natural border between Guatemala and Mexico, in the southern city of Tapachula, after obtaining the paper bracelet from the National Institute of Migration which will allow him to stay and work in Mexico for at least a year, as part of the government’s new reception programme, which began on Jan. 17. Credit: Ángeles Mariscal/IPS

In December, while presenting the new National Migration Plan, in force until 2024, Secretary of the Interior Olga Sánchez Cordero stressed that Mexico is the first country to adjust its migration policies to the new [Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration](#), signed at the United Nations headquarters in New York on Dec. 19, after being agreed at a conference in Marrakech eight days earlier.

However, the signals sent by the Mexican government are ambiguous with regard to some controversial points. And for some critics, the new reception policy actually represents an acceptance of turning Mexico into a “safe third country”, curbing migration to the United States – a demand reiterated by U.S. President Donald Trump.

In addition, the second component of the programme, the work aspect, is linked to a U.S. investment project aimed at boosting the economic development of southern Mexico and the countries of the Northern Triangle.

Foreign Secretary Marcelo Ebrard Casaubón announced on Dec. 19 that the U.S. government will invest 5.8 billion dollars for the economic development of that Central American region over the next five years, plus another 4.8 billion dollars in southeastern Mexico.

The Mexican government presents this investment as a kind of Marshall Plan (which helped rebuild Europe in the post-WWII period).

But skeptics see it as a new stab at a failed programme: the Plan Puebla-Panama that was attempted by the right-wing government of Vicente Fox (2000-2006) and that would create a controversial free trade zone with the construction of tourist towns in areas mainly populated by indigenous people, who have not been consulted.

In addition, the main doubt about the investment plan lies in the level of commitment of the Central American governments to the development aimed at curbing migration.

This is compounded by mistrust regarding the way the Mexican government will use the data that it is gathering from the migrants taking part in the programme, because in order to receive a humanitarian visitor’s card, they are asked for an identity document, a photograph and their full names, age, place of residence, fingerprints and an eye scan.

This policy in theory should be a positive development, especially considering the level of vulnerability of migrants in Mexico to criminal groups like gangs and cartels.

But some migration specialists and immigration rights activists see the data collection as a continuation of the Merida Initiative, a plan by various U.S. agencies to support Mexico to “strengthen both societies in the fight against organised crime and violence.”

The Initiative has involved an investment of 1.6 billion dollars, allocated by the U.S. Congress to Mexico for “training equipment and assistance.”

For now, the López Obrador administration has decided to implement a strategy to convince Central American migrants to take advantage of the




humanitarian visa programme.

For those who continue northwards with the caravan – some 2,000 who did not accept the proposal – special vigilance has been assigned to prevent road accidents and to provide them with humanitarian aid. So far, no migrants have been detained or deported.

At the southern border, some of the Central Americans lining up for their humanitarian visas told IPS that they would try to settle in Mexico; others said they would use the safe-conduct to try to reach the United States, because now they would be able to follow that dream without the threat of being persecuted in the long, hazardous journey through this country.

With reporting by Ángeles Mariscal in Tapachula and other towns in the state of Chiapas.

726 readings

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Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 25 January 2019 16:33

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Updated November, 2018



A number of cities, counties, states and countries throughout the world have taken steps to either restrict or ban glyphosate, the active ingredient in Monsanto's Roundup weed killer.

The following countries have issued outright bans on glyphosate, imposed restrictions or have issued statements of intention to ban or restrict glyphosate-based herbicides, including Roundup, over health concerns and the ongoing Roundup cancer litigation:

Argentina: Over 30,000 health care professionals advocated for a glyphosate ban following the International Agency for Research on Cancer's (IARC) report on glyphosate, which concluded the chemical is probably carcinogenic to humans. More than 400 towns and cities in Argentina have passed measures restricting glyphosate use.

Australia: Numerous municipalities and school districts throughout the country are currently testing alternative herbicides in an effort to curtail or eliminate glyphosate use. Many use steam technology for weed control on streets and in other public areas.

Belgium: Banned the individual use of glyphosate. In 2017, Belgium voted against relicensing glyphosate in the EU. The country was also one of six EU member states to sign a letter to the EU Commission calling for "an exit plan for glyphosate..." The city of Brussels banned the use of glyphosate within its territory as part of its "zero pesticides" policy.

Bermuda: Outlawed private and commercial sale of all glyphosate-based herbicides. In 2017, the government relaxed its ban on glyphosate, allowing the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to import restricted concentrations of glyphosate for managing roadside weed overgrowth.

Brazil: In August of 2018, a federal judge in Brasilia ruled that new products containing glyphosate could not be registered in the country. Existing regulations concerning glyphosate were also suspended, pending a reevaluation of toxicological data by Anvisa, the country's health agency. In September of 2018, a Brazilian court overturned the federal judge's ruling. September marks Brazil's first month of soybean planting. The country is the largest exporter of soybeans in the world, and as such, has become heavily reliant on agrochemicals. Anvisa issued a statement following the court's decision to overturn the ruling, saying it will take necessary legal and technical steps in response. Further, Brazil's Solicitor General's office has said it is preparing an appeal to the court decision with support from the Agriculture Ministry.

Canada: Eight out of the 10 provinces in Canada have some form of restriction on the use of non-essential cosmetic pesticides, including glyphosate. Vancouver has banned public and private use of glyphosate, aside from the treatment of invasive weeds.

Colombia: In 2015, Colombia outlawed the use of glyphosate to destroy illegal plantations of coca, the raw ingredient for cocaine, out of concern that glyphosate causes cancer. However, in January of 2017, the country reinstated its controversial glyphosate fumigation program for coca. Unlike the previous program, which used aerial fumigation, the new program consists of manual spraying from the ground.

Czech Republic: Agriculture Minister Miroslav Toman said the country will limit glyphosate use starting in 2019. Specifically, the Czech Republic will ban glyphosate as a weedkiller and drying agent.

Denmark: The Danish Working Environment Authority declared glyphosate to be carcinogenic and has recommended a change to less toxic chemicals. Aalborg, one of the largest cities in Denmark, issued private-use glyphosate ban in September of 2017. In July of 2018, the Danish government implemented new rules banning the use of glyphosate on all post-emergent crops to avoid residues on foods.

El Salvador: Banned glyphosate over links to deadly kidney disease.

England: Following the landmark \$289 million Monsanto Roundup verdict on Aug. 10, 2018, Homebase, one of England's largest DIY

retailers, announced that it would review the sale of Roundup and Ranger Pro. A number of townships, including Brighton, Frensham, Hammersmith & Fulham, Bristol, Glastonbury, Frome, Erewash, North Somerset, Lewes and Wadebridge have also voted to institute restrictions on pesticides and herbicides, including glyphosate.

France: In November of 2017, President Emmanuel Macron announced that France would issue an outright ban on glyphosate within the next three years.

Germany: According to Environment Minister Svenja Schulze, Germany plans to update its conditions for pesticide approval and will seek an end date for glyphosate use. Certain retail stores in Germany have also pulled glyphosate-based herbicides like Roundup from shelves.

Greece: Greece was one of nine EU countries to vote against relicensing glyphosate in November of 2017. The country was also one of six EU member states to sign a 2018 letter to the European Commission calling for “an exit plan for glyphosate...” According to Greek Minister of Agricultural Development Evangelos Apostolou, “[i]t is our duty to push in the direction of risk management, in the interests of consumers, producers and the environment.” In March of 2018, the Greek government approved a five-year license for Monsanto’s Roundup against the wishes of Greek environmentalists.

Italy: Italy’s Ministry of Health placed a number of restrictions on glyphosate use. Italian legislators have also raised concerns about glyphosate safety, and have come out against relicensing the herbicide in the European Union. In 2016, the Italian government banned the use of glyphosate as a pre-harvest treatment and placed restrictions on glyphosate use in areas frequented by the public. In November of 2017, Italy was one of seven EU nations to vote against relicensing glyphosate.

India: In October of 2018, the government of Punjab banned the sale of glyphosate in the state. “All pesticide manufacturers, marketers and dealers in the State shall not sell glyphosate formulations-concentrations with immediate effect. The licensing authorities have been asked to take necessary steps for removal of entries for glyphosate from the licenses issued by them,” said State Agriculture Secretary K.S. Pannu.

Luxembourg: One of Luxembourg’s largest supermarket chains removed glyphosate from its shelves following the release of the IARC glyphosate report. Luxembourg was one of nine EU countries to vote against relicensing glyphosate in November of 2017, and in early 2018, the country signed a letter to the EU Commission calling for “an exit plan for glyphosate...”

Malta: Malta began the process of instituting countrywide ban of glyphosate. However, Environment Minister José Herrera backtracked in January of 2017, saying the country would continue to oppose glyphosate in discussions but would fall in line with the European Union and wait for further studies. In November of 2017, Malta was one of nine EU countries to vote against relicensing glyphosate. The country also signed a letter to the EU Commission in 2018 calling for “an exit plan for glyphosate...”

Netherlands: Banned all non-commercial use of glyphosate.

New Zealand: The cities of Auckland and Christchurch passed resolutions to reduce the usage of chemicals for weed and pest control in public places. The Physicians and Scientists for Global Responsibility, a New Zealand charitable trust, called for a glyphosate ban in 2015.

Portugal: Prohibits the use of glyphosate in all public spaces. President of the Portuguese Medical Association has also called for a worldwide ban of glyphosate.

Scotland: Aberdeen cut back its use of herbicides and Edinburgh’s City Council voted to phase out glyphosate. In November of 2017, five of Scotland’s six EU parliamentarians voted in favor of a motion that would phase out glyphosate by 2022.

Slovenia: Slovenia was one of six EU member states to sign a 2018 letter to the European Commission citing “concerns” about the risks associated with glyphosate. The letter called upon the Commission to introduce “an exit plan for glyphosate...”


Spain: According to Kistiñe Garcia of the Spanish NGO, Ecologistas en Acción, Barcelona, Madrid, Zaragoza and the region of Extremuda have decided to ban glyphosate. The regions of La Rioja (major Spanish wine region) and Aragon have also approved motions against endocrine disrupting chemicals, which includes glyphosate.

Sri Lanka: Sri Lanka was the first country to issue a nationwide ban on glyphosate. However, in 2018, the government decided to lift the ban due to crop losses and overgrowing weeds.

Sweden: Raised concerns about glyphosate safety and has pushed against relicensing the herbicide in the EU. In 2017, the Swedish Chemicals Agency (SCA) announced it was planning to tighten rules on private use of plant protection products. Under the plan, private users would only be allowed to use products containing “low-risk substances.” According to the SCA, glyphosate is an example of an active substance not expected to be included among low-risk substances, meaning in due time, private consumers may not be permitted to use herbicides containing glyphosate.

Switzerland: Concerned about public wellbeing, the Swiss

supermarket chains Migros and Coop removed glyphosate-based products from their shelves due to health risks. In 2017, the Green party put forth a plan to ban glyphosate in Switzerland. The proposed plan was rejected by the Federal Council, Switzerland's executive.

farmer-in-field-

Why is Glyphosate Banned?

Most of the glyphosate restrictions or bans throughout the world were introduced following the 2015 IARC report on glyphosate. The IARC report concluded that glyphosate is a “probable human carcinogen.”

According to the report, the cancers most associated with glyphosate exposure were found to be non-Hodgkin lymphoma and other hematopoietic cancers. The report further concluded that glyphosate exposure caused DNA and chromosomal damage in human cells, as well as genotoxic, hormonal and enzymatic effects in mammals.

Other glyphosate studies have linked the chemical to a number of health issues, including, but not limited to ADHD, Alzheimer's Disease, Autism, Birth Defects, various forms of cancer, Celiac Disease, Colitis, Heart Disease, Inflammatory Bowel Syndrome, Kidney Disease, Liver Disease, and Parkinson's Disease.

Is Glyphosate Banned in Europe?

As you can see above, some individual countries have introduced legislation to ban or restrict private sales of glyphosate, or restrictions on spraying glyphosate in public spaces. As for the whole of the European Union (EU), glyphosate is not currently banned.

However, EU public opinion is leaning in favor of a glyphosate ban. In a 2016 poll of the five largest EU countries, over 66 percent of respondents said they favored a glyphosate ban. Over 1.3 million people signed a petition in 2017 calling for a European ban of glyphosate. That public pressure caught the attention numerous Members of European Parliament, who have cited the petition as the foundation for instituting an EU ban.

In November of 2017, EU member states narrowly voted to relicense glyphosate for a period of five years. The vote was not without controversy; German Agriculture Minister Christian Schmidt (CSU) entered a ‘yes’ vote for his country without consulting with

German Chancellor Angela Merkel (CDU) on the matter. His unilateral vote disregarded Germany's Environment Minister, who had instructed Schmidt to abstain from voting. With Germany's vote, the measure narrowly passed and glyphosate received a new license.

Following the scandal, six EU countries sent a letter to the European Commission, calling for an exit plan for glyphosate. France and Italy have stated they will carry out glyphosate bans by 2020, and Germany announced in 2018 that it will also issue a glyphosate ban.

Is Glyphosate Banned in the United States?

Despite the IARC report's 2015 conclusion that glyphosate is a probable human carcinogen, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) maintains that glyphosate is not likely to be carcinogenic to humans. As such, glyphosate is not banned by the U.S. government; Roundup and other glyphosate-based herbicides are readily available for purchase throughout the country.

However, not everyone agrees with the EPA's conclusion on glyphosate. A number of cities, counties and even one U.S. state have issued bans, restrictions or warnings on glyphosate as a result of the ongoing health concerns.

Is Glyphosate Banned in California?

California has not issued a statewide ban on glyphosate. However, on July 7, 2017, California became the first state in the nation to issue a warning on glyphosate by adding the chemical to the state's Proposition 65 list of chemicals and substances known to cause cancer.

California's decision to warn consumers about glyphosate was pursuant to the requirements of the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act, better known as California Proposition 65, a ballot initiative approved by voters in 1986 to address toxic chemical exposure concerns. Prop 65 requires California to publish a list of chemicals known to cause cancer, birth defects or other reproductive harm.

u. s. glyphosate bans or restrictions

U.S. Cities to Restrict or Ban Glyphosate
California

Arcata, California - Initiated a pesticide reduction plan that urges pesticides to only be used as a last resort.

Belvedere, California - Passed municipal ordinance initiating Integrated Pest Management program that restricts toxic pesticide use and urges pesticide use as last resort.

Benicia, California - City decided to go glyphosate-free following the verdict in Johnson v. Monsanto Co.

Berkeley, California - Implemented pest management program to minimize or eliminate the use of pesticides.

Burbank, California - City Council members voted to discontinue the use of Roundup in city parks for one year, and Burbank Unified School District will no longer use the herbicide due to cancer concerns.

Carlsbad, California - The City Council voted unanimously to adopt a policy that makes organic pesticides the preferred method for killing weeds. "Asked to choose between aesthetics and public health...I'm going to choose public health every time," said Councilwoman Cori Schumacher.

Corte Madera, California - Passed ordinance calling for Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program restricting highly toxic pesticides, while also urging for pesticide use to be a last resort.

Davis, California - Passed ordinance implementing Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program designed to reduce the use of pesticides. Some city parks do not allow the use of glyphosate.

Encinitas, California - Banned the use of Roundup and other glyphosate-based weed killers in city parks.

Fairfax, California - Passed municipal ordinance restricting use of toxic pesticides on public property in favor of alternative methods.

Irvine, California - City Council passed resolution to cease spraying Roundup and other chemicals on public parks, streets and playgrounds.

Long Beach, California - Citing the landmark \$289 million verdict in Johnson v. Monsanto Co., Long Beach Parks & Recreation Director Gerardo Mouet announced an immediate halt on the spraying of Roundup in Long Beach Parks.

Mill Valley, California - Passed ordinance initiating Integrated Pest Management program that restricts toxic pesticide use and urges pesticide use as last resort.

Novato, California - Following the \$289 million Monsanto verdict, Novato Mayor Josh Fryday said the city will no longer use Roundup weed killer.

Oakland, California - Passed ordinance initiating Integrated Pest Management program that restricts toxic pesticide use and promotes

pesticide use as last resort. On Sept. 1, 2018, the city formally halted the use of Roundup. Alameda County is reviewing its chemical spraying practices.

Palo Alto, California - Pest management program calls for Integrated Pest Management that restricts pesticide use in favor of less harmful methods.

Petaluma, California - City officials are considering a ban on glyphosate for use in public parks.

Richmond, California - Issued an ordinance to ban the use of glyphosate for all weed abatement activities conducted by the city.

San Anselmo, California - Passed city resolution promoting an Integrated Pest Management program restricting the use of toxic pesticides. The program only allows pesticide use as a last resort.

San Francisco, California - Restricts the use of toxic pesticides on public property in favor of alternative, organic methods.

Santa Rosa, California - Banned the use of Roundup at city parks.

Thousand Oaks, California - City instituted a ban on glyphosate use on public golf courses.

Woodland, California - Woodland Joint Unified School District suspended the use of Roundup on school campuses.

Colorado

Boulder, Colorado - Banned Roundup for use on city parks.

Durango, Colorado - Instituted an Organically Managed Lands program to minimize the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides.

Connecticut

A growing number of Connecticut towns, including Branford, Cheshire, Granby, Essex, Greenwich, Manchester, Plainville, Roxbury, Watertown, and Woodbridge have adopted bans or restrictions on glyphosate use. The state also has Public Act 09-56 to eliminate the use pesticides in K-8 schools.

Florida

North Miami, Florida - City Council approved a plan calling for the gradual reduction of pesticide use on city property and a study on alternative pesticides.

Stuart, Florida - City commissioners voted to ban glyphosate, calling for an integrated pest control plan that reduces the use of glyphosate with the ultimate goal of eliminating chemicals.

Illinois

Chicago, Illinois - The city stopped spraying glyphosate in public spaces.

Evanston, Illinois - Evanston decided to go pesticide-free in 2010. Glyphosate is banned from use on city property, parks and schools.

Franklin Park, Illinois - Passed resolution promoting an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) policy that restricts highly toxic pesticides and urges for pesticides to be considered as a last resort.

Iowa

Dubuque, Iowa - City instituted a ban on glyphosate use in public parks.

Kansas

Lawrence, Kansas - Implemented Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program designed to reduce pesticide use.

Wichita, Kansas - Initiated pilot program that limits or eliminates pesticide use.

Maryland

Greenbelt, Maryland - Adopted Sustainable Land Care policy for public lands calling for limited use of pesticides.

Hyattsville, Maryland - Passed ordinance prohibiting the use of toxic pesticides on public property in favor of alternative, organic methods

Montgomery County, Maryland - County Council voted to ban the use of cosmetic pesticides on private lawns.

Takoma Park, Maryland - Placed restriction on cosmetic pesticides for lawn care on public and private property.

Maine

Dozens of cities and townships in Maine have adopted local ordinances restricting or banning pesticides and herbicides.

South Portland, Maine - Passed a pesticide plan that discourages property owners from using certain pesticides and herbicides.

Massachusetts

Eastham, Massachusetts - Local ordinance requires town employees to receive a permit for use of registered pesticides and prohibits the use of highly-toxic pesticides.

Marblehead, Massachusetts - Created Organic Pest Management program to phase out pesticides and herbicides.

Warwick, Massachusetts - A measure to ban Monsanto's Roundup passed at a Special Town Meeting. The ban does not allow people to spray glyphosate on any land within the town.

Wellesley, Massachusetts - Wellesley banned all pesticides in 2011. Glyphosate is restricted from being sprayed on athletic fields and any city-owned property. The chemical can be used in limited emergency weed control situations.

Minnesota

Minneapolis, Minnesota - Commissioners of the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board decided to eliminate all glyphosate-based products from being used in neighborhood parks. In October of 2018, the Park Board's Operations & Environment Committee voted to extend the glyphosate ban to the entire Minneapolis park system.

Nevada

Reno, Nevada - The city initiated a pesticide free pilot program.

New Hampshire

Dover, New Hampshire - Passed resolution calling for Organic Land Management. City utilizes least toxic compounds only when necessary.

Portsmouth, New Hampshire - Passed resolution eliminating the use of toxic pesticides on public property in favor of alternative, organic methods.

New Mexico

Taos County, New Mexico - Taos County Commissioners are considering the possibility of banning all pesticides, including glyphosate.

New Jersey

New Jersey has State and local ordinances encouraging Integrated Pest Management programs to eliminate or drastically reduce the use of pesticides. At least 15 city school districts and over a dozen other parks and recreation departments in the state have enacted IPM programs.

New York

New York's Park and Recreation Department has measures to eliminate or reduce pesticide and herbicide use in areas under its control.

New Paltz, New York - The use of toxic pesticides and herbicides by city employees or by private contractors is forbidden on all city-owned lands.

Rockland County, New York - Created a Non-Toxic Pesticide program, mandating the use of natural, non-toxic, or as a last resort with prior approval, the least toxic pesticide use.

Westchester County, New York - Enacted a law for pesticide-free parks.

North Carolina

Carrboro, North Carolina - The city of Carrboro has restricted glyphosate use since 1999. Under the terms of the ban, glyphosate cannot be sprayed in public parks, schools and town buildings or properties. The city will only allow glyphosate to be sprayed under limited circumstances.

Ohio

Cuyahoga County, Ohio - Local ordinance prohibits the use of pesticides on county-owned land, and established the adoption of an Integrated Pest Management program for county-owned properties.

South Euclid, Ohio - Passed ordinance prohibiting toxic pesticides on public grounds in favor of alternative, organic pest control methods unless permitted by an Environmental Review Board.

Oregon

Portland, Oregon - Since 1988, Portland has restricted the use of Roundup to emergency use only. Glyphosate is banned on all city-owned property.

Texas

Austin, Texas - City Council voted to prohibit the spraying of glyphosate on city lands.

Virginia

Charlottesville, Virginia - Restricts the use of glyphosate on any city-owned parks, schools, or buildings. Glyphosate can only be sprayed under limited circumstances.

Washington

King County, Washington - Passed municipal ordinance initiating an Integrative Pest Management (IPM) program to determine if and how pesticides should be used.

Olympia, Washington - City passed a resolution to encourage the implementation of an Integrative Pest Management (IPM) program for

non-chemical pest control.

Thurston County, Washington - Passed municipal ordinance to restrict the use of toxic pesticides on public property.

565 readings

[223 international scientists urge B.C. to protect provincial rainforests](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 27 January 2019 17:28

'There are certain places that are so biologically rare and important'

Matt Humphrey • CBC News • Posted: Jun 28, 2018 8:00 AM PT | Last Updated: June 28, 2018

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/rain-forest-gone-1.4724448>



B.C. is known for its towering trees and temperate rain forests, but an international group of scientists is warning that without urgent protection, those forests are at risk of disappearing.

A total of 223 scientists from nine countries have signed a letter urging the provincial government to take immediate action to protect B.C.'s remaining temperate rain forests.

"There are certain places that are so biologically rare and important," said Dominick DellaSala, the chief scientist at the Geos Institute in Oregon who helped organize the letter.

"The B.C. rainforests are among those rare places."

NDP blamed for failing to save Vancouver Island old-growth giants from logging

DellaSala said both the province's coastal rainforests and rainforests further inland are dissimilar to anywhere else on the planet. Both play important roles in the preservation of biodiversity and the battle against climate change, he said.

"People know these places are important for fish and wildlife, but they probably don't know those trees are regulating the global climate."

As rainforest trees go through photosynthesis, they absorb atmospheric carbon dioxide.

B.C.'s provincial tree threatened by climate change, expert says
Essentially the trees are large sticks of carbon, and the longer that carbon stays in the rainforest, the cooler the planet will be, said DellaSala.

He said cutting down rainforest doesn't only destroy wildlife habitats, it also releases carbon dioxide into the air, which raises the global temperature — carbon dioxide that would otherwise be locked in the trees for hundreds of years.

Primary and intact forests

The letter specifically calls for protection of primary forests (old-growth forests that have never been logged) and intact forests (forest isolated from human activity).

DellaSala said unsustainable logging practices such as new road construction and clear cutting will only lead to the "unravelling" of the forests' ecosystems.

Instead, the province's wood fibre needs should be satisfied by logging in second-growth forests which are already impacted by humans, rather than in primary or intact forests, said DellaSala.

DellaSala acknowledged that B.C.'s second-growth forests may yet not be mature enough for the timber industry to only harvest from them, but he said if the provincial government is serious about its commitment to combat climate change, it must explore the option.

The signatories of the letter live and work in many countries, including Canada, Argentina, Australia, Indonesia, Mexico, Mongolia, Norway, the United States and Scotland.

With files from The Early Edition



The group of scientists includes members from Canada, Argentina, Australia, Indonesia, Mexico, Mongolia, Norway, the United States and Scotland. (Mark Worthing/ Sierra Club B.C.)

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[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 05 February 2019 14:34

By [Desmond Brown](#) Reprint |  Print |

IPS correspondent Desmond Brown interviews DOUGLAS SLATER, Assistant Secretary General at the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat.



A fisher in Barbados. The Caribbean's fish stocks have been affected by climate change. Credit: Desmond Brown/IPS

GEORGETOWN, Feb 5 2019 (IPS) - In recent years Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries have experienced escalated climate change impacts from hurricanes, tropical storms and other weather-related events thanks to global warming of 1.0 ° Celsius (C) above pre-industrial levels. And it has had adverse effects on particularly vulnerable countries and communities.

CARICOM countries and other small island and low-lying coastal developing states have long been calling for limiting the increase in average global temperatures to below 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels by the end of the century in order to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

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- [VIDEO: On the way to COP24 – The Caribbean Will Not be Left Out](#)
- [The Caribbean Island of Mayreau Could be Split in Two Thanks to Erosion](#)
- [The Caribbean Reiterates “1.5 Degrees Celsius to Stay Alive”](#)

Regional countries have also noted with grave concern the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) [Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 °C](#). The report noted that climate-related risks for natural and human systems including health, livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security and economic growth are significantly higher at an increased global warming of 1.5 °C than at the present warming levels of 1 °C above pre-industrial levels.

Particularly worrisome for small island developing states (SIDS) is the finding that 70 to 90 percent of tropical coral reefs will be lost at a 1.5 °C

temperature increase and 99 percent of tropical coral reefs will be lost at a 2 °C temperature increase.

Dr. Douglas Slater, Assistant Secretary General at the CARICOM Secretariat, told IPS that they have been working closely with the Alliance of Small Island States grouping. “The CARICOM SIDS grouping is considered a very important link and we are really leaders in the SIDS movement,” he said.

He said that at last year’s [24th Conference of the Parties \(COP24\)](#) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the region had been able to ensure, to some extent, that the procedures for the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement were clearly outlined.

Excerpts of the interview follow:



Dr. Douglas Slater, Assistant Secretary General at the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, says the region needs to recognise the importance of implementing some of the measures as recommended by technical institutions that will help to build climate resilience. Credit: Desmond Brown/IPS

Inter Press Service (IPS): How is the CARICOM region doing with its climate change fight?

DS: Starting from COP21 in France, certain decisions were made. The region thought that [at COP24] we needed to ensure that the procedures for the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement and the modalities were clearly elucidated and outlined. To some extent I would say that that was achieved.

Another issue that we took [to COP24] and lobbied hard for, was a

response to the IPCC 1.5 study.

The world is already looking to limit global warming to below 2 °C. We insisted that it should be no more than 1.5°C. Now, it might sound like they are close, but the differences are so significant, especially as it relates to us.

I must say that we had a hard task convincing them to accept the language of the findings of the IPCC. In fact, majority of the parties supported the findings and the actions to respond to it. But there were some major players [who did not] and because we work on consensus, it couldn't find its way into the outcome document in a forceful way that was supportive of what we wanted.

There were four main countries, some real heavy rollers—the United States, Russia, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia—who resisted that. We will continue and there will be other opportunities. In fact, there is a meeting in May of this year where we'll continue to push.

IPS: Were there any other tangible outcomes?

DS: We did get some language that will encourage parties to work towards what we want. There is also the issue of the Talanoa Dialogue, which was decided from the previous COP Presidency—Fiji. The word suggests working together in an inclusive cooperative way to ensure that a lot of issues, including the Nationally Determined Contributions, are adjusted to meet the times. That had some challenges being accepted wholesale too, but I think it is correct to say that Parties acknowledged what was happening and gave some commitment to increase the ambition to reduce greenhouse gases.

But it is a continuing struggle and we have to keep sounding our small but powerful voices because climate change is existential to us. Already, coming out of the hurricane season in 2017, we have had first-hand experience of what can happen to us and we don't want a repeat of that.

IPS: Given the political cycle in the Caribbean where you could have a change in administration every five years or less, do you find that when an administration changes the drive and level of attention to climate change also changes?

DS: It is my feeling, based on my observation over the years, that the political parties in the region understand the impact that climate change can cause on us and in general are strongly supportive. So, it's not a major issue. It might just be degrees of emphasis or so, but I don't think there's a challenge there. I think it is clear to all of our political leaders that climate change is a reality and it can devastate our sustainability, especially economic sustainability.

In my opinion, it doesn't matter which administration is there, the policy should be aimed at addressing resilience to climate change and I think by and large that has been happening.

IPS: What major challenges remain for individual countries in the

region or as a collective of SIDS?

DS: I think we need to recognise the importance of implementing some of the measures as recommended by our technical institutions that will help to build resilience. Let us take hurricanes, for example. One of the reasons why you get significant damage is that the building codes that we have been using need updating. I think if we do that it will build a more resilient region. I think the message is there, but the implementation takes some time due to a lack of resources.

We have been working on that.

I know Dominica, especially post Hurricane Maria, are really working assiduously to build the first climate-resilient country probably in the world. That augers well for the region. We are hoping whatever we can gain from that experience can be disseminated in the entire region.

I am particularly concerned about some individual member states of CARICOM. Such as, for example, Haiti. I [bring up] Haiti because of land degradation and its impact, which we are dealing with now. We hope that Haiti can adjust to understanding the need for reforestation because that is a resilience measure.

I think if our individual member states can work with the various ministries and the regional institutions and we can mobilise the resources, that is the big challenge.

We know in general what we need to do. There's a willingness to do it, the challenge is having the resources to.

We have some excellent institutions like CDEMA [Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency] which really is on the ball, but they need resources sometimes to respond to some of the challenges.

We are working with some international organisations and some other international development partners to see how we can pull that together. But it's a work in progress.

**Interview edited for clarity.*

433 readings

[The speech by Greta Thunberg at COP24 in Katowice](#)  

[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 05 February 2019 14:39



Below is the transcript of the speech of Greta Thunberg at the COP24 in Katowice, Poland. A heartfelt, harsh speech she gave with a calm voice, addressing the world's leaders.

“My name is Greta Thunberg. I am 15 years old. I am from Sweden. I speak on behalf of Climate Justice Now. Many people say that Sweden is just a small country and it doesn't matter what we do. But I've learned you are never too small to make a difference. And if a few children can get headlines all over the world just by not going to school, then imagine what we could all do together if we really wanted to.

But to do that, we have to speak clearly, no matter how uncomfortable that may be. You only speak of green eternal economic growth because you are too scared of being unpopular. You only talk about moving forward with the same bad ideas that got us into this mess, even when the only sensible thing to do is pull the emergency brake. You are not mature enough to tell it like is. Even that burden you leave to us children. But I don't care about being popular. I care about climate justice and the living planet. Our civilization is being sacrificed for the opportunity of a very small number of people to continue making enormous amounts of money. Our biosphere is being sacrificed so that rich people in countries like mine can live in luxury. It is the sufferings of the many which pay for the luxuries of the few.

to see the video please go to <https://www.lifegate.com/people/news/greta-thunberg-speech-cop24>

Last Updated on Tuesday, 05 February 2019 14:57

380 readings

[COMBATING DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 07 February 2019 14:10

The Right to Life, Liberty, and Land

By [Tharanga Yakupitiyage](#)



Erin Myers Madeira who leads the Nature Conservancy's Global Programme on Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities says that communities outperform the government and other stakeholders in stopping deforestation and degradation. The Akaratshie community from the Garu and Tempene districts have been able to restore degraded land. Credit: Albert Oppong-Ansah/IPS

UNITED NATIONS, Feb 7 2019 (IPS) - Sustainable land management is becoming more important than ever as rates of emissions, deforestation, and water scarcity continue to increase. But what if you don't have rights to the land?

While the impact of agriculture on land is well known, the relationship between land degradation and land tenure seems to be less understood.

In fact, research has shown that insecure land tenure is linked to poor land use as communities have fewer incentives to invest in long-term protective measures, thus contributing to environmental degradation.

Related IPS Articles

- [The Silent, Invisible Crisis Destabilising Communities Could be a Subject of Hope](#)
- [Poverty-Stricken Communities in Ghana are Restoring Once-Barren Land](#)
- [Gender Gap Made Worse by Land Degradation](#)

“Establishing secure tenure and secure rights to territory and resources for indigenous people and local communities is one of the most important things we can do around achieving positive outcomes for conservation,” said Erin Myers Madeira who leads the [Nature Conservancy's](#) Global Programme on Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

“Communities outperform the government, other stakeholders in stopping deforestation and degradation,” she added to IPS.

Despite holding customary rights to more than half of the earth’s lands, indigenous people and local communities legally own only a 10 percent slice.

[Resources and Rights](#) also found the legal recognition of community forest tenure rights also still remains adequate, amounting to just over 14 percent of forest area as of 2017.

While this is partially a result of a lack of government policies, land grabs by companies which fail to acknowledge communities’ ancestral lands are increasingly common around the world.

In 2006, 200 families lost access to their land in Cambodia’s Sre Ambel district to make way for a sugar plantation.

In Liberia, Liberian farmers were evicted after the government allocated 350,000 hectares to Malaysian multinational corporation Sime Darby, causing widespread resentment and conflict in the area.

According to the [United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification \(UNCCD\)](#), 35 percent of the remaining available cropland across Africa has been acquired by large entities, with over 70 million hectares allotted for biofuels.

Many have put up a fight against the expanse but it came with a deadly cost.

According to [Global Witness](#), a record 201 environmental defenders were killed in 2017 trying to protect their land from mining, agribusiness, and other industries.

320 readings

[Veni, Vidi, Tweeti \(I Came, I Saw, I Tweeted\) An Obituary for the Republic](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 14 February 2019 12:55

By [Tom Engelhardt](#)

http://www.tomdispatch.com/post/176527/tomgram%3A_engelhardt%2C_hail%2C_caesar%21/

What dreamers they were! They imagined a kind of global power that would leave even Rome at its Augustan height in the shade. They imagined a world made for one, a planet that could be swallowed by a single great power. No, not just great, but beyond anything ever seen before -- one that would build (as its [National Security Strategy](#) put it in 2002) a military “beyond challenge.” Let’s be clear on that: no future power, or even bloc of powers, would *ever* be allowed to challenge it again.

And, in retrospect, can you completely blame them? I mean, it seemed so obvious then that we -- the United States of America -- were the best and the last. We had, after all, outclassed and outlasted every imperial power since the beginning of time. Even that other menacing superpower of the Cold War era, the Soviet Union, the “[Evil Empire](#)” that refused to stand down for almost half a century, had gone up in a puff of smoke.

Imagine that moment so many years later and consider the crew of neoconservatives who, under the aegis of George W. Bush, the son of the man who had “won” the Cold War, came to power in January 2001. Not surprisingly, on viewing the planet, they could see nothing -- not a single damn thing -- in their way. There was a desperately weakened and impoverished Russia (still with its nuclear arsenal more or less intact) that, as far as they were concerned, had been mollicoddled by President Bill Clinton’s administration. There was a Communist-gone-capitalist China focused on its own growth and little else. And there were a set of other potential enemies, “rogue powers” as they were dubbed, so pathetic that not one of them could, under any circumstances, be called “great.”

In 2002, in fact, three of them -- Iraq, Iran, and North Korea -- had to be cobbled together into an “[axis of evil](#)” to create a faintly adequate enemy, a minimalist excuse for the Bush administration to act preemptively. It couldn’t have been more obvious then that all three of them would go down before the unprecedented military and economic power of us (even if, as it happened, two of them didn’t).

It was as clear as glass that the world -- the whole shebang -- was there for the taking. And it couldn’t have been headier, even after a tiny Islamist terror outfit [hijacked](#) four American jets and took out New York’s World Trade Center and part of the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. As President Bush would put it in an address [at West Point](#) in 2002, “America has, and intends to keep, military strengths beyond challenge, thereby making the destabilizing arms races of other eras pointless, and limiting rivalries to trade and other pursuits of peace.” In other words, jihadists aside, it was all over. From now on, there would be an arms race of one and it was obvious who that one would be. The National Security Strategy of that year put the same thought this way: “Our forces will be strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military build-up in hopes of surpassing, or equaling, the power of the United States.” Again, anywhere on the

planet *ever*.

Look at more or less any document from the period and you'll sense that they weren't shy about touting the unprecedented greatness of a future global *Pax Americana*. Take, for instance, columnist Charles Krauthammer who, in February 2001, six months before the terror attacks of September 11th, [wrote a piece](#) swooning over the new Bush administration's "unilateralism" to come and the "Bush Doctrine" which would go with it. In the process, he gave that administration a green light to put the pathetic Russians in their nuclear place and summed the situation up this way: "America is no mere international citizen. It is the dominant power in the world, more dominant than any since Rome. Accordingly, America is in a position to reshape norms, alter expectations, and create new realities. How? By unapologetic and implacable demonstrations of will."

"How Did USA's Oil Get Under Iraq's Sand?"

And soon enough after September 11th, those unapologetic, implacable demonstrations of will did, in fact, begin -- first in Afghanistan and then, a year and a half later, in Iraq. [Goaded](#) by Osama bin Laden, the new Rome went into action.

Of course, in 2019 we have the benefit of hindsight, which Charles Krauthammer, Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, and the rest of that crew didn't have as they applied their Roman-style vision of an imperial America to the actual world. It should be added, however, that the [millions](#) of people who hit the streets globally to protest the coming invasion of Iraq in the winter of 2003 -- "How did USA's oil get under Iraq's sand?" said a [typical protest sign](#) (which Donald Trump would have [understood](#) in his own way) -- had a far better sense of the world than did their American rulers-to-be. Like the Soviets [before them](#), in fact, they would grievously confuse military power with power on this planet.

More than 17 years later, the U.S. military remains stuck in Afghanistan, bedeviled in Iraq, and floundering across much of the Greater Middle East and Africa on a planet with a resurgent Russia, and an impressively rising China. One-third of the former axis of evil, Iran, is, remarkably enough, still in Washington's [gunsights](#), while another third (North Korea) sits uncomfortably in a presidential bear hug. It's no exaggeration to say that none of the dreams of a new Rome were ever faintly fulfilled. In fact, if you want to think about what's been truly exceptional in these years, it might be this: never in history has such a great power, at its height, seemed quite so incapable of effectively applying force, military or otherwise, to achieve its imperial ends or bring its targets to heel.

And yet, wrong as they may have been on such subjects, don't sell Krauthammer and the rest of that neocon crew short. They were, in their own way, also prophets, at least domestically speaking. After all, Rome, like the United States, had been an imperial republic. That republic was replaced, as its empire grew, by autocratic rule, first by the self-anointed emperor Augustus and then by his successors.

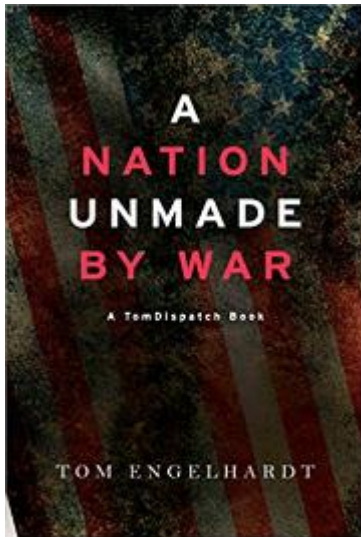
Arguably, 18 years after Krauthammer wrote that column, the American republic might be heading down the same path. After all, so many years later, the neocons, triumphantly risen yet again in Washington (both in the administration and as its critics), finally have their Caesar.

Hail, Donald J. Trump, we who are about to read your latest tweet salute you!

A Rogue State of One

Let's note some other passing parallels between the new Rome and the old one. As a start, it's certainly accurate to say that our new American Caesar has much gall (divided into at least three parts). Admittedly, he's no Augustus, the first of a line of emperors, but more likely a Nero, fiddling while, in his case, the world quite literally burns. Still, he could certainly say of campaign 2016 and what followed: *Veni, Vidi, Tweeti* (I came, I saw, I tweeted). And don't forget the classic line that might someday be applied to his presidency, "*Et tu, Mueller?*" -- or depending on who turns on him, you can fill in your name of choice.

One day, it might also be said that, in a country in which executive power has become ever more imperial (as has the power of the Senate's majority leader), blowback from imperial acts abroad has had a significant, if largely hidden, hand in crippling the American republic, as was once true of Rome. In fact, it seems clear enough that the first republican institution to go was the citizen's army. In the wake of the Vietnam War, the draft was thrown out and replaced by an "all-volunteer" force, one which would, as it came to fight on ever more distant battlefields, morph into a home-grown version of an imperial police force or foreign legion. With it went the staggering sums that, in this century, would be invested -- if that's even the word for it -- in what's still called "defense," as well as in a vast empire of bases abroad and the national security state, a rising locus of power at home. And then, of course, there were the never-ending wars across much of the Greater Middle East and parts of Africa that went with all of that. Meanwhile, so much else, domestically speaking, was put on the equivalent of austerity rations. And all of that, in turn, helped provoke the crisis that brought Donald Trump to power and might, in the end, even sink the American system as we've known it.



Buy the book

The Donald's victory in the 2016 election was always a sign of a deep disturbance at the heart of an increasingly unequal and unfair system of wealth and power. But it was those trillions of dollars -- The Donald claims seven trillion of them -- that the neocons began sinking into America's "infinite" wars, which cost Americans big time in ways they hardly tracked or noticed. Those trillions didn't go into shoring up American infrastructure or health care or education or job-training programs or anything else that might have mattered to most people here, even as untold tax dollars -- one estimate: \$15,000 per middle-class family per year -- went into the pockets of the rich. And some of those dollars, in turn, poured back into the American political system (with a helping hand from the Supreme Court's 2010 Citizens United decision) and, in the end, helped put the first billionaire in the Oval Office. By the 2020 election campaign, we may achieve another all-American first: two or even three of the candidates could be billionaires.

All of this not only gave Americans a visibly unhinged president -- think of him, in axis-of-evil terms, as a rogue state of one -- but an increasingly unhinged country. You can feel so much of this in President Trump's confused and confusing attempts to both end American wars and ratchet them up, 17-and-a-half -- he always claims "almost 19" -- years after the invasion of Afghanistan. You can feel it in his gut-level urge to attack the "deep state" and yet fund it beyond its wildest dreams. You can feel it in his attempts to create a corps of "my generals" and then fire them all. You can feel the unhinged nature of events in a world in which, after so many years of war, America's enemies still seem to have the formula for staying afloat, no matter what Washington does. The Taliban in Afghanistan is on the rise; al-Shabaab in Somalia, is still going strong; the Houthis in Yemen remain functional in a sea of horror and starvation; ISIS, now without its caliphate, has from Syria to the Philippines, Africa to Afghanistan, become a distinctly global brand; al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula thrives, while terror groups more generally continue to spread.

You can feel it in the president's confused and confusing explanations for his

urges to withdraw American troops in [days](#) or [four months](#) or [whenever](#) from Syria and do the same or [maybe not exactly](#) in Afghanistan. (As he [said](#) in his State of the Union address, American troops would both withdraw *and* “focus” on “counterterrorism” in that country.) You can feel it in the way, after so many years of visible failure, the neocons are once again [riding high](#) in Washington, ascendant both in his administration and as critics of its global and military policies.

These days, who even remembers that classic early Cold War question -- who lost China? -- that rattled American domestic politics for years, or later, the similar one about Vietnam? Still, if Donald Trump ever truly does withdraw American forces from Afghanistan (undoubtedly leaving this country’s allies in a Vietnam-style ditch), count on foreign policy establishmentarians in Washington and pundits around the country to ask an updated version of the same question: Did Donald Trump lose Afghanistan?

But no matter what happens, don’t make the mistake of blaming him. It’s true that he tweeted endlessly while the world burned, but he won’t be the one who “lost” Afghanistan. It was “lost” in the grisly dreams of the neocons as the century began and it’s never truly been found again.

Of course, we no more know what’s going to happen in the years ahead than the neocons did in 2001. If history has taught us anything, it’s that prediction is the diciest of human predilections. Still, think of this piece as an obituary of sorts. You know, the kind major newspapers write about those still living and then continually update until death finally occurs.

Think of it not as an obituary for a single loopy president, a man who, with his “great, great wall,” has indeed been an opiate of the masses (for his famed base, at least) in the midst of an [opioid crisis](#) hitting them hard. Yes, Donald J. Trump, reality TV star and [bankruptee](#), he of the golden letters, was elevated to a strange version of power by a troubled republic showing signs of wear and tear. It was a republic feeling the pressure of all that money flowing into only half-noticed distant wars and into the pockets of billionaires and corporate entities in a way that turned the very idea of democracy into a bad joke.

Someday, if people ask the obvious question -- not who lost Afghanistan, but who lost America? -- keep all those failed imperial wars and the national security state that went with them in mind when you try to answer. Cumulatively, they had a far more disruptive role than is now imagined in toppling the dominos that sent us all careening on a path to nowhere here at home. And keep in mind that, whatever Donald Trump does, the Caesarian die was [cast](#) early in this century as the neocons crossed their own Rubicon.

Hail, Caesar, we who are about to die salute you!

Tom Engelhardt is a co-founder of the [American Empire Project](#) and the author of a history of the Cold War, [The End of Victory Culture](#). He runs [TomDispatch.com](#) and is a fellow of the [Type Media Center](#). His sixth and

latest book is [A Nation Unmade by War](#) (Dispatch Books).

[Note: A bow of thanks to Jonathan Cobb whose sharp thoughts are an invaluable resource for me -- and another to the late, great Chalmers Johnson who was already writing about such subjects as this century began! Tom]

Follow TomDispatch on [Twitter](#) and join us on [Facebook](#). Check out the newest Dispatch Books, John Feffer's new dystopian novel (the second in the Splinterlands series) [Frostlands](#), Beverly Gologorsky's novel [Every Body Has a Story](#), and Tom Engelhardt's [A Nation Unmade by War](#), as well as Alfred McCoy's [In the Shadows of the American Century: The Rise and Decline of U.S. Global Power](#) and John Dower's [The Violent American Century: War and Terror Since World War II](#).

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Last Updated on Thursday, 14 February 2019 12:58

395 readings

[UW study: Exposure to chemical in Roundup increases risk for cancer](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 14 February 2019 17:18

February 13, 2019

Jackson Holtz

<https://www.washington.edu/news/2019/02/13/uw-study-exposure-to-chemical-in-roundup-increases-risk-for-cancer/> UW News

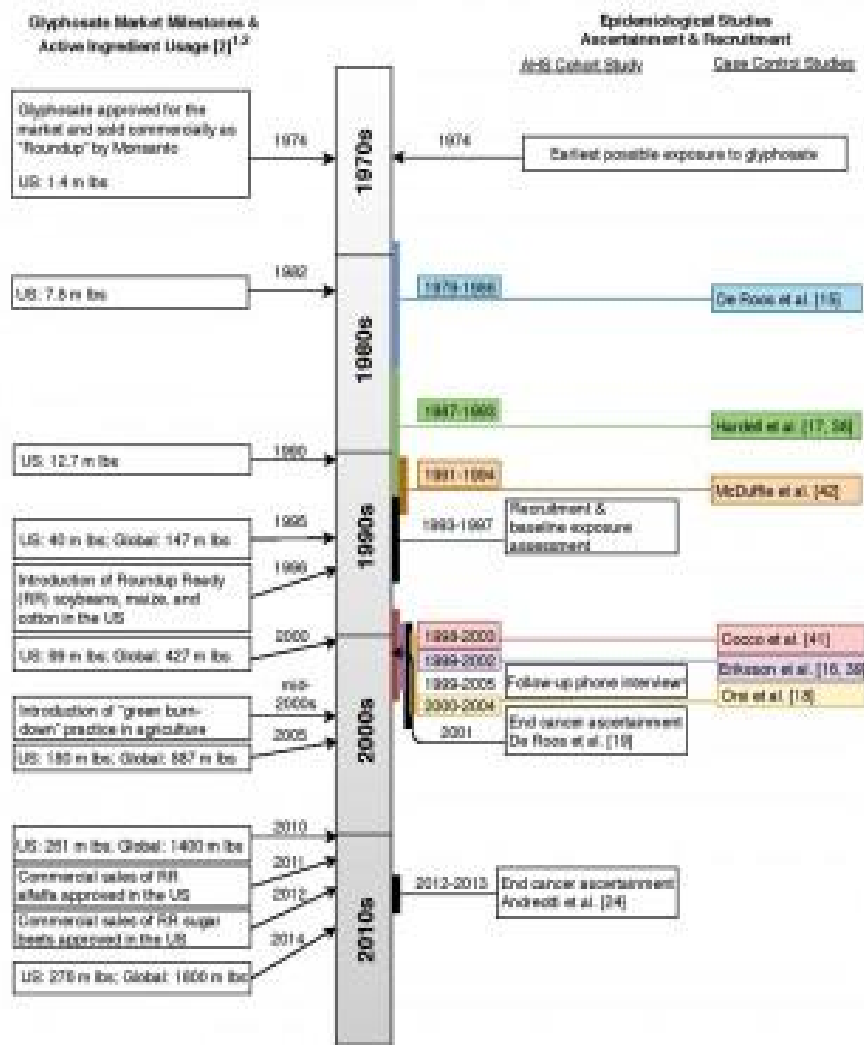


Figure 3: Timeline of glyphosate use milestones in relation to cohort and case-control study events

¹ Glyphosate active ingredient usage includes agricultural and non-agricultural applications.
² m = millions, lbs = pounds.
³ Completed by 60% of ARS participants.

A timeline that shows the growth in glyphosate usage worldwide (left) and key human epidemiological studies on the herbicide (right).

Exposure to glyphosate — the world's most widely used, broad-spectrum herbicide

and the primary ingredient in the weedkiller Roundup — increases the risk of some cancers by more than 40 percent, according to new research from the University of Washington.

Various reviews and international assessments have come to different conclusions about whether glyphosate leads to cancer in humans.

The research team conducted an updated meta-analysis — a comprehensive review of existing literature — and focused on the most highly exposed groups in each study. They found that the link between glyphosate and Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma is stronger than previously reported.

Their findings were published this month in the online journal *Mutation Research/Reviews in Mutation Research*.

“Our analysis focused on providing the best possible answer to the question of whether or not glyphosate is carcinogenic,” said senior author Lianne Sheppard, a professor in the UW departments of Environmental & Occupational Health Sciences and Biostatistics. “As a result of this research, I am even more convinced that it is.”

By examining epidemiologic studies published between 2001 and 2018, the team determined that exposure to glyphosate may increase the risk of Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma by as much as 41 percent. The authors focused their review on epidemiological research in humans but also considered the evidence from laboratory animals.

“This research provides the most up-to-date analysis of glyphosate and its link with Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma, incorporating a 2018 study of more than 54,000 people who work as licensed pesticide applicators,” said co-author Rachel Shaffer, a UW doctoral student in the Department of Environmental & Occupational Health Sciences.

“These findings are aligned with a prior assessment from the International Agency for Research on Cancer, which classified glyphosate as a ‘probable human carcinogen’ in 2015,” Shaffer said.

Glyphosate first was introduced as an herbicide in 1974. Usage in the agricultural industry has soared, particularly since the mid-2000s when the practice of “green burndown” was introduced, in which glyphosate-based herbicides are applied to crops shortly before harvest. As a consequence, crops now are likely to have higher residues of glyphosate.

graph

A timeline that shows the growth in glyphosate usage worldwide (left) and key human epidemiological studies on the herbicide (right).

Researchers say more studies are needed to account for the effects of increased exposures from green burndown, which may not be fully captured in the existing studies reviewed in this new publication.

Co-authors include Luoping Zhang and Imaan Rana in the Division of Environmental Health Sciences at the University of California, Berkeley, and Emanuela Taioli in the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York.

Funding was provided by the National Institutes of Environmental Health Sciences award T32ES015459 and the University of Washington Retirement Association Aging Fellowship.



Drone visual of the area in Upper East Region, Ghana prior to restoration taken in 2015. Credit: Albert Oppong-Ansah /IPS

People-Led, Better-Led

Karina Kloos Yeatman, the Women's Land Rights Campaign Director at [Landesa](#), highlighted the importance of people-led conservation and sustainable land management but the first step is land rights.

"If we aren't looking forward and thinking about land use and land tenure security and finding more solutions to help people make long term investments to sustainably use their land, we are going to continue to see an even larger influx of climate migrants and people being displaced," she told IPS.

Yeatman particularly pointed to successes of how secure lands rights have led to increase long-term investments in sustainable soil and forestry management.

For instance, smallholder farmers with secure rights in Ethiopia were 60 percent more likely to invest in soil erosion prevention.

In forests where indigenous land rights have been recognised, deforestation rates have dramatically declined.

In Bolivia, deforestation is 2.8 times lower within tenure-secure indigenous lands.

This has not only helped halt land degradation, but such measures have also mitigated forest-based emissions and curbed global warming.

Both Yeatman and Madeira noted that land rights alone is not enough to promote sustainable land management, but rather four pillars. These are securing the rights to

territories and resources; support strong community leadership and local governance; promoting multi stakeholder collaborations, allowing local communities to engage in high levels of decision-making and; identifying environmentally sustainable economic development opportunities in line with communities' cultural values and sustainable management.

“It’s when you have the four of those ingredients that is when you end up with enduring conservation, communities who have the power to protect those peoples and who can also benefit economically from their stewardship of those places,” Madeira said.

In an effort to curb logging and deforestation, Peru’s Shipibo-Conibo indigenous communities residing in the Amazon enlisted over 6,000 hectares—80 percent of their territory—into the country’s conservation programme and helps manage the land in a way that provides sustainable sources of income.

As part of the National Programme for Forest Conservation, communities receive 3 dollar per year for every hectare they assign to conservation which amounts to potential earnings of at least 18,000 dollar. In order to receive the payment, they must commit to protecting the forest.

A significant proportion of the money received is thus invested back into the forest and its communities who engage in activities such as ecotourism and the sustainable extraction of forest resources.



Farmers undertaking periodic pruning at vegetation Susudi, in the Upper East Region of Ghana. Credit: Albert Oppong-Ansah/IPS

One Step Forward, Many More To Go

While tenure can look different in various contexts, Madeira highlighted the importance of governments and companies respecting land rights as well as the inclusion of indigenous people and local communities to shape sustainable land management planning.

“A lot of the development decisions are made far away from the ground in board rooms. The extent to which indigenous people and local communities are excluded from those decisions, you’re going to get these poor outcomes,” she told IPS.

Yeatman urged corporations to be aware of the complexities surrounding land tenure and support local communities to ensure a sustainable future.

“[Companies] often have 50-100 year leases and if they want the land to be sustainable, they need to help those farmers secure their land rights and help have access to information and inputs to diversify so that they are not degrading their lands,” she said.

Consumers also have a role to play, Yeatman noted, as they delve into the stories behind the products and companies they buy from.

[Oxfam’s](#) campaign Behind the Brands provides a scorecard, assessing how the world’s 10 largest food and beverage companies are measuring up against a number of indicators including support for women farm workers, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and respecting rights to and sustainably using land.

For instance, French multinational company Danone and American manufacturer General Mills are ranked among the lowest on the land indicator as it has not committed to zero tolerance for land grabs and does not require its suppliers to consider how such acquisitions affect livelihoods.

While it is easier said than done, there have already been positive developments across the world.

Most recently, the Malaysian government file a lawsuit against local government of Kelantan state for failing to uphold the land rights of its indigenous people Orang Asli, many of whom lack formal titles, as it continues to grant licenses to logging companies and agricultural plantations.

“Rapid deforestation and commercial development have resulted in widespread encroachment into the native territories of the Orang Asli,” Attorney-General Tommy Thomas said in a statement.

“Commercial development and the pursuit of profit must not come at the expense of the Temiar Orang Asli and their inherent right, as citizens of this country, to the land and resources which they have traditionally owned and used,” he added.

Similarly, Myanmar, which has among the highest rates of deforestation in Asia, plans to transfer over 918,000 hectares of forest land to community management by 2030 in order to help prevent illegal logging and allow traditional residents to practice sustainable forestry.

There is still a long way to go but action is necessary to prevent the dwindling of land and natural resources essential for everyone’s survival.

434 readings

[‘China is your daddy’: Backlash against Tibetan student’s election prompts questions about foreign influence](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 15 February 2019 18:14

Social Sharing

Chemi Lhamo, 22, got thousands of hateful comments after becoming U of T Scarborough student president

CBC News · Posted: Feb 14, 2019 5:42 PM ET | Last Updated: February 15
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/china-tibet-student-election-1.5019648>



Chemi Lhamo, the president-elect of the University of Toronto's Scarborough campus, believes she's being targeted because of her Tibetan identity. (Martin Trainor/CBC) What might otherwise be the usual mudslinging around a student election has turned into a political firestorm on a Toronto university campus, where a newly-elected student president is raising questions about the source of pro-China attacks against her.

On Saturday morning, Chemi Lhamo, 22, learned she'd been elected student president at the University of Toronto's Scarborough campus (UTSC).

By noon, her phone was buzzing incessantly with notifications. But instead of messages of congratulations, Lhamo — a Canadian citizen of Tibetan origin — realized a photo she'd posted on Instagram for the Lunar New Year was attracting thousands of hateful comments, most rife with anti-Tibet sentiment, some threatening.

"China is your daddy — you better know this," read one comment.

"Ur not gonna be the president of UTSC," read another. "Even if you do, we will make sure things get done so u won't survive a day. Peace RIP."

China denies role in backlash against Tibetan student's election at U of T
After McCallum's firing, expert looks at what's next in Canada-China spat
That wasn't all. A petition calling on Lhamo to step down had amassed nearly 10,000 signatures.

And there was a message on the Chinese mobile service We Chat making the rounds, calling on Chinese international students to stop Lhamo from becoming president.

The message, posted by the account Ladder Street, said: "The U of T student union is about to be controlled by Tibetan separatists." The message also says Lhamo shouldn't benefit from the millions of dollars brought in each year by Chinese students.

535 readings

[THERE IS NO NEW NORMAL; JUST UNHEEDED WARNINGS, LOST OPPORTUNITY AND OPPORTUNISTIC ADAPTING](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 17 February 2019 17:05

THERE IS NO NEW NORMAL; JUST UNHEEDED WARNINGS, LOST OPPORTUNITY AND OPPORTUNISTIC ADAPTING

A Glimpse through time

By Joan Russow

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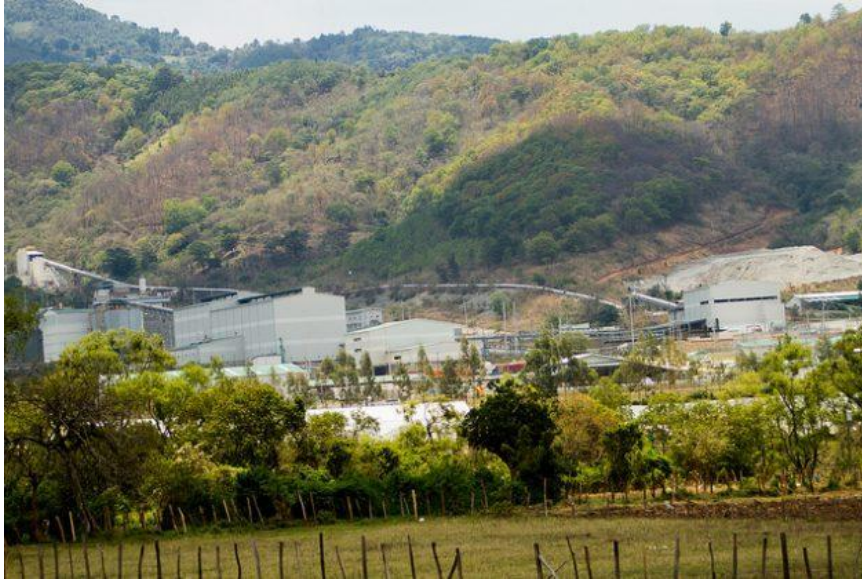


[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 19 February 2019 11:15

By [Edgardo Ayalant](#) |



The installations of the silver mine located in the rural municipality of San Rafael Las Flores, in Guatemala, have been closed since 2017, as the result of a Constitutional Court ruling in response to the struggle by local inhabitants, who had not been properly consulted, as required by law. Credit: Edgardo Ayala/IPS

SAN SALVADOR, Feb 19 2019 (IPS) - Like an octopus, metals mining has been spreading its tentacles throughout Central America and dealing a blow to the region's agriculture and natural ecosystems, according to affected villagers, activists and a new report on the problem.

"Where the mining company is operating was land that peasants leased to plant corn and beans, our staple crops. But since the company came in, there is no land left to farm," said Lesbia Villagrán, who lives in the municipality of San Rafael Las Flores in eastern Guatemala.

Minera San Rafael, a subsidiary of the Canadian company Tahoe Resources, set up shop in this rural municipality of just over 9,000 people in 2007, and since then local residents in different villages scattered throughout this municipality and nearby areas have been organised to bring its operations to a halt.

**"Water, apart from daily use, is vital for agriculture, and is affected by the presence of metallic minerals, like cyanide, all of which will alter food production."
-- Julio González**

The villagers are fighting the El Escobal silver mine arguing that it will affect their livelihood in agriculture, as well as local water sources and biodiversity.

"When I was little, my father leased four or six manzanas (a little more than four hectares) of land and for us it was a joy to work in the abundant harvest. But when the owners of the land sold it to the company, my father

was no longer able to plant our staple crops,” added Villagrán, 28, in an interview with IPS from San Rafael.

The mine changed ownership in January, and now the company is called Minera San Rafael El Escobal, a subsidiary of Canada’s [Pan American Silver](#), which according to its website is the world’s second-largest producer of silver. It owns and operates six mines in Argentina, Bolivia, Mexico, Peru, and now Guatemala.

“The situation in agriculture is complicated by the company’s operations,” said Alex Reynoso, a coffee grower from a municipality near San Rafael.

According to Reynoso, the country’s markets do not want produce harvested near the mine because of fears that they are contaminated with heavy metals used in the extraction process.

“The country’s most important markets flat-out avoid buying our products,” he told IPS from his hometown.

IPS attempted to get comments from both Tahoe Resources and Pan American Silver with respect to the criticism by San Rafael Las Flores residents against the mine, but had received no reply by the time this article was published.

Mining operations have been suspended since July 2017 while the Guatemalan Constitutional Court studied a complaint by organisations of local Amerindian Xinca residents that they were not consulted about the project as required by law.

The Court issued a ruling upholding the suspension of mining activity in September 2018.



Environmental organisations from Central America presented in San Salvador the study “Strategies for the Defense of the Environment and Human Rights in the Face of the Impacts of Mining Extractivism in Central America”, which shows the growth of the mining industry and how it affects agriculture and the way of life

of rural people in Central America. Credit: Courtesy of the Association for the Development of El Salvador

This case in Guatemala is an example of the tensions caused in Central America by metals mining, an activity that has been ongoing in the area, albeit in a rudimentary fashion, since the time of Spanish colonialism in the sixteenth century.

In the last few decades it has expanded with the arrival of transnational mining corporations to the area.

The arrival of foreign corporations generated social conflict, as local residents in the villages and towns where the mines are active began to organise, especially in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua.

The consortiums that win the mining concessions have been grabbing up traditional farming and forest land, while monopolising water resources that local communities, especially indigenous ones, depend on, putting their food security at risk.

The study “Strategies for the Defense of the Environment and Human Rights in the Face of the Impacts of Mining Extractivism in Central America”, released Feb. 11 in San Salvador, gives an account of this expansion and its impacts.

In Honduras, up to January 2017, 172 mining concessions had been granted, covering a total area of 7,275 square kilometers, equivalent to 6.47 of the country’s territory.

In Guatemala, up to the same date, 55 concessions had been granted, covering an area of 4,143 square kilometers, or 3.81 percent of the national territory.

And by May 2017 Nicaragua had granted 146 mining concessions, and is still processing 20 more applications. Altogether, including the pending applications, they cover 11,143 square kilometers, or 8.55 percent of the country.

El Salvador made international history by being the first country in the world to ban all forms of mining in March 2017.

But as of 2006 there were 31 mining concessions, covering an area of 1,088 square kilometers, 5.17 percent of the national territory.

Central America is a region of great social deprivation, with a population of 48 million inhabitants and an area of 524,000 square kilometers, also made up of Belize, Costa Rica and Panama.

It is also one of the regions most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, with high annual crop losses, either due to excess water, during the rainy season, or due to droughts in the dry season.

Following the Salvadoran example, “there are cases of movements that are demanding mining-free territories” in neighboring countries,

Nicaraguan researcher Angélica Alfaro, one of the chief authors of the new study, told IPS.

“But the reality is that countries like Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua have passed laws aimed directly at promoting the mining sector,” said Alfaro, who worked on the document as a consultant for the [Association for the Development of El Salvador](#).

The report was published by the [Central American Mining Alliance](#), a conglomerate of environmental organisations in the region.

The mining industry jeopardises food security in Central America because it directly impacts agriculture, as it affects several watersheds, Julio González, of the Guatemalan group Madre Selva, told IPS.

For example, the Cerro Blanco mine, located in the Guatemalan municipality of Asunción Mita, bordering on western El Salvador, is part of the Ostua-Guija-Lempa basin.

The pollution generated by the mine runs into Lake Guija, in El Salvador, and from there to the Lempa River, which winds through this country and whose water is used for irrigation and human consumption, after being processed.




“Water, apart from daily use, is vital for agriculture, and is affected by the presence of metallic minerals, like cyanide, all of which will alter food production,” said González, who participated in the presentation of the study in San Salvador.

He added that the land used by the mining industry is not the enormous extensions of land owned by large landowners, but rather the areas used for subsistence agriculture, especially in the territories of indigenous people, historically expelled from their land and pushed into forested areas.

“But that’s the agriculture that sustains food security,” he said.

The report “[Impacts of metal mining in Central America](#),” published in 2011, warned that “access to the geographical space available to mining is twice that dedicated to the production of basic grains, that is, for every square kilometer that is planted with basic grains in Central America there are two square kilometers controlled by the mining industry.”

1038 readings

[Wake Up and Smell the Organic Coffee](#)   

[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 20 February 2019 09:43



Dorienne Rowan-Campbell is an organic coffee farmer in Jamaica. Taking over her father's farm in 1992 and turning it into an organic one was a huge risk at the time. However, she sustainably grows 1,800 coffee trees and harnesses nature to deal with pests, rather than using pesticides. Courtesy: Dorienne Rowan-Campbell

BULAWAYO, Zimbabwe, Feb 20 2019 (IPS) - In 1992, the idea of replanting her father's ruined coffee farm seemed foolhardy at the time. But in retrospect it was the best business decision that Dorienne Rowan-Campbell, an international development consultant and broadcast journalist, could have made.

Nearly three decades later, Rowan-Campbell grows organic coffee on her two hectare, Rowan's Royale farm. The nearly 60-year-old farm is situated on a steep slope western Portland, a parish northeast of Jamaica overlooking the famous Blue Mountains, known for their coffee plantations.

Rowan-Campbell is a select grower of the famous Jamaica Blue Mountain coffee, one of the most rare and expensive coffees, favoured for making delectable espresso.

"I was foolhardy I just wanted to get up in the mountains and try farming," Rowan-Campbell tells IPS about her foray into growing coffee, an energy-boosting beverage loved the world over, which may well become scarce, thanks to climate change.



Freshly picked coffee beans. Credit: Will Boase/IPS

Shifting to organic farming a big risk but not for nature

Growing organic coffee was a major shift from conventional coffee farming but it was a big bet. Her father grew coffee the conventional way using polluting pesticides, herbicides and industrial fertilisers to manage pests and diseases while maintaining soil nutrition. She cultivates over half a hectare of the farm with more than 1,800 coffee trees.

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“Organic came [about] because everyone said ‘You need a big 50-60 gallon drum to mix pesticides’ and I thought not me,” says Rowan-Campbell, a former Commonwealth Director of the Women and Development Programme at the Commonwealth Secretariat in London.

She beat the odds of having initially a poor knowledge about organic farming. Her husband and small staff were trained in organic farming techniques. And the organic farming experiment worked. In 2002, BCS OEKO-GARANTIE in Germany—which certifies some 35 percent of all

organic products in the country— certified the farm organic.

Since 2004, it has been inspected and certified annually by the Certification of Environmental Standards (CERES), an organic certification agency that uses the presence of birds as one indication of environmental balance.

A 2006 study, by Humbolt University and the University of the West Indies, into birds as vectors of pest control found that although Rowan's Royale was the smallest farm in the sample, it had the most birds, the greatest variety of birds and the least coffee berry borer (a beetle harmful to coffee crops).

"As an organic farmer, I have to harness nature and work with it because we do not use any chemicals on my farm. I have insects and birds and they eat more than 50 percent of any pests that would attack my coffee so the quality of the coffee is naturally protected," she says, explaining that she mulches and prepares natural compost for the coffee trees and manages pests and diseases with natural chemicals.

"We have coffee rust disease right now, decimating the coffee industry in Central, South America and the Caribbean. Some people are using extremely strong chemicals to deal with it. I use a mixture of garlic and water. It works, and I share it with all the farmers."

An estimated 4,000 farmers are growing Blue Mountain Coffee in Jamaica. This year Rowan-Campbell expects to harvest up to four tonnes of coffee beans and is marketing the coffee in America, Europe and Asia.



Dorianne Rowan-Campbell's farm is a select producer of the famous Jamaica Blue Mountain coffee, one of the most rare and expensive of coffees, favoured for making delectable espresso. Courtesy: Dorianne Rowan-Campbell

Beating climate change

Once Rowan-Campbell packed a package, a box with various coffee roasts and sent it to Prince Charles, the future king of England via a courier. But he never got it.

"He had asked about organic coffee and was told there was none," she remembers. "Organic farming is an adaptation strategy against climate change and I try to teach others."

Coffee is vulnerable to temperature change as it only grows at specific temperatures around the tropics.

Scientific research is showing that climate change will reduce coffee growing areas around the world by up to 88 percent by 2050. It has become necessary for more than 25 million coffee farmers in more than 60 tropical countries to adapt to climate change using a blend of techniques such as shade improvement and crop rotation.

"Our results suggest that coffee-suitable areas will be reduced 73–88 percent by 2050 across warming scenarios, a decline 46–76 percent greater than estimated by global assessments," says a study by the

PNAS journal.

Coffee is the second most commonly traded commodity in the world, trailing only as a source of foreign exchange to developing countries, according to the International Coffee Organisation.

Bouyed by global demand for organic produce, Rowan-Campbell—an active member of the Jamaica Organic Agriculture movement—is also growing root vegetables and makes organic jams and marmalade.

“For me organic farming it is the most important thing in farming because it says you are building a sustainable future for your great [grand] children,” she said.

However, what has made organic farming work? “Probably love and passion,” she says.

“I think it is important that in Jamaica we have this wonderful flavour of coffee. It is a gift because coffee is grown at a certain elevation and the soil is good.

“When I started, I did not know I was taking such a major step in Jamaica. I have many women who come to me and say they want to grow organic.”

Since 2004, the farm purchased by her father in 1960 has weathered four hurricanes with Hurricane Dean in 2007 damaging close to 70 of the coffee trees. Despite this, Rowan-Campbell says organic methods have prevented landslides and soil erosion on the farm.

Rowan-Campbell is a certified inspector and trains other farmers in organic farming and promoting certification. Last year she was part of an initiative to develop a Caribbean Community (CARICOM) standard for organic coffee production.

Organic coffee farmers in Jamaica have had to overcome the challenges of poor regulations for organic coffee, high license fees and local certification.

Rowan-Campbell says she has no plans of expanding the business. She wants to keep it small, efficient, profitable and delivering high quality export coffee.

“I am meticulous. I want only well ripened cherries and I reap a little at a time. No big pay-out at end of the day, but sustainable production and high quality coffee.”

488 readings

[The herbicide glyphosate persists in wild, edible plants:](#)

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Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 20 February 2019 10:23

Randy Shore Updated: February 19, 2019

<https://vancouver.sun.com/news/local-news/the-herbicide-glyphosate-persists-in-wild-edible-plants-b-c-study>

Lisa Wood, a forester and assistant professor at the University of Northern B.C., is the author of a study on the impact of aerial spraying of the herbicide glyphosate in the Canadian Journal of Forest Research.

Lisa Wood, a forester and assistant professor at the University of Northern B.C., is the author of a study on the impact of aerial spraying of the herbicide glyphosate in the Canadian Journal of Forest Research. Handout

Edible and medicinal forest plants that survive aerial spraying of glyphosate can retain the herbicide and related residues for at least a year, a new study has found.

“The highest and most consistent levels of glyphosate and AMPA (aminomethylphosphonic acid) were found in herbaceous perennial root tissues, but shoot tissues and fruit were also shown to contain glyphosate in select species,” according to the study published in the Canadian Journal of Forest Research.

Herbicides containing glyphosate are used by forest companies to kill aspen and other broadleaf plants in areas that have been logged and replanted with trees of commercial value such as Douglas fir and pine, according to the Ministry of Forests.

When herbicides are sprayed by plane, the spray can deliver non-lethal doses of glyphosate to nearby “non-target plants,” some of which may store the compound indefinitely or break it down very slowly, said author Lisa Wood, a registered professional forester and assistant professor of forest ecology at the University of Northern B.C.

Wood found unexpected levels of glyphosate in new shoots and

berries of plants that survived an aerial herbicide application made one year earlier.

These findings raise concerns about forage plants used extensively by First Nations in northern B.C. where most spraying occurs, she said.

The 10 species tested were selected for their importance as traditional-use plants, because some First Nations had expressed concerns about the long-term effects of glyphosate on wild plants, said Wood.

Glyphosate is typically broken down in soil by microorganisms over a period of months, but how long it persists in living plant tissues is unknown, she said.

This image was taken May 31, 2014, about a year after the area near Baldy Hughes was sprayed with glyphosate, according to Stop the Spray BC. James Steidle / PNG

“If a plant dies from an application it falls to the soil and there are microbes that gobble up the glyphosate,” she said.

“When they don’t die, they have interesting ways of coping, often by storing and isolating the glyphosate.”

Forest companies are obligated by provincial legislation to manage regenerating forests until the replanted trees are free-growing, which may require selective tree and brush removal and use of herbicides to delay the growth of deciduous plants and tree species that crowd or shade timber stock species.

Chemical treatments are generally less expensive than manual control methods because fewer treatments are required, the ministry said.

About 17,000 hectares of forest land are sprayed each year, around 10 to 12 per cent of the area replanted each year. The total has been trending down since 2016 when the ministry relaxed brush control requirements in the Cariboo-Chilcotin.

Improved, fast-growing seedlings have also reduced the need for

spraying.

The B.C. Wildlife Federation is poised to call for tighter controls on the use of glyphosate in forestry, citing in a draft resolution its negative impact on food and habitat for wildlife and the “growing body of evidence that suggests glyphosates are carcinogenic.”

Provincial regulations encourage chemical treatment by forest companies that want to avoid the expense of replanting cutblocks when timber species don’ t thrive, said federation spokesman Jesse Zeman.

“Government guidance governing the use of glyphosate is an outcome of archaic legislation that puts merchantable timber first and all other values, including wildlife second,” he said.

rshore@postmedia.com

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[Water commission unanimously opposes Malahat detour in watershed](#)



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Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 21 February 2019 10:25

BY [Jeff Bell](#) / Times Colonist

<https://www.timescolonist.com/news/local/water-commission-unanimously-opposes-malahat-detour-in-watershed-1.23640449>feb2019-sooke-lake007110.jpg



Sooke Lake Reservoir, from the top of the dam's spillway. February 2019

Photograph By CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT

Members of the Regional Water Supply Commission have unanimously opposed the idea of building an emergency Malahat detour route through water-supply lands or park wilderness.

The detour route has been discussed as a possible solution to traffic incidents that block the Malahat.

Councillors trying to block a Malahat bypass from going through watershed
About a dozen members of the public spoke to the issue at the commission's Wednesday meeting, all of them against the alternate thoroughfare.

"The flow of traffic should be done within the Malahat corridor," speaker Thomas Hackney said. "There is no need to look outside that."

map - Greater Victoria water supply area
Alison Spriggs told the commission that it should stand up for protective measures that have been taken in the past.

"There are solutions to the congestion and the bad driving on the Malahat that don't involve punching an emergency road through the heart of this precious, protected area," she said. "Point-to-point cameras have been mentioned, expanded commuter-bus services — all good solutions. Green and clean."

Torrance Coste, who is part of a local group called the Wilderness Committee, said some communities on Vancouver Island have encroachment-related issues with their water supply that don't come up in the Capital Regional District.

"Everyone who lives and works in this city is so lucky to have a protected watershed," he said. "This is a tremendously rare gift that was given to them through the foresight and leadership of past CRD directors and through the advocacy of citizens who

championed the additions of further buffer zones.

“To squander the gift that we have in the Sooke Hills would be a mistake that will haunt us forever.”

Jean Siemens urged the commission to reject the detour route and “choose to be on the right side of history.”

Commission member and Victoria Coun. Jeremy Loveday, who introduced the motion to oppose the route, said he and his colleagues have one job to do. “That it is to protect our water supply,” he said. “I think it’s important that the Water Supply Commission goes on record at this early hour opposing any construction in the watershed.”

Loveday said the commission should send “a very clear message” that climate is changing, the chance of drought and forest fires is increasing “and that makes protecting our water supply more important than ever.”

The quality of local water should be maintained for generations to come, he said.

In addition to opposing a detour route, the commission voted to recommend that the CRD board take the same position. That comes after the CRD board took an in-camera vote last week to have staff form a working group with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to examine options for a Malahat detour.

Loveday said prior to the meeting that the motion doesn’t run counter to the CRD being part of the working group because the CRD has yet to take a position on any route.

The final motion also included a request that CRD chairman Colin Plant, a Saanich councillor, write to the premier, the ministers of environment and transportation and MLAs advising that t

BY [Jeff Bell](#) / Times Colonist

Last Updated on Thursday, 21 February 2019 12:29

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[Facts Don’t Interfere With Propaganda Blitz Against Venezuela’s Elected President](#)



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Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 22 February 2019 01:08

Facts Don’t Interfere With Propaganda Blitz Against Venezuela’s Elected President

By: Joe Emersberger



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Published 19 February 2019

U.S. Senator Marco Rubio poses for a photo as he awaits the arrival of U.S. President Trump to speak about Venezuela at Florida International University in Miami. | Photo: Reuters

OPINION

U.S. Senator Marco Rubio poses for a photo as he awaits the arrival of U.S. President Trump to speak about Venezuela at Florida International University in Miami.

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by Joe Emersberger

A child wearing U.S. flag runs under a Venezuelan flag where humanitarian aid for Venezuela is being stored in Cucuta, Colombia Feb. 10, 2019.

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by Scott Patrick

U.S. President Donald Trump is pursuing a policy of intervention in Venezuela.

Donald Trump's War of Recolonization Against Venezuela

by Samuel Moncada

Portraits of Simon Bolivar and Venezuela's late President Hugo Chavez are seen during a news conference, Venezuela Jan. 24, 2019.

Trump's Only Goal: To End Chavismo

by Alex Anfruns

Guaidó, anointed by Trump and a new Iraq-style Coalition of the Willing, did not even run in Venezuela's May 2018 presidential election. In fact, shortly before the election, Guaidó was not even mentioned by the opposition-aligned pollster Datanálisis when it published approval ratings of various prominent opposition leaders. Henri Falcón, who actually did run in the election (defying US threats against him) was claimed by the pollster to basically be in a statistical tie for most popular among them. It is remarkable to see the Western media dismiss this election as "fraudulent," without even attempting to show that it was "stolen" from Falcón. Perhaps that's because it so clearly wasn't stolen.

Data from the opposition-aligned pollsters in Venezuela (via Torino Capital) indicates that Henri Falcón was the most popular of the major opposition figures at the time of the May 2018 presidential election. Nicolás Maduro won the election due to widespread opposition boycotting and votes drawn by another opposition candidate, Javier Bertucci.

1

The constitutional argument that Trump and his accomplices have used to "recognize" Guaidó rests on the preposterous claim that Maduro has "abandoned" the presidency by soundly beating Falcón in the election. Caracas-based journalist Lucas Koerner took apart that argument in more detail.

What about the McClatchy-owned Herald's claim that Maduro "continues to reject international aid"? In November 2018, following a public appeal by Maduro, the UN did authorize emergency aid for Venezuela. It was even reported by Reuters (11/26/18), whose headlines have often broadcast the news agency's contempt for Maduro's government.

It's not unusual for Western media to ignore facts they have themselves reported when a major "propaganda blitz" by Washington is underway against a government. For example, it was generally reported accurately in 1998 that UN weapons inspectors were withdrawn from Iraq ahead of air strikes ordered by Bill Clinton, not expelled by Iraq's government. But by 2002, it became a staple of pro-war propaganda that Iraq had expelled weapons inspectors (Extra! Update, 10/02).

And, incidentally, when a Venezuelan NGO requested aid from the UN-linked Global Fund in 2017, it was turned down. Setting aside how effective foreign aid is at all (the example of Haiti hardly makes a great case for it), it is supposed to be distributed based on relative need, not based on how badly the U.S. government wants somebody overthrown.

RELATED:

Venezuela Confronts US-backed Right-wing Coup

But the potential for "aid" to alleviate Venezuela's crisis is negligible compared to the destructive impact of U.S. economic sanctions. Near the end of Wyss' article, he cited an estimate from the thoroughly demonized Venezuelan government that US sanctions have cost it \$30 billion, with no time period specified for that estimate. Again, this calls to mind the run-up to the Iraq invasion, when completely factual statements that Iraq had no WMDs were attributed to the discredited Iraqi government. Quoting Iraqi denials supposedly balanced the lies spread in the media by US officials like John Bolton, who now leads the charge to overthrow Maduro. Wyss could have cited economists independent of the Maduro government on the impact of U.S. sanctions—like US economist Mark Weisbrot, or the emphatically anti-Maduro Venezuelan economist Francisco Rodríguez.

Illegal US sanctions were first imposed in 2015 under a fraudulent "state of emergency" declared by Obama, and subsequently extended by Trump. The revenue lost to Venezuela's government due to US economic sanctions since August 2017, when the impact became very easy to quantify, is by now well over \$6 billion. That's enormous in an economy that was only able to import about \$11 billion of goods in 2018, and needs about \$2 billion per year in medicines. Trump's "recognition" of Guaidó as "interim president" was the pretext for making the already devastating sanctions much worse. Last month, Francisco Rodríguez revised his projection for the change in Venezuela's real GDP in 2019,

from an 11 percent contraction to 26 percent, after the intensified sanctions were announced.

The \$20 million in US “aid” that Wyss is outraged Maduro won’t let in is a rounding error compared to the billions already lost from Trump’s sanctions.

RELATED:

Latin American Left-Wing Parties Call for Peace in Venezuela

Former US Ambassador to Venezuela William Brownfield, who pressed for more sanctions on Venezuela, dispensed with the standard “humanitarian” cover that US officials have offered for them (Intercept, 2/10/19):

“And if we can do something that will bring that end quicker, we probably should do it, but we should do it understanding that it’s going to have an impact on millions and millions of people who are already having great difficulty finding enough to eat, getting themselves cured when they get sick, or finding clothes to put on their children before they go off to school. We don’t get to do this and pretend as though it has no impact there. We have to make the hard decision—the desired outcome justifies this fairly severe punishment.

How does this gruesome candor get missed by reporters like Wyss, and go unreported in his article?”

Speaking of “severe punishment,” if the names John Bolton and Elliott Abrams don’t immediately call to mind the punishment they should be receiving for crimes against humanity, it illustrates how well the Western propaganda system functions. Bolton, a prime facilitator of the Iraq War, recently suggested that Maduro could be sent to a US-run torture camp in Cuba. Abrams played a key role in keeping US support flowing to mass murderers and torturers in Central America during the 1980s. Also significant that Abrams, brought in by Trump to help oust Maduro, used “humanitarian aid” as cover to supply weapons to the U.S.-backed Contra terrorists in Nicaragua.

In the Herald article, the use of US “aid” for military purposes is presented as another allegation made by the vilified Venezuelan president: “Maduro has repeatedly said the aid is cover for a military invasion and has ordered his armed forces not to let it in, even as food and medicine shortages sweep the country.”

Calling for international aid and being democratically elected will do as little to protect Maduro’s government from U.S. aggression as being disarmed of WMD did to prevent Iraq from being invaded—unless there is much more pushback from the US public against a lethal propaganda system.

Last Updated on Saturday, 09 March 2019 20:30

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Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 22 February 2019 10:00

By Matthew Behrens Rabble

<http://rabble.ca/columnists/2019/02/its-taboo-talk-about-canadas-real-corporate-scandal> February 22, 2019



While the SNC-Lavalin scandal has torn another strip off the "sunny ways" prime minister, there's another

POLITICS IN CANADA

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau visits CFB Esquimalt. Photo: Adam Scotti/PMO

While the SNC-Lavalin scandal has torn another strip off the "sunny ways" prime minister, there's another corporate scandal that makes the financial figures in that case -- mere hundreds of millions of dollars in fraud and bribes -- seem like pocket change. But no major political party will touch it, which speaks to the manner in which an all-party commitment to bedrock Canadian militarism squelches democratic discourse and strangles any opportunity for real economic justice.

The corporate scandal you won't hear about on the campaign trail is the largest procurement project in Canadian history, one that will result in forking over at least \$105 billion in corporate welfare to war manufacturers for a completely unnecessary fleet of Canadian warships.

With every political campaign comes the costing question: how will modest investments in daycare, housing and pharmacare be paid for when Canada struggles with debt and deficits? But the question that will not be asked is whether voters want to mortgage their grandchildren's financial future for a project that will line the pockets of Irving Shipyards and the world's largest war profiteer, Lockheed Martin.

On February 8, the Canadian government awarded the design contract for those warships to Lockheed Martin. Even working from the false assumption that these warships are needed -- no logical rationale has been provided -- critics have pointed out that the design proposed by Lockheed Martin has never been built and tested; hence, any real sense of the cost (and such megaprojects have a way becoming sinkholes for billions robbed from the public purse) is conservative at the estimated \$105 billion. Once committed, there is no way the government will say no when Lockheed Martin and Irving Shipyards call out for another \$10-\$30 billion in "unforeseen costs."

In addition, the lives of Canadian sailors (which have never been a concern for those who order them into conflict from their safe bunkers in Ottawa) will be at risk as well. These megaships, with a limited life expectancy of 25 years, will likely be sitting ducks vulnerable to advanced warfare techniques that will be light years ahead of the eventual finished products. Indeed, as former Canadian navy commander Ken Hansen wrote in December 2018, by the time these warships sail the high seas, they will be essentially obsolete against high-tech weapons systems that remain the world's most maddening annual investment.

Again, even assuming these are needed, what will Canada do after their 25-year life span is over? Spend another \$105 billion?

The boondoggle that booted Wilson-Raybould

Canada's warship boondoggles are at the root of the current political crisis

swirling around the Liberals. When Trudeau removed Jody Wilson-Raybould from the attorney general's office, he claimed it was a move precipitated by former Treasury Board president Scott Brison's decision to leave politics. But Brison's sudden disappearance from cabinet appears linked to the bizarre case of Vice Admiral Mark Norman, who was arrested by the RCMP for allegedly leaking cabinet secrets related to a Harper-era navy contract that went to Quebec's Davie Shipyards, an Irving Shipyards competitor. It appears that Brison undertook a strenuous campaign to halt the Davie contract on behalf of Irving. He is expected to be called to testify at the Norman trial later this year, but says his resignation has nothing to do with that upcoming court date.

As that court case continues to proceed at a snail's pace, efforts to receive further disclosure will likely unveil even more information about the corporate influence at cabinet level (which is standard practice in Canada, as we have witnessed in cases as diverse as the unending subsidies doled out to tarsands producers and companies like Bombardier, as well as the purchase of a \$4.5-billion leaky pipeline last year and the \$9.2-billion backstop of the Muskrat Falls megadam).

While politicians of all stripes will express the usual consternation about corruption in politics, not a soul among them will focus on the new warship scandal. Unfortunately, the addiction to militarism that drives the NDP, the Liberals, the PCs and, in all likelihood, the Greens, will render this a non-issue in 2019 unless we make some noise about it. We saw this addiction in 2015, when Tom Muclair's NDP refused to call for cancellation of the \$15-billion Saudi weapons contract. It was a poor decision that prioritized political power games over the lives of Saudi women being tortured in Riyadh prisons and Yemeni children who die at a rate of 10 an hour.

In 2019, there will be no referendum on whether Canadians wish to take on a \$105-billion debt that will serve no social purpose whatsoever. Yes, there will be some well-paying jobs in the shipyards, but the majority of the gravy will go to investors in war industries. Imagine that public investment being directed toward renewable energy, clean water in all Indigenous communities, affordable housing, free child care, truly accessible health care, guaranteed annual income support and programs, the arts, tuition, and all the other underfunded programs people need to live decent lives.

Canada's contractor: Unending corruption

Part of the furor over SNC-Lavalin centres around whether a company can be an honest executor of government contracts when it has a high rate of scandal. The Transparency International group reports that even as maligned an institution as the World Bank has banned SNC-Lavalin and its subsidiaries for over 117 instances of corruption. SNC-Lavalin currently claims that it is in pristine shape because the guys involved in defrauding the Libyan people of hundreds of millions of dollars and spending tens of millions on bribes have departed the company. But SNC-Lavalin subsidiaries continue to make the list of banned companies as recently as October 2018, when the World Bank issued a five-year ban to four company branches. In January 2018, an additional five SNC-Lavalin

companies were banned when the World Bank found them guilty of fraud and corruption.

But this is the way business has always operated. While SNC-Lavalin was successful in having Canadian law changed to try and protect itself from future prosecutions, the company that has received the Canadian warship design contract -- Lockheed Martin -- is the ultimate master class of corporate corruption.

The U.S. government's Federal Contractor Misconduct Database notes that Lockheed Martin has been found guilty of misconduct in 86 instances since 1995. It's an accepted price of doing business for war industries which can write off their penalties (Lockheed Martin received over \$50 billion in U.S. weapons contracts in 2017, while the price for over two decades of bad behavior was a paltry \$767 million in penalties).

Almost weekly, new misconduct claims arise. Indeed, a mere two weeks ago, Lockheed Martin was subject to a U.S. Justice Department complaint about false claims and kickbacks on a contract to clean up the devastated Hanford nuclear site in Washington State.

For those wondering about the due diligence undertaken by the Canadian government in choosing a company to design Canada's \$105-billion warships, it is quite instructive to peruse the readily available public information that Ottawa is quite happy to ignore in plowing ahead. The list of complaints against Lockheed Martin pursued by the U.S. Justice Dept. is massive. It includes failure to pay overtime, falsification of testing records, mismanagement of retirement funds, groundwater contamination, nuclear safety violations at the Oak Ridge plant, contract fraud, deficiencies in radioactive work controls, nuclear waste storage violations, violations of the U.S. Arms Export Control Act and International Traffic in Arms Regulations, the unauthorized export of classified and unclassified technical data, the failure to comply with requirements for safeguarding classified information, false and fraudulent lease claims, age discrimination, producing defective software on the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter (a project to which Canada has maddeningly contributed over \$500 million in corporate welfare), groundwater cleanup violations, Toxic Substances Control Act violations, overbilling and mischarging the government, wrongful deaths, retaliatory firings, PCB contamination, conspiracy to commit wire fraud, National Labor Relations Act violations, sexual and racial discrimination, procurement fraud, unfair business practices, nuclear reactor safety violations, emissions violations, and whistleblower retaliation.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission filed a lawsuit last September claiming Lockheed Martin "violates the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which prohibits disability discrimination and retaliation for opposing it and requires employers to provide reasonable accommodations to individuals with disabilities unless it would cause an undue hardship."

Profit from torture and nuclear weapons

Then there's a little matter of torture, in which Lockheed Martin companies were found complicit early on during the so-called war on terror. Aside from the daily business of corruption, what Lockheed Martin actually produces -- the world's most dangerous weapons -- would appear to be in complete contradiction to all the Trudeau/Chrystia Freeland talk of a rules-based order founded on peace and respect.

Lockheed Martin executives have spoken unabashedly in defence of the Saudi regime's appalling human rights record. On June 23, 2016, the European Centre for Democracy and Human Rights, Defenders for Medical Impartiality, and the Arabian Rights Watch Association filed a complaint against the Boeing Company and Lockheed Martin for alleged breaches of OECD guidelines. The companies' products were alleged to have contributed to human rights violations in Yemen by Saudi forces (last August, we learned, without surprise, that the missiles that murdered 40 Yemeni children was made by Lockheed Martin).

Perhaps it is also no accident that the Trudeau government's expressed opposition to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons seems to have been developed in the executive offices of their favoured weapons of mass destruction contractor: Lockheed Martin, which continues to develop the most dangerous nukes the world has ever known. Indeed, the U.S.-based multinational produces the Trident II (D5) nuclear missiles (on average the equivalent of 25 Hiroshima bombs) for U.S. and U.K. arsenals, along with Minuteman III nuclear intercontinental ballistic missiles and the new Long Range Stand-Off (LRSO) missile. They are also a primary recipient of the trillion-dollar investment begun by the Obama administration in a new generation of nuclear weapons.

As Forbes recently reported, "a single D5 equipped with multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles carrying nuclear warheads can destroy a small country such as North Korea. A handful of D5s could collapse the entire electrical grid, transportation network and information infrastructure of even the largest countries. And the Navy has hundreds of D5 missiles."

Addicted to militarism

While Lockheed Martin is quite the loathsome corporate entity, Irving is no lovey-dovey Canadian boy scout in the corporate world, instead acting as a privately held company to squeeze as many dollars out of the public purse as possible. As the National Observer reports, Irving and its subsidiaries "don't have to reveal any financial information to the public -- including how much they receive in government handouts, earn in profits, pay in taxes or invest. They also don't pay out dividends to shareholders -- only members of the Irving family presumably receive the wealth."

It was Irving that Scott Brison went to bat for in closed cabinet sessions that led to the arrest of Mark Norman. Meanwhile, the federal government and Irving teamed up to oppose a trade tribunal complaint that alleged the awarding of the warship contract violated a series of trade rules. In their defence, Canada and Irving argued that the warship contract is exempt from normal trade laws because they have

invoked a "national security exception" to keep the issue beyond the tribunal's jurisdiction.

What happens next is entirely up to everyone who lives in this land known as Canada. Are we willing to face up to how our addiction to militarism kills, whether it's the blood of Yemeni children being murdered with Canadian-made and exported weapons or the frozen bodies on Canadian sidewalks because Ottawa continues to invest the largest amount of discretionary funding into war instead of housing for all?

It's certainly a question that will only be on the table if we place it there.

Matthew Behrens is a freelance writer and social justice advocate who coordinates the Homes not Bombs non-violent direct action network. He has worked closely with the targets of Canadian and U.S. 'national security' profiling for many years.

Photo: Adam Scotti/PMO

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RELATED ITEMS

Canada's Saudi weapons sales a moral race to the bottom

With each new reported Saudi atrocity, Canadian leaders dig in their heels and issue earnest statements about "troubling" revelations, and respect for human rights and the rule of law.

No legal remedy possible for SNC-Lavalin; NDP candidate proposes creative solution

Recently passed deferred prosecution legislation might not apply to SNC-Lavalin, but the NDP's Julia Sanchez suggests how jobs and expertise could still be protected.

Trudeau aide Gerald Butts pulls rip cord amid SNC-Lavalin allegations

Demoting the justice minister turns out to have created a political storm that Gerald Butts -- given that he must have been in on the decision -- has attempted to quell with his resignation.

<="" p="">

Last Updated on Saturday, 09 March 2019 20:13



Classifying or even postulating the consequences of climate change as the “new normal” has exonerated those who are responsible; the National governments for failing to act, the fossil fuel industry for years of countering climate change, and for other industries foreseeing benefits from disasters.

A Glimpse through time

1.

THE NEW NORMAL

Examples

In every continent the expression “new normal” has been used to describe the consequences of climate change Some examples:

Is Cape towns drought the new normal

<https://allafrica.com/stories/201711010476.html>

Rainfall extremes to become the Nile’s new normal

<https://www.climatechangenews.com/2017/05/02/rainfall-extremes-become-niles-new-normal/>

Extreme weather will be the ‘new’ normal, warns Meteorological Department

chief

<http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/tamil-nadu/2018/dec/30/extreme-weather-will-be-the-new-normal-warns--met-dept-chief-1918246.html>

Quirky Winds Fuel Brazil's Devastating Drought, Amazon's Flooding

....the boom-and-bust phenomenon may be **South America's new normal**

<https://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2015/02/150226-drought-floods-south-america-brazil-bolivia-flying-rivers-environment/>

Japan floods a warning for a changed climate | The Interpreter

[mean disasters such as that in Japan will become the new normal.](#)

<https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/japan-floods-warning-changed-climate>

Australia's Burning, Flooding, Disastrous New Normal

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/14/opinion/australia-floods-fires-climate.html>

Are fires and floods the new normal for British Columbia?

<https://vancouver.sun.com/news/local-news/are-fires-and-floods-the-new-normal-for-b-c>

Why California's recent wildfires are the 'new normal'

<https://abcnews.go.com/Technology/californias-recent-wildfiresnormal/story?id=59598310>

Are devastating wild fires a new normal?; it's actually worse than that climate scientist says

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/are-devastating-wildfires-a-new-normal-its-actually-worse-than-that-climate-scientist-says/>

2.

UNHEEDED WARNINGS

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.

In 2007, economist Sir Nicolas Stern stated: "The costs of inaction are far greater than the costs of action,"

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/a-climate-change-message-dressed-in-green-pinstripes/article1070805/>

Next year, at GLOBE 2008 (Vancouver), in a room full of corporations, scientists and governments, Sir Nicolas Stern received a standing ovation when he warned the audience of the economic consequences of climate change.

In 2009, at COP15, the emerging science was ignored and the governments were relying on an outdated IPCC report. I remember at an IPCC Press Conference, a scientist from the IPCC stated: "at 2 degree rise in temperature, the poor, the vulnerable and the disenfranchised would not survive, at 1.5 degree, they might". The developed countries ignored the pleas of the developing ones whose leaders called for the temperature to not rise above 1.5 degrees and some, such as Bolivia, to not rise above 1 degree. Yet, in the Copenhagen Accord, states, excluding many developing states, agreed to a 2-degree rise in temperature. The developing states, such as Tuvalu decried, that they would not sell out their citizens for 30 pieces of silver, and the leader of the African Group declared that, at 2-degree, global rise, there would be a holocaust in Africa.

In 2010, at COP16 I challenged the Nobel Laureate Dr Mario Molina for claiming, in his opening address, That at COP15 all states agreed to 2-degree rise, he responded the US would not agree to anything less than a 2-degree rise", and I responded, "Is that what science has become, what the US will agree to" A delegate from Bangladesh decried, "for the developed states it would require a life style change but for us it is survival itself".

In 2012, at GLOBE (Vancouver) a plenary arm-chair discussion with four CEOs from the fossil fuel industry took place. During the question period, they were asked what they thought caused climate change; they all answered that 'the cause was still up in the air; I was next in line to ask a question. I exclaimed I could not believe that by now they had not agreed that the cause was anthropogenic, and that they had refused to admit their culpability.

OPPORTUNITY LOST: A GLOBAL VISION

In 2015 at COP 21, Ban Ki Moon, in Paris, urged states to negotiate with a global vision not with national vested interests (COP21 press conference)

A global vision would have been

- i. to address article 2 of the UNFCCC, the objective of the legally binding UNFCCC;
stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system
- ii. to collectively commit to a baseline, percentage and target that would contribute to arise in temperature way below 1.5 degrees
- iii. to immediately end all subsidies for fossil fuel,
- iv. to calculate the carbon budget for all states
- v. to divest in fossil fuels and to reinvest in renewable energy, to conserve sinks -such as old growth forests and bogs,
- vi. to strengthen conservation of biodiversity,
- vii. to avoid all false solutions such as nuclear, geo-engineering and biofuels which would all violate principles within the UNFCCC,
- viii. to compensate for historical emissions,
- ix. to institute a fair and just transition for workers affected negatively by the new vision.
- x. to promote nature-based solutions and socially equitable and environmentally sound such as solar, wind, tidal, wave and geothermal

http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10462:cop21a-lack-of-global-vision-but-not-stemic-constraints-&catid=86:i-earth-news&Itemid=210

At COP 15, in the state negotiating conference room, the fossil fuel states aided by the fossil fuels industries were negotiating with a vested interest national interest,

not a global vision, while, at a press conference, in another room, the World Bank was offering funds to the president of a low-lying state to adapt and be resilient.

4.

OPPORTUNISTIC ADAPTING AND DISASTER RELIEF

Adapting to the New normal written by Maya Fischkoff from the Network for Business Sustainability (NBS)

nbs.net/p/adapting-to-a-new-normal-275999b1-5663-4724-b980-

Network for Business Sustainability

To successfully adapt to climate change, for example, you might want to work with government officials to shape policy **that provides adaptation incentives**, and with activists pressuring your company for a specific response. NBS provides guidance on how to collaborate with different partners: [government](#), [NGOs](#), and even [competitors](#).

Climate change could cost Canada roughly \$5 billion per year by 2020, rising to between \$21-\$41 billion per year by mid century (Figure 1). Adaptation is one key way to drive down the costs. While adaptation and mitigation are related – both strategies may have co-benefits – in practice, firms allocate far more attention to adaptation than mitigation.

Companies have a role in climate change adaptation.

Adaptation involves adjusting to actual or expected climate change effects. This includes managing risk and exploiting opportunities.

5.

2018 RECENT URGENT WARNINGS; A GLOBAL EMERGENCY

a. The 2018 report of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

The report shows that the global average temperature for the first ten months of the year was nearly 1°C above the pre-industrial baseline (1850-1900). This is based on five independently maintained global temperature data sets.

“We are not on track to meet climate change targets and rein in temperature increases,” said WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas. “Greenhouse gas concentrations are once again at record levels and if the current trend continues, we may see temperature increases 3-5°C by the end of the century. If we exploit all known fossil fuel resources, the temperature rise will be considerably higher,” he said.

“It is worth repeating once again that we are the first generation to fully understand climate change and the last generation to be able to do something about it,” said Mr. Taalas

<https://public.wmo.int/en/our-mandate/climate/wmo-statement-state-of-global-climate>

b IPCC REPORT a life-or-death situation without a doubt

In the 728-page document, the U.N. organization detailed how Earth's weather, health and ecosystems would be in better shape if the world's leaders could somehow limit future human-caused warming to just 0.9 degrees Fahrenheit (a half degree Celsius) from now, instead of the globally agreed-upon goal of 1.8 degrees F (1-degree C). Among other things:

-

Half as many people would suffer from lack of water.

-
-

There would be fewer deaths and illnesses from heat, smog and infectious diseases.

-
-

Seas would rise nearly 4 inches (0.1 meters) less.

-
-

Half as many animals with back bones and plants would lose the majority of their habitats.

-
-

There would be substantially fewer heat waves, downpours and droughts.

-
-

The West Antarctic ice sheet might not kick into irreversible melting.

-
-

And it just may be enough to save most of the world's [coral reefs](#) from dying.

-

"For some people this is a life-or-death situation without a doubt," said Cornell University climate scientist Natalie Mahowald, a lead author on the report.

Read more at: https://phys.org/news/2018-10-global-life-or-death_1.html#jp

IPCC concluded that reduction of carbon emissions below 1.5°C pre-industrial levels would require 'rapid and far-reaching transitions in land, energy, industry, buildings, transport and cities'.

c. The governments even ignore the recent warning by the famous economist Nicolas Stern who has said

Economic-Reasons-to-Act-on-Climate-Change)

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/The-Economic-Reasons-to-Act-on-Climate-Change.pdf>

At all these COPs, when the question arose, at press conferences, about where will we get the money to mitigate climate change, I always took the opportunity to propose that states reallocate the over trillion dollar military budget [Now, probably over 1.8 trillion].

d. The most powerful speech at COP24 by Swedish girl Greta Thunberg

A Global Emergency

<https://www.lifegate.com/people/news/greta-thunberg-speech-cop24>.




<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFkQSGyeCWg>

Pull the emergency break

The scientists have spoken, economists have spoken, developing countries have spoken and the children around the world have spoken for present and future generations and for the ecosystem and rallied across the world. Will the fossil fuel states and corporations finally listen and act responsibly, or will they continue to be negligent and delude the world into thinking that this is the new normal and we must all just adapt and pay for disaster .

Last Updated on Monday, 25 February 2019 01:59

720 readings

[Taking the Lead in Fight Against Climate Change](#)   

[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 22 February 2019 12:03

Posts by A. D. McKenzie"



Monique Taffe, a 22-year-old London-based fashion designer, makes clothing from

recycled textiles and objects. Credit: A.D. McKenzie/IPS

PARIS, Feb 22 2019 (IPS) - As the grandchild of Jamaican citizens who moved to Great Britain, Monique Taffe says she inherited a tradition of recycling and learned not to be part of the “throwaway culture”, as some environmentalists have labelled consumerist societies.

“I saw how my grandmother re-used things, and that was passed down to my mother who inspired me to do the same,” said Taffe, who wants to use waste materials and recycled fabrics in fashion design.

The 22-year-old London-based designer is a recent graduate of a British fashion school and she participated the [3rd Women4Climate conference](#) that took place Feb. 21 in Paris. She joined other young women from around the world, including from several Latin American countries, who have launched sustainability projects and are being mentored by member cities of C40, a network of 94 “megacities” committed to addressing climate change – and which co-organised the conference titled “Take the Lead”.

Related IPS Articles

- [Bringing #MeToo to the Fashion Industry](#)

Taffe has started a project to design maternity sportswear, encouraging expectant mothers to exercise during their pregnancy. All the clothing is being made from recycled textiles and objects at her Taffe Jones startup company, she told IPS.

She is also one of 10 finalists from some 450 contestants for London’s Mayors Entrepreneur Programme 2018, in which the city linked to the Women4Climate Mentoring Programme. The aim is to develop innovative businesses that are meant to tackle climate change.

“Women leaders played a pivotal role in negotiating the Paris Agreement on climate change in 2015 and will be crucial to its success in the future,” says Women4Climate, which was launched in 2016. “Now more than ever, enhancing women’s participation and leadership will be critical to securing a healthy, prosperous and sustainable future for us all.”

Taffe said in an interview that she would like to see young people in Britain, the Caribbean and around the world getting together via social media to share best practices for textile recycling. This could include information about leaving used clothing in central depots or designated places, where designers and others could retrieve material. Recycling in the fashion industry could have a positive environmental impact, as the sector is one of the most polluting, according to experts.

The [United Nations Environment Programme](#) says that the fashion industry “produces 20 percent of global wastewater and 10 percent of global carbon emissions – more than all international flights and maritime shipping.” The agency adds that “textile dyeing is the second largest polluter of water globally and it takes around 2,000 gallons of water to make a typical pair of jeans”.

At the U.N. Environment Assembly next month, the agency will “formally launch the U.N. Alliance on Sustainable Fashion to encourage the private sector, governments and non-governmental organisations to create an industry-wide push for action to reduce fashion’s negative social, economic and environmental impact,” the U.N. says.

With clothing factories across Latin America and the Caribbean, this is an area that environmentalists are addressing as well, with organisations saying that the main focus is on waste management, including textiles and plastics that pollute the region’s beaches.

The Jamaica Environmental Trust, an NGO based in Kingston, emphasises recycling, conducts beach clean-ups with volunteers, and works to protect air and water quality, a spokesperson told IPS. Its leadership team consists mostly of young women, like Taffe, who work to sensitise the public to environmental and climate issues.

“Raising awareness will help other young people to see what’s being done and make it easier for us to form alliances for climate action,” Taffe said.

She and other observers have noted the measures taken in the Caribbean to ban single-use plastic bags and straws and to expand the use of solar power. The Jamaican government, for instance, announced last year that it wants the country to reach 50 percent renewable energy by 2030, up from the previous policy of 30 percent.

Although no Caribbean city is a member of C40, attending international conferences such as Women4Climate was one way of bringing ecological entrepreneurs together to share experiences, participants said.

In fact, forming international links was a central theme of the event, hosted by Paris mayor Anne Hidalgo (the initiator of the Women4Climate idea) and held in the French capital’s imposing city hall – flanked by the blue and green bicycles of the city’s bike-sharing scheme.

Representing cities such as Quito (Ecuador), Mexico City, and Santiago (Chile), Taffe and other women from around the world shared projects on sustainability and carbon-emissions reduction. They described ventures to improve species conservation in towns, understand and stop urban sprawl, transform restaurant waste into biogas and increase textile recycling.

Young innovators also presented technology solutions in a Women4Climate Tech

Challenge.

“Climate change often has impact first on the lives of women ... who traditionally are the ones taking care of the family, so women’s skills should be acknowledged,” said Hidalgo at the conference. “This is not to say women are better than men but that women have different skills and competences that are crucial in the fight against climate change.”

Hidalgo said policy makers and activists had to “think locally to act globally”.

Participants in the conference included women mayors from several cities – Freetown, Sierra Leone; Charlotte, North Carolina; Dakar, Senegal; and Sydney, Australia – alongside several male mayors working to address climate change.

“We cannot fight against climate change effectively without empowering women,” said Rodacio Rodas, the mayor of Quito. He described food-security and urban garden projects that employ women and added that at the “community” level, women could be empowered and could empower themselves to take action.

Many delegates, however, highlighted the lack of national support for climate action by some male leaders, with Clover Moore, the Lord Mayor of Sydney, deploring the global effects of climate-sceptic governments.

“We’re as devastated across the world by Trump as you are in the U.S.,” Moore said, referring to the U.S. president’s lack of support for the Paris Agreement on climate change, but she added that the prime minister of Australia was not “much better”.

“It’s very depressing times, but we don’t despair ... we fully support our young community coming out and telling our national government to act responsibly. Full strength to our young communities.”

In a movement known as “Youth Strike 4 Climate”, led by Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg, students in several countries have been staying out of school on certain days to protest inaction by their governments against global warming. “Young people see what’s happening, they know the science,” Moore said.

Student participants at the Women4Climate conference included 17-year-old Youna Marette, a Belgian high school activist who was one of the keynote speakers.

“We’ll continue to fight, strike ... for our future,” Marette declared, urging governments to create more inclusive societies and to increase action to protect the planet.

For Taffe, the up-and-coming designer, thinking of the future and a liveable world is a strong motivation. “My grandmother passed down ways to live sustainably, and I want to carry that on,” she told IPS. “We have to re-use and recycle and do what we can wherever we live.”

Last Updated on Saturday, 09 March 2019 19:53

733 readings

[Iran still holding up its end of nuclear deal, IAEA report shows by Francois Murphy](#)



[Peace News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 22 February 2019 15:05

VIENNA (Reuters) - Iran has remained within the key limits on its nuclear activities imposed by its 2015 deal with major powers despite growing pressure from newly reimposed U.S. sanctions, a report by the U.N. nuclear watchdog showed on Friday.

The International Atomic Energy Agency is policing the deal, which lifted sanctions against Tehran in exchange for restrictions on Tehran's atomic activities aimed at increasing the time Iran would need to make an atom bomb if it chose to.

Iran has stayed within caps on the level to which it can enrich uranium, as well as its stock of enriched uranium, the IAEA said in a confidential quarterly report sent to its member states and obtained by Reuters.

"Not much has changed..., a continuing reporting of the implementation (by Iran)," a senior diplomat said on condition of anonymity, summarising the report.

The IAEA also repeated its usual statement that it carried out so-called complementary access inspections - which are often at short notice - at all locations in Iran that it needed to visit.

President Donald Trump pulled the United States out of the Iran nuclear deal last May, reimposing U.S. sanctions on Iran's economy and lifeblood oil industry that were lifted under the 2015 agreement.

European powers that signed the deal – France, Britain and Germany – have sought to cushion the blow to Iran of those sanctions. They are setting up a new channel for non-dollar trade with Iran but diplomats say it will not be able to handle the big transactions Iran says it needs to keep the deal afloat.

Setting up that channel, however, has angered Washington for undermining its effort to choke Iran's economy in response to Tehran's ballistic missile programme and its influence on the wars in Syria and Yemen.

U.S. Vice President Mike Pence last week called on those European powers to follow Washington in pulling out of the agreement despite their long-held position that the deal is worth keeping as long as Iran sticks to it.

ADVERTISEMENT

The Islamic Republic has long said that it wants nuclear power only for purposes of civilian energy.

Iran's stock of heavy water, a substance used as a moderator in some nuclear reactors, stayed within the limit set by the deal and Tehran continued to ship some of it out of the country, with 1 tonne having been exported during the quarter. The senior official said it was sold to an unspecified IAEA member state.

Reporting by Francois Murphy; Editing by Mark Heinrich

1004 readings

[Invoke the Precautionary Principle, no Highway through the Sooke Hills Wilderness](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 24 February 2019 10:05

by Joan Russow

Global Compliance Research Project



from Sooke Mirror

In 1992, when there was a NDP Government, I received the following from Freedom of information;

In a document obtained through the Freedom of information Act there was evidence of the Provincial cabinet endorsement for the ratification of the Biodiversity and Climate Change Conventions:

..."The Province endorsed the ratification. We agreed with Canada to ratify it. There was provincial endorsement. The move to endorse the Conventions was made by John Cashore, the then B.C. Minister of Environment" Cashore then went to Cabinet, sought their support and endorsement of the ratification and then stated that the Cabinet had approved the Conventions to the CCME meeting

Through the endorsement, the BCT NDP government agreed to the precautionary principle as expressed in the UN Framework convention on

Climate change and the convention on Biological Diversity. (obtained through freedom of information ,1992)

In the legally binding Convention on Biological Diversity, 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 legally binding UN Framework Convention on climate change there was the obligation:

to take precautionary measures to anticipate, prevent or minimize the causes of climate change and mitigate its adverse effects. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing such measures. (UNFCCC, 1992)

Under the Framework Convention on Climate Change is the following obligation;

Under Article 2 of the legally binding UN Framework Convention on Climate change, states are to stabilize greenhouse gases below a level of dangerous anthropogenic emission. (UNFCCC)

In the universally adopted Rio Declaration, the precautionary principle reads;

Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, [to the environment and human health] lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation." (Rio Declaration, UNCED1992).

*interpretation of the precautionary principle in the Rio Declaration

Precautionary principle extended to be applied to health article by World Health organization www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/91173/E83079.pdf PDF file. In this file the precautionary principle has been extended to cover health.

n 1993, I participated in the NDP working group to determine criteria for discharging emissions; at that time, as a result of the working group, the precautionary principle became part of the ministry of the environment.

The proposal to build a highway or expand any roadway through the Sooke Hills Wilderness Park (i) could be a threat to loss or reduction of biodiversity;

(ii) could increase the contribution to climate change (iii) could cause serious or irreversible damage (iv) could be a threat to human health though endangering the water supply

I urge the NDP government to invoke the precautionary principle and immediately cancel any plans to build or expand any roadway through the Sooke Hills Wilderness Park.

Last Updated on Sunday, 24 February 2019 10:30

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[Michael Cohen's parting shot: I fear what happens if Trump loses in 2020](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 27 February 2019 23:57

“This behavior denigrates the office of the president, and it’s simply un-American.”

By Dylan Scott@ dylanlscottdylan.scott@vox.com Feb 27, 2019, 5:35pm EST



Michael Cohen leaves after testifying before the House Oversight and Reform Committee on February 27, 2019. Andrew Caballero-Reynold/AFP/Getty Images

Michael Cohen leaves after testifying before the House Oversight and Reform Committee on February 27, 2019. Andrew Caballero-Reynold/AFP/Getty Images

Michael Cohen closed his remarkable testimony before Congress on Wednesday with an opaque but alarming warning about what could happen if President Donald Trump loses the 2020 election and some words addressed directly to his former boss.

“My loyalty to Mr. Trump has cost me everything: my family’s happiness, friendships, my law license, my company, my livelihood, my honor, my reputation and, soon, my freedom. And I will not sit back, say nothing, and allow him to do the same to the country,” Cohen said at the hearing’s closing. “Indeed, given my experience working for Mr. Trump, I fear that if he loses the election in 2020 that there will never be a peaceful transition of power, and this is why I agreed to appear before you today.”

He then turned his remarks to Trump himself, running through a long list of actions he has found unacceptable — attacks on law enforcement and the media, family separations at the Mexican border, friendliness with hostile foreign leaders

— that Cohen said motivated him to testify.

“This behavior denigrates the office of the president and it’s simply un-American,” he said. “And it’s not you.”

Cohen’s full closing statement is below:

I have acknowledged I have made my own mistakes and I have owned up to them publicly and under oath. But silence and complicity in the face of the daily destruction of our basic norms and civility to one another will not be one of them.

I did things and I acted improperly, at times at Mr. Trump’s behest. I blindly followed his demands. My loyalty to Mr. Trump has cost me everything, my family’s happiness, friendships, my law license, my company, my livelihood, my honor, my reputation and soon my freedom.

And I will not sit back, say nothing, and allow him to do the same to the country. Indeed given my experience working for Mr. Trump I fear that if he loses the election in 2020 that there will never be a peaceful transition of power, and this is why I agreed to appear before you today.

In closing, I’d like to say directly to the president: We honor our veterans even in the rain, you tell the truth even when it doesn’t aggrandize you, you respect the law and incredible law enforcement agents, you don’t villainize them, you don’t disparage generals, gold star families, prisoners of war and other heroes who had the courage to fight for this country. You don’t attack the media and those who question what you don’t like or what you don’t want them to say and you take responsibility for your own dirty deeds.

You don’t use your power of your bully pulpit to destroy the credibility of those who speak out against you. You don’t separate families from one another or demonize those looking to America for a better life. You don’t vilify people based on the god they pray to and you don’t cuddle up to our adversaries at the expense of our allies. Finally, you don’t shut down the government before Christmas and

New Year's just to simply appease your base.

This behavior denigrates the office of the president, and it's simply un-American. And it's not you.

So to those who support the president and his rhetoric as I once did, I pray the country doesn't make the same mistakes that I have made or pay the heavy price that my family and I are paying, and I thank you very much for this additional time, Mr. Chairman.

Last Updated on Saturday, 09 March 2019 19:37

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[What Does It Take to Destroy a World Order?](#)   

[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 28 February 2019 08:43

How Climate Change Could End Washington's Global Dominion

By Alfred W. McCoy Tomdispatch

Once upon a time in America, we could all argue about whether or not U.S. global power was declining. Now, most observers have little doubt that the end is just a matter of timing and circumstance. Ten years ago, I predicted that, by 2025, it would be all over for American power, a then-controversial comment that's commonplace today. Under President Donald Trump, the once "indispensable nation" that won World War II and built a new world order has become dispensable indeed.

The decline and fall of American global power is, of course, nothing special in the great sweep of history. After all, in the 4,000 years since humanity's first empire formed in the Fertile Crescent, at least 200 empires have risen, collided with other imperial powers, and in time collapsed. In the past century alone, two dozen modern imperial states have fallen and the world has managed just fine in the wake of their demise.

The global order didn't blink when the sprawling Soviet empire imploded in 1991, freeing its 15 "republics" and seven "satellites" to become 22 newly capitalist nations. Washington took that epochal event largely in stride. There were no triumphal demonstrations, in the tradition of ancient Rome, with manacled Russian captives and their plundered treasures paraded down Pennsylvania Avenue. Instead, a Manhattan real-estate developer bought a 20-foot chunk of the Berlin Wall for display near Madison Avenue, a sight barely noticed by busy shoppers.

For those trying to track global trends for the next decade or two, the real question is not the fate of American global hegemony, but the future of the world order it began building at the peak of its power, not in 1991, but right after World War II. For the past 75 years, Washington's global dominion has rested on a "delicate duality." The raw realpolitik of U.S. military bases, multinational corporations, CIA coups, and foreign military interventions has been balanced, even softened, by a surprisingly liberal world order -- with sovereign states meeting as equals at the United Nations, an international rule of law that muted armed conflict, a World Health Organization that actually eradicated epidemic diseases which had plagued humanity for generations, and a developmental effort led by the World Bank that lifted 40% of humanity out of poverty.

Some observers remain supremely confident that Washington's world order can survive the inexorable erosion of its global power. Princeton political scientist G. John Ikenberry, for example, has essentially staked his reputation on that debatable proposition. As U.S. decline first became apparent in 2011, he argued that Washington's ability to shape world politics would diminish, but "the liberal international order will survive and thrive," preserving its core elements of multilateral governance, free trade, and human rights. Seven years later, amid a rise of anti-global nationalists across significant parts of the planet, he remains optimistic that the American-made world order will endure because international issues such as climate change make its "protean vision of interdependence and cooperation... more important as the century unfolds."

This sense of guarded optimism is widely shared among foreign-policy elites in the New York-Washington corridor of power. The president of the influential Council on Foreign Relations, Richard Haass, has typically argued that the "post-Cold War order cannot be restored, but the world is not yet on the edge of a systemic crisis." Through deft diplomacy, Washington could still save the planet from "deeper disarray" or even "trends that spell catastrophe."

But is it true that the decline of the planet's "sole superpower" (as it was once

known) will no more shake the present world order than the Soviet collapse once did? To explore what it takes to produce just such an implosion of a world order, it's necessary to turn to history -- to the history, in fact, of collapsing imperial orders and a changing planet.

Admittedly, such analogies are always imperfect, yet what other guide to the future do we have but the past? Among its many lessons: that world orders are far more fundamental than we might imagine and that their uprooting requires a perfect storm of history's most powerful forces. Indeed, the question of the moment should be: Is climate change now gathering sufficient destructive force to cripple Washington's liberal world order and create an opening for Beijing's decidedly illiberal one or possibly even a new world in which such orders will be unrecognizable?

Empires and World Orders

Despite the aura of awe-inspiring power they give off, empires have often been the ephemeral creations of an individual conqueror like Alexander the Great or Napoleon that fade fast after his death or defeat. World orders are, by contrast, far more deeply rooted. They are resilient global systems created by a convergence of economic, technological, and ideological forces. On the surface, they entail a diplomatic entente among nations, while at a deeper level they entwine themselves within the cultures, commerce, and values of countless societies. World orders influence the languages people speak, the laws they live by, and the ways they work, worship, and even play. World orders are woven into the fabric of civilization itself. To uproot them takes an extraordinary event or set of events, even a global catastrophe.

Looking back over the last millennium, old orders die and new ones arise when a cataclysm, marked by mass death or a maelstrom of destruction, coincides with some slower yet sweeping social transformation. Since the age of European exploration started in the fifteenth century, some 90 empires, large and small, have come and gone. In those same centuries, however, there have been only three major world orders -- the Iberian age (1494-1805), the British imperial era (1815-1914), and the Washington world system (1945-2025).

Such global orders are not the mere imaginings of historians trying, so many decades or centuries later, to impose some logic upon a chaotic past. Those three powers -- Spain, Britain, and the United States -- consciously tried to re-order

their worlds for, they hoped, generations to come through formal agreements -- the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494, the Congress of Vienna in 1815, and the San Francisco conference that drafted the U.N. charter in 1945. Should Beijing succeed Washington as the world's preeminent power, future historians will likely look back on its Belt and Road Forum, which brought 130 nations to Beijing in 2017, as the formal start of the Chinese era.

Each of these treaties shaped a world in the most fundamental ways, articulating universal principles that would define the nature of nations and the rights of all humans within them for decades to come. Over this span of 500 years, these three world orders conducted what could be seen, in retrospect, as a continuing debate over the nature of human rights and the limits of state sovereignty over vast stretches of the planet.

In their spread across disparate lands, world orders become coalitions of contending, even contradictory, social forces -- diverse peoples, rival nations, competing classes. When deftly balanced, such a system can survive for decades, even centuries, by subsuming those contending forces within broadly shared interests. As tensions swell into contradictions, however, a cataclysm in the form of war or natural disaster can catalyze otherwise simmering conflicts -- allowing challenges from rival powers, revolts by subordinate social orders, or both.

The Iberian Age

During the last thousand years, the first of these transformative cataclysms was certainly the Black Death of 1350, one of history's greatest waves of mass mortality via disease, this one spread by rats carrying infected lice from Central Asia across Europe. In just six years, this pandemic killed up to 60% of Europe's population, leaving some 50 million dead. As lesser yet still lethal epidemics recurred at least eight times over the next half-century, the world's population fell sharply from an estimated 440 million to just 350 million people, a crash from which it would not fully recover for another two centuries.

Historians have long argued that the plague caused lasting labor shortages, slashing revenues on feudal estates and so forcing aristocrats to seek alternative income through warfare. The result: a century of incessant conflict across France, Italy, and Spain. But few historians have explored the broader geopolitical impact of this demographic disaster. After nearly a millennium, it seems to have ended the Middle Ages with its system of localized states and relatively stable regional

empires, while unleashing the gathering forces of merchant capital, maritime trade, and military technology to, quite literally, set the world in motion.

As Tamerlane's horsemen swept across Central Asia and the Ottoman Turks occupied southeast Europe (while also capturing Constantinople, the Byzantine empire's capital, in 1453), Iberia's kingdoms turned seaward for a century of exploration. Not only did they extend their growing imperial power to four continents (Africa, Asia, and both Americas), but they also created the first truly global order worthy of the name, commingling commerce, conquest, and religious conversion on a global scale.

Starting in 1420, thanks to advances in navigation and naval warfare, including the creation of the agile caravel gunship, Portuguese mariners pushed south, rounded Africa, and eventually built some 50 fortified ports from Southeast Asia to Brazil. This would allow them to dominate much of world trade for more than a century. Somewhat later, Spanish conquistadores followed Columbus across the Atlantic to conquer the Aztec and Incan empires, occupying significant parts of the Americas.

Just weeks after Columbus completed his first voyage in 1493, Pope Alexander VI issued a decree awarding the Spanish crown perpetual sovereignty over all lands west of a mid-Atlantic line so "that barbarous nations be overthrown and brought to the [Catholic] faith." He also affirmed an earlier Papal bull (Romanus Pontifex, 1455) that gave Portugal's king rights to "subdue all Saracens and pagans" east of that line, "reduce their persons to perpetual slavery," and "possess these islands, lands, harbors, and seas."

To settle just where that line actually lay, Spanish and Portuguese diplomats met for months in 1494 in the tiny city of Tordesillas for high-stakes negotiations, producing a treaty that split the non-Christian world between them and officially launched the Iberian age. In its expansive definition of national sovereignty, this treaty allowed European states to acquire "barbarous nations" by conquest and make entire oceans into a *mare clausum*, or a closed sea, through exploration. This diplomacy would also impose a rigid religious-cum-racial segregation upon humanity that would persist for another five centuries.

Even as they rejected Iberia's global land grab, other European states contributed to the formation of that distinctive world order. King Francis I of France typically demanded "to see the clause of Adam's will by which I should be denied my share

of the world.” Nonetheless, he accepted the principle of European conquest and later sent navigator Giovanni da Verrazzano to explore North America and claim what became Canada for France.

A century after, when Protestant Dutch mariners defied Catholic Portugal’s *mare clausum* by seizing one of its merchant ships off Singapore, their jurist Hugo Grotius argued persuasively, in his 1609 treatise *Mare Liberum* (“Freedom of the Seas”), that the sea like the air is “so limitless that it cannot become a possession of any one.” For the next 400 years, the twin diplomatic principles of open seas and conquered colonies would remain foundational for the international order.

Sustained by mercantile profits and inspired by missionary zeal, this diffuse global order proved surprisingly resilient, surviving for three full centuries. By the start of the eighteenth century, however, Europe’s absolutist states had descended into destructive internecine conflicts, notably the War of Spanish Succession (1701-1714) and a global Seven Years War (1756-1763). Moreover, the royal chartered companies -- British, Dutch, and French -- that by then ran those empires were proving ever less capable of effective colonial rule and increasingly inept at producing profits.

After two centuries of dominion, the French East India Company liquidated in 1794 and its venerable Dutch counterpart collapsed only five years later. Final fatal blows to these absolutist regimes were delivered by the American, French, and Haitian revolutions that erupted between 1776 and 1804.

The British Imperial Era

The British imperial age emerged from the cataclysmic Napoleonic Wars that unleashed the transformative power of England's innovations in industry and global finance. For 12 years, 1803 to 1815, those wars proved to be a Black Death-style maelstrom that roiled Europe, leaving six million dead in their wake and reaching India, Southeast Asia, and the Americas.

By the time the Emperor Napoleon disappeared into exile, France, stripped of many of its overseas colonies, had been reduced to secondary status in Europe, while its erstwhile ally, Spain, was so weakened that it would soon lose its Latin American empire. Propelled by a tumultuous and historic economic

transformation, Britain suddenly faced no serious European rival and found itself free to create and oversee a bifurcated world order in which sovereignty remained a right and reality only in Europe and parts of the Americas, while much of the rest of the planet was subject to imperial dominion.

Admittedly, the destruction caused by the Napoleonic wars may seem relatively modest compared to the devastation of the Black Death, but the long-term changes engendered by Britain's industrial revolution and the finance capitalism that emerged from those wars proved far more compelling than the earlier era's merchant companies and missionary endeavors. From 1815 to 1914, London presided over an expanding global system marked by industry, capital exports, and colonial conquests, all spurred by the integration of the planet via railroad, steamship, telegraph, and ultimately radio. In contrast to the weak royal companies of the earlier age, this version of imperialism combined modern corporations with direct colonial rule in a way that allowed for far more efficient exploitation of local resources. No surprise, then, that some scholars have called Britain's century of dominion the "first age of globalization."

While British industry and finance were quintessentially modern, its imperial age extended key international principles of centuries past, even if in grim secular guise. While the Dutch doctrine of "freedom of the seas" allowed the British navy to rule the waves, the earlier religious justification for domination was replaced by a racist ideology that legitimized European efforts to conquer and colonize the half of humanity whom the imperialist poet Rudyard Kipling branded the "lesser breeds."

Although the 1815 Congress of Vienna officially launched the British era by eliminating France as a rival, the 1885 Berlin Conference on Africa truly defined the age. Much as the Portuguese and Spanish had done at Tordesillas in 1494, the 14 imperial powers (including the United States) present at Berlin four centuries later justified carving up the entire continent of Africa by proclaiming a self-serving commitment "to watch over the preservation of the native tribes and to care for the improvement of the conditions of their moral and material well-being." Just as that designation of Africans as "native tribes" instead of "nations" or "peoples" denied them both sovereignty and human rights, so the British century witnessed eight empires subjecting nearly half of humanity to colonial rule premised on racial inferiority.

Only a century after its founding, however, the contradictions that lurked within Great Britain's global rule erupted, thanks to the way that two cataclysmic world wars coincided with the long-term rise of anti-colonial nationalism to create our

current world order. The alliance system among rival empires proved volatile, exploding into murderous conflicts in 1914 and again in 1939. Worse yet, industrialization had spawned the battleship and the airship as engines for warfare of unprecedented range and destructive power, while modern science would also create nuclear weapons with the power to potentially destroy the planet itself. Meanwhile, the colonies that covered nearly half the globe refused to abide by the institutionalized denial of the very liberty, humanity, and sovereignty that Europe prized for itself.

While most of the 15 million combat deaths in World War I emerged from the destructive nature of trench warfare on the western front in France (compounded by 100 million fatalities worldwide from an influenza pandemic), World War II spread its devastation globally, killing more than 60 million people and ravaging cities across Europe and Asia. With Europe struggling to recover, its empires could no longer constrain colonial cries for independence. Just two decades after the war's end, the six European overseas empires that had dominated much of Asia and Africa for five centuries gave way to 100 new nations.

Washington's World Order

In the aftermath of history's most destructive war, the United States used its unmatched power to form the Washington world system. American deaths in World War II numbered 418,000, but those losses paled before the 24 million dead in Russia, the 20 million more in China, and the 19 million in Europe. While industries across Europe, Russia, and Japan were damaged or destroyed and much of Eurasia was ravaged, the United States found itself left with a vibrant economy on a war footing and half the world's industrial capacity. With much of Europe and Asia suffering from mass hunger, the swelling surpluses of American agriculture fed a famished humanity.

Washington's visionary world order took form at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, in 1944. There, 44 Allied nations created an international financial system exemplified by the World Bank and then, at San Francisco in 1945, by a U.N. charter to form a community of sovereign nations. In a striking blow for human progress, this new order resoundingly rejected the religious and racial divisions of the previous five centuries, proclaiming in the U.N.'s Universal Declaration of Human Rights the "equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family," which "should be protected by the rule of law."

Within a decade after the end of World War II, Washington also had 500 overseas military bases ringing Eurasia and a chain of mutual defense pacts stretching from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to the Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty (ANZUS), and a globe-girding armada of nuclear-armed warships and strategic bombers. To exercise its version of global dominion, Washington retained the seventeenth-century Dutch doctrine of “freedom of the seas,” later extending it even to space where, for more than half a century, its military satellites have orbited without restraint.

Just as the British imperial system was far more pervasive and powerful than its Iberian predecessor, so Washington’s world order went beyond both of them, becoming rigorously systematic and deeply embedded in every aspect of planetary life. While the 1815 Congress of Vienna was an ephemeral gathering of two dozen diplomats whose influence faded within a decade, the United Nations and its 193 member states have, for nearly 75 years, sustained 44,000 permanent staff to supervise global health, human rights, education, law, labor, gender relations, development, food, culture, peacekeeping, and refugees. In addition to such broad governance, the U.N. also hosts treaties that are meant to regulate sea, space, and the climate.

Not only did the Bretton Woods conference create a global financial system, but it also led to the formation of the World Trade Organization that regulates commerce among 124 member states. You might imagine, then, that such an extraordinarily comprehensive system, integrated into almost every aspect of international intercourse, would be able to survive even major upheavals.

Cataclysm and Collapse

Yet there is mounting evidence that climate change, as it accelerates, is creating the basis for the sort of cataclysm that will be capable of shaking even such a deeply rooted world order. The cascading effects of global warming will be ever more evident, not in the distant future of 2100 (as once thought), but within just 20 years, impacting the lives of most adults alive today.

Last October, scientists with the U.N.’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change issued a “doomsday report,” warning that humanity had just 12 years left to cut carbon emissions by a striking 45% or the world’s temperature would rise by at least 1.5 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels by about 2040. This, in turn, would bring significant coastal flooding, ever more intense storms, fierce

drought, wildfires, and heat waves with damage that might add up to as much as \$54 trillion -- well over half the current size of the global economy. Within a few decades after that, global warming would, absent heroic measures, reach a dangerous 2 degrees Celsius, with even more devastation.

In January, scientists, using new data from sophisticated floating sensors, reported that the world's oceans were heating 40% faster than estimated only five years earlier, unleashing powerful storms with frequent coastal flooding. Sooner or later, sea levels might rise by a full foot thanks to nothing but the thermal expansion of existing waters. Simultaneous reports showed that the rise in world air temperature has already made the last five years the hottest in recorded history, bringing ever more powerful hurricanes and raging wildfires to the United States with damages totaling \$306 billion in 2017. And that hefty sum should be considered just the most modest of down payments on what's to come.

Surprisingly fast-melting ice sheets in Greenland and the Antarctic will only intensify the impact of climate change. An anticipated rise in sea level of eight inches by 2050 could double coastal flooding in tropical latitudes -- with devastating impacts on millions of people in low-lying Bangladesh and the megacities of southeastern Asia from Mumbai to Saigon and Guangzhou. Meltwater from Greenland is also disrupting the North Atlantic's "overturning circulation" that regulates the region's climate and is destined to produce yet more extreme weather events. Meanwhile, Antarctic meltwater will trap warm water under the surface, accelerating the break-up of the West Antarctic ice shelf and contributing to a rise in ocean levels that could hit 20 inches by 2100.

In sum, an ever-escalating tempo of climate change over the coming decades is likely to produce massive damage to the infrastructure that sustains human life. Seven hundred years later, humanity could be facing another catastrophe on the scale of the Black Death, one that might, once again, set the world in motion.

The geopolitical impact of climate change may be felt most immediately in the Mediterranean basin, home to 466 million people, where temperatures in 2016 had already reached 1.3 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. (The current global average was still around 0.85 degrees.) This means that the threat of devastating drought is going to be brought to a historically dry region bordered by sprawling deserts in North Africa and the Middle East. In a telling example of how climate catastrophe can erase an entire world order, around 1200 BC the eastern Mediterranean suffered a protracted drought that "caused crop failures, dearth, and famine," sweeping away Late Bronze Age civilizations like the Greek

Mycenaean cities, the Hittite empire, and the New Kingdom in Egypt.

From 2007 to 2010, ongoing global warming caused the “worst three-year drought” in Syria’s recorded history -- precipitating unrest marked by “massive agricultural failures” that drove 1.5 million people into city slums and, next, by a devastating civil war that, starting in 2011, forced five million refugees to flee that country. As more than a million migrants, led by 350,000 Syrians, poured into Europe in 2015, the European Union (EU) plunged into political crisis. Anti-immigrant parties soon gained in popularity and power across the continent while Britain voted for its own chaotic Brexit.

Projecting the Middle East’s history, ancient and modern, into the near future, the ingredients for a regional crisis with serious global ramifications are clearly present. Just last month, the U.S. National Intelligence Council warned that “climate hazards,” such as “heat waves [and] droughts,” were increasing “social unrest, migration, and interstate tension in countries such as Egypt, Ethiopia, Iraq, and Jordan.”

If we translate those sparse words into a future scenario, sometime before 2040 when average global warming is likely to reach that dangerous 1.5 degrees Celsius mark, the Middle East will likely experience a disastrous temperature rise of 2.3 degrees. Such intense heat will produce protracted droughts far worse than the one that destroyed those Bronze Age civilizations, potentially devastating agriculture and sparking water wars among the nations that share the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, while sending yet more millions of refugees fleeing toward Europe. Under such unprecedented pressure, far-right parties might take power across the continent and the EU could rupture as every nation seals its borders. NATO, suffering a “severe crisis” since the Trump years, might simply implode, creating a strategic vacuum that finally allows Russia to seize Ukraine and the Baltic states.

As tensions rise on both sides of the Atlantic, the U.N. could be paralyzed by a great-power deadlock in the Security Council as well as growing recriminations over the role of its High Commissioner for Refugees. Pummeled by these and similar crises from other climate-change hot spots, the international cooperation that lay at the heart of Washington’s world order for the past 90 years would simply wither, leaving a legacy even less visible than that block of the Berlin Wall in midtown Manhattan.

Beijing's Emerging World System

As Washington's global power fades and its world order weakens, Beijing is working to build a successor system in its own image that would be strikingly different from the present one.

Most fundamentally, China has subordinated human rights to an overarching vision of expanding state sovereignty, vehemently rejecting foreign criticism of its treatment of its Tibetan and Uighur minorities, just as it ignores equally egregious domestic transgressions by countries like North Korea and the Philippines. If climate change does, in fact, spark mass migrations, then China's untrammled nationalism, with its implicit hostility to the rights of refugees, might prove more acceptable to a future era than Washington's dream of international cooperation that has already begun to sink from sight in the era of Donald Trump's "great wall."

In a distinctly ironic twist, a rising China has defied the long-standing doctrine of open seas, now sanctioned under a U.N. convention, instead effectively reviving the *mare clausum* version of imperial power by claiming adjacent oceans as its sovereign territory. When the Permanent Court of Arbitration, the original world court, unanimously rejected its claim to the South China Sea in 2016, Beijing insisted that the ruling was "naturally null and void" and would not affect its "territorial sovereignty" over an entire sea. Not only did Beijing in that way extend its sovereignty over the open seas, but it also signaled its disdain for the international rule of law, an essential ingredient in Washington's world order.

More broadly, Beijing is building an alternative international system quite separate from established institutions. As a counterpoise to NATO on Eurasia's western extremity, China founded the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in 2001, a security and economic bloc weighted toward the eastern end of Eurasia thanks to the membership of nations like Russia, India, and Pakistan. As a counterpoint to the World Bank, Beijing formed the Asian Infrastructure Development Bank in 2016 that quickly attracted 70 member nations and was capitalized to the tune of \$100 billion, nearly half the size of the World Bank itself. Above all, China's \$1.3 trillion Belt and Road Initiative, 10 times the size of the U.S. Marshall Plan that rebuilt a ravaged Europe after World War II, is now attempting to mobilize up to \$8 trillion more in matching funds for 1,700 projects that could, within a decade, knit 76 nations across Africa and Eurasia, a full half of all humanity, into an integrated commercial infrastructure.

By shedding current ideals of human rights and the rule of law, such a future world order would likely be governed by the raw realpolitik of commercial advantage and national self-interest. Just as Beijing effectively revived the 1455 doctrine of *mare clausum*, so its diplomacy will be infused with the self-aggrandizing spirit of the 1885 Berlin conference that once partitioned Africa. China's communist ideals might promise human progress, but in one of history's unsettling ironies, Beijing's emerging world order seems more likely to bend that "arc of the moral universe" backward.

Of course, on a planet on which by 2100 that country's agricultural heartland, the north China plain with its 400 million inhabitants, could become uninhabitable thanks to unendurable heat waves and its major coastal commercial city, Shanghai, could be under water (as could other key coastal cities), who knows what the next world order might truly be like. Climate change, if not brought under some kind of control, threatens to create a new and eternally cataclysmic planet on which the very word "order" may lose its traditional meaning.

Alfred W. McCoy, a TomDispatch regular, is the Harrington professor of history at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is the author of *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade*, the now-classic book which probed the conjuncture of illicit narcotics and covert operations over 50 years, and the recently published *In the Shadows of the American Century: The Rise and Decline of U.S. Global Power* (Dispatch Books).

Follow TomDispatch on Twitter and join us on Facebook. Check out the newest Dispatch Books, John Feffer's new dystopian novel (the second in the Splinterlands series) *Frostlands*, Beverly Gologorsky's novel *Every Body Has a Story*, and Tom Engelhardt's *A Nation Unmade by War*, as well as Alfred McCoy's *In the Shadows of the American Century: The Rise and Decline of U.S. Global Power* and John Dower's *The Violent American Century: War and Terror Since World War II*.

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Last Updated on Saturday, 09 March 2019 19:21

[Cuba's Ambassador Responds to
CBC News](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 03 March 2019 22:05

Cuba's Ambassador Responds to CBC News

Cuba's Ambassador responds to the CBC News tendentious and manipulative article, Canada at odds with Cuban 'ally' over Maduro's fate.

I reject categorically and in the strongest terms the tendentious and manipulative article "Canada at odds with Cuba 'ally' over Maduro's fate", written by journalist Evan Dyer and published today, Sunday, March 3, 2019, by CBC News.

Good journalism does not speculate, it informs objectively.

The assertion that thousands of Cubans would allegedly be inserted into the structures of the armed and security forces of Venezuela, holding the government of (legitimate) President Nicolás Maduro, is a scandalous slander. I demand that CBC News present a proof, which evidently it does not have, since it does not appear in the whole article.

What Cuba has been offering Venezuela for many years is a modest cooperation, in which slightly more than 20,000 Cuban collaborators participate, 94% of them health workers, others in education, as they do in 83 countries around the world.

It is unfortunate that CBC News plays into the hands of the government of the United States, whose President happened to accuse Cuba a few days ago of maintaining a "private army" in Venezuela, a statement that is vile.

It is regrettable that CBC News does not denounce the US government's military aggression plans against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and the fact that it openly declares that its ultimate objective is to overthrow the Cuban Revolution. What else to expect from a sinister character like John Bolton, who in 2002 organized the coup against Venezuela, while accusing Cuba of developing a biological weapons program at a time when the false pretext of the presence of WMD in Iraq was fabricated to launch the war against that country? The latter lie was quickly denied by the US Intelligence Community itself.

Let's hope that CBC News, with its biased coverage, does not support the aggression of the United States against the peoples of our America, and then apologize, as so many media organizations had to do after the war against Iraq. Our peoples will not forget.

As the Cuban Government recently stated, what is at stake today in Venezuela is "the sovereignty and dignity of Latin America and the Caribbean"..., "the survival

of the rule of International Law and the UN Charter”... “and whether the legitimacy of a government emanates from the express and sovereign will of its people, or from the recognition of foreign powers”. “History will severely judge a new imperialist military intervention in the region and the complicity of those who might irresponsibly support it”.

Josefina Vidal Ambassador of Cuba to Canada

Last Updated on Saturday, 09 March 2019 19:08

660 readings

[Liberal precedent for confounding dual role of Minister of Justice and Attorney General](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 07 March 2019 11:12

By Joan Russow

Global Compliance Research Project



Image of the Honorable Irwin Cotler as Minister of Justice and Attorney General. in 2004, I wrote to him about my being discriminated on the grounds of Political opinion under the ICCPR,

When I was national leader of the Green Party of Canada,I found out in 1998 that

I was on a RCMP Threat assessment list. In 2002 I filed a case about being on a threat Assessment list and was in Court was against Paul Partridge the Lawyer for the Attorney General office.. The lawyer from the then Attorney General Office was obviously acting in the political role of the Minister of Justice. I was appealing in court for the attorney General to reveal the reason for my being on the RCMP list. The Judge said that I did not have enough information; I replied that he placed me in a conundrum because the government had refused to divulge the reason for my being placed on the list. The judge struck my claim but did not dismiss my case and advised me to go through access to information and Privacy to obtain documents which I did but the responses were all didacted for international reason of security. In 2004,I wrote the enclosed letter to Irwin Cotler as Minister of justice and Attorney General and received no assistance from him. Irwin Cotler is purported as being concerned about discrimination on the grounds of political or other opinion in other countries yet not in Canada in 2004 when he was minister of Justice in his partisan role or as Attorney General, in his non partisan role.

FAX: TRANSMISSION Fax 1 613 9907255

the reason NAME: Hon Irwin Cotler

Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada

NO.OF PAGES, INCLUDING COVER : 8

Please give this your immediate attention.

SENDER DR JOAN RUSSOW

1230 St. Patrick St.

Victoria, B.C. V8S 4Y4

1230 St Patrick

September 23, 2004

Hon Irwin Cotler

Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada,

Justice Building 4th floor

284 Wellington St.

Ottawa, On., K1A 0H8

Fax 1 613 9907255

Dear Minister Cotler,

At least since 1997, I have been on an RCMP threat assessment list. I found out about this fact inadvertently during the release of documents during the APEC inquiry. Although I have often been a strong critic of government policy and practices, I have never been arrested and I have never been a threat to any person or to any country.

I have a Masters Degree in Curriculum Development, introducing principle based -issue principle analysis- a method of teaching human rights linked to peace, environment and

social justice within a framework of international law. I have a doctorate in interdisciplinary studies. I was a former lecturer in global issues at the University of Victoria. I co-founded the Vancouver Island Human Rights Coalition in 1981, I have been on the Board of Directors of United Nations Association in Victoria and the Vancouver peace Society, and I am a member of the IUCN Commission of Education and Communication and the Canadian UNESCO Sectoral Commission on Science and Ethics. I am the author of the Charter of Obligations - 350 pages of international obligations incurred through conventions, treaties, and covenants, of international commitments made through conference action plans, and of expectations created through UN. General Assembly Declarations and Resolutions related to the public trust or common security (peace, environment social justice and human rights). I had attended international conferences as a member of an accredited NGO or as a representative of the media. From April 1997 to March 2001, I was the Federal leader of the Green Party of Canada,

However, as an activist from India once stated: nothing is more radical than asking governments to live up to their obligations. If academic/ activist condemning the failure of the government to live up to its international obligations, commitments, and expectations is a threat to the country, then I am a threat to Canada. However, under CSIS, there is no provision for designating as a threat those who engage in "legitimate dissent" which I would propose is what I have been engaged in for years. I subsequently sought through privacy and access to information requests to determine the reasons for placing me on a list. I obtained unsatisfactory and evasive responses from the RCMP, CSIS, Privy Council, PMO, SIRC with exemptions under various section being cited such as "information cannot be released for military and international security reasons".

After being refused media access to the APEC conference, I filed a complaint with the RCMP Commission in January, 1998. In my complaint I pointed out to the RCMP officers who interviewed me, that I suspected that there had been a directive from the Prime Minister's office because his office had pulled the pass of a journalist from Reuters because she had asked a probing question at an APEC press Conference. [I had upset Prime Minister Chretien when in the 1997 election I asked him to address the issue of Canada's failure, in many cases, to enact the necessary legislation to ensure compliance with international law]. I was, however, never allowed to appear before the Commission even though the commissioner was aware that there was a directive from the PMO to prevent me from attending the Conference. [an RCMP document in 1998 indicated that the media accreditation desk had received instruction from a Brian Groos from PMO to pull my pass after it had been issued]. I even spoke several times to the lawyers acting for the Commission and to Commission Hughes about my case. I was not even able to appear, even though I pointed out that a constable from the Vancouver police had made a statement, on the stand, that I had behaved inappropriately on a media bus going out to UBC during APEC. Her statement was reported on CPAC and thus across the country. I had never been on a media bus, and I was never out at UBC during the APEC conference. After the APEC conference, in February 1998 I had a petition placed on the floor of the House of Commons calling for an investigation into the Canadian Government's disregard for the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights and in particular the requirement to not discriminate on the grounds of "political or other opinion".--a ground unfortunately not enshrined in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms or addressed under the Canadian Human Rights Act. .

In September 1998, it was brought to my attention that I had been placed on an RCMP APEC threat assessment list of "other activists". The placing of the leader of a registered political party on a threat assessment became a media issue and was reported widely across the country through CBC television, through CBC radio, and through the National Post and its branch papers in 1998. The Privy

Council was concerned that the Opposition might raise the issue in parliament, and a response was prepared for the Solicitor General. [accessed through A of I] My being placed on a threat assessment list coincided with the announcement the leader of the German Green party, Joska Fischer's being named foreign Minister.

In 1999, an additional article appeared across the country when I filed a complaint with SIRC, and a new response was devised by the Privy Council for the Solicitor General to diffuse any questions from the Opposition [document accessed through A of I].

In August of 2001 there was an award-winning series of article, in the National Post and its Affiliates on the Criminalization of Dissent. One of the pieces was dedicated to the placing of a leader of a political party on a threat assessment list. In the Ottawa Citizen, my picture along with Martin Luther King's accompanied the article. In the Times Colonist in Victoria the series generated much comment. Although most of the comments were supportive, many citizens were convinced that there must have been a valid reason for placing me on a threat list. One of the reasons may have been that during the 2000 election, a campaign worker in David Anderson's office had circulated a press release claiming that I was under investigation by Elections Canada, and two days before the election this press release was the top news item on the principal AM station in Victoria. [an affidavit by a relative of another campaign worker in David Anderson's office, had been filed with Elections Canada; Elections' Canada had immediately dismissed the complaint and on election Day the AM station issued a retraction but the damage was irreversible].

In 2002, after years of trying to find out about the reason for my being placed on a threat assessment list, I decided to launch a case of defamation of Character against various federal government departments. I filed a statement of claim against the Crown. I had been told by a representative from the Federal Court in Vancouver that if I listed "her majesty" in the Style of Cause, that all the other departments which I mentioned in the body of the claim would also be deemed to be defendants. However, only the Attorney General's office was represented.

The Attorney General's office has been remiss in not advising the Federal government that "politics" is a listed ground under the ICCPR and should have been included in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. When I raised the fact that "politics" is a recognized ground, internationally, the lawyer from the Attorney General's office and the Judge appeared to be reticent about giving credibility to the binding provisions of International covenants to which Canada is a signatory. When I appeared in court the judge acknowledged that I was making serious

allegations, but he thought that I needed to have more particulars and proposed that I increase Access to Information requests. I have submitted numerous additional requests but always government departments use sections in their Acts that preclude the full disclosure of information. Even under the Privacy Commissioner, nothing can

be done if the agency argues that it was collecting information under a legal investigation, and that collected by a recognized body under statutory provisions. In addition, there was the constant exemption related to military and international security.

I believe that the issues I raise are ethical ones of abuse of power and discrimination on the grounds of politics - a ground that is included in the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights, a covenant that has been signed and ratified by Canada but not effectively incorporated into legislation even though Canada incurred an obligation to enact the necessary legislation to ensure compliance with the Covenant.

My reputation has been damaged, and I have had to continue live under the stigma of being a “threat to Canada”.

The sequence of events and the myriad of frustrating fruitless government processes have left me disillusioned with politics and in particular with the unethical abuse of political power.

POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES OF ENGAGING IN SUSTAINED LEGITIMATE DISSENT, AND OF BEING PLACED ON A THREAT ASSESSMENT LIST

In 2002, there was an article that appeared across the country about the launching of my court case, and about my concern at being deemed a security risk. I mentioned the stigma attached to my name, and the possibility that any international access might be curtailed, and any employment opportunities, thwarted.

In 1995, I was co-teaching a course in global issues at the University of Victoria, and I received two CIDA grants one for authoring the aforementioned Charter of

Obligations for the UN Conference on Women, and the other for an exploratory project on the complexity and interdependence of issues in collaboration with academics in Brazil. On completing my doctorate in January 1996, I had no doubts about my ability to repay my student loan. I have attempted, however, to apply for numerous jobs, and have been continually disappointed.

Apart from two \$500 government grants in the Spring of 1996, I have not earned any income. I incurred a student loan of \$57,000 when I graduated. Twenty thousand of the amounts was granted in remission for community service by the Provincial government. I then still owed \$37,000 to the Federal Government under the Ministry of Human Resources.

I have, however, continued to promote the public trust continually writing and lecturing on common security – peace, social justice, human rights, and the environment,

In 1996, for the Habitat II Conference, I prepared 176-page book in which I placed the Habitat II Agenda in the context of previous commitments made through Habitat 1, and subsequent commitments from conference action plans, obligations from conventions, treaties, covenants, and expectations created through UNGA declarations and resolutions.

When I returned from the 1996 Habitat II conference, I applied for numerous federal grants

with no success. Ironically, one of my grant applications was with the Canada Mortgage and

Housing Corp under Public Works. I applied for a research grant under one of their categories

“Sustainable Development”.

The proposed project was the following: A revising of "Sustainable Development" in the context of "sustainable human settlement Development" from principle to policy." This project was linked to the commitments made through the Habitat II Agenda, and brought to a local context with community groups. My grant was

refused. The reason for the refusal I found out later through a privacy request was the following:

“IRD Review of Submissions - 1006 External Research Program - The six 1996 ERP submissions that were sent to International Relations Division for review have been evaluated and the results are summarized in the enclosed table.”

"All the submissions reviewed were interesting, trade-relevant and were thought likely to

generate some added value. Nevertheless, none of these proposals were thought to be sufficiently compelling or well targeted in relation to the Division's current or likely future priorities

that we would be prepared to urge that they be supported.”

"This [MY PROJECT] is the highest scoring of the proposals reviewed by IRD, this score is largely a reflection of the thoroughness of the proposal and its supporting documentation.

This proposal, however, is marginal in terms of its capacity to support the international commercial endeavours of Canada's housing industry.

IRD cannot support this proposal as it provides is unlikely to result in any tangible benefit to Canada' housing exporters. " [Note the current relevance when there is a current Commission looking into criteria for projects within the Department of Public Works]

Prior to finding out in 1998 that I was on the threat assessment list, even though I still had not received any income, I decided that I would not declare bankruptcy and renege on my obligation to repay my student loan. Although I was not earning an income, I was continually making grant applications and contributing my time to further the public trust and the respect for international law. I was often part of government stakeholder meetings, and in 1997 I had been asked to review Canada's submission to the UN for RIO +5. I spent several months reviewing the documents and then preparing a 200-page response. Rather than receiving remuneration, I was thanked for my comprehensive submission, and denied a

request on my part to participate on the Canadian delegation. I participated, without remuneration, throughout the years as a stakeholder, in conference calls, in meetings, working groups and similar undertakings. I realized one of the repercussions of raising issues during election at all candidates' meetings. At the University all candidates meeting I raised the issue of corporate funding of university; the next day, the University of Victoria, sent a note to the office of the Green Party of Canada stating that I was no longer associated with the university. I had been a sessional lecturer and co-developed the course in global issues. [Subsequently, a global studies section was established with substantial corporate funding.]

I was constantly hounded by credit agencies and I finally decided to write to the Minister of Human Resource, Pierre Pettigrew, in 1998 asking if it was possible to forgive my loan on the basis of my contribution to years of community service [some years earlier Senator Perrault, had proposed that students should be able to repay their loan through community service] and given that I was then 60 years old and my chances for employment were diminishing. He declined. Also, even though, I was then 60, and entitled to my meager Canada pension of \$78 per month on the hope I declined to accept the pension on the hope that I could find work, and thus repay my loan.

In 1998, when I found out that I was on the Threat Assessment list, and when it was well publicized across the country, I realized that my reputation had been sullied and the chances of my finding work was next to impossible

Since 1998, I have been constantly harassed by credit agencies every two weeks and sometime even more often. In 2003, I wrote another letter to the Jane Stewart, the then Minister of Human Resources, indicating that for "unforeseen and unexpected" reasons I would not be able to repay my loan citing the fact that my being placed on a threat assessment list, the wide publication of this fact, and the stigma attached to being placed on the list prevented me from fulfilling my obligations. I received a phone call from Minister Stewart's office, and was told to deal with the Collection agencies.

With interest I now owe \$67,000. August 2004, I received a phone call from a law firm in Victoria about the Attorney General's taking me to court about the loan, and that a notice would be served to me around mid August. I phoned Human Resources and appealed to them again and they arranged with the law firm that I could have until October 15 to prepare my case.

I have now made about 60 privacy and access to information requests - many still outstanding, and still have not found out why I have been deemed to be a threat to Canada. Yet while I have had to live with the stigma, so many of government officials and political representatives whose departments have invoked, against me, exemption clauses of " military and international security" have been discredited.

This list would include:

(I) Robert Fowler as Deputy Minister of Defence- the originator of the infamous list of groups that the military should not belong to. This list, which was reported in Now magazine, included a category of social justice and human rights groups including mainline Christian and Jewish organizations, and another category of groups that have a greater bond among their members than to their country; this category included the Green Party and the Raging Grannies.

(ii) Andy Scott, for prejudging the APEC inquiry;

(iii) McCauley for accepting benefits;

(iv) Radwanska for misappropriation of funds;

(v) Gagliano for his potential involvement in the Sponsorship scandal;

(vi) Jean Chretien for his potential involvement in the Sponsorship scandal;

(vii) Howard Wilson for potential bias and not "speaking truth to power".

And as reported today, September 23, 2004, the Department of Justice hired Group action even after there had been a warning about Group action's incompetency sent from the Treasury Board.

When I appeared in the Federal Court in 2002, I was up against an adept lawyer from the Attorney Generals' office, and I was scolded by the Federal judge for appearing before the court without sufficient particulars. The judge placed me in a conundrum by stating that he would not grant my claim because I did not have sufficient particulars when it was the crown and numerous government departments represented by the Attorney General that had refused to disclose the particulars. I would think that placing a plaintiff in such conundrum would violate a principle of equity under common law. Similarly, a demand by a government department to fulfill an obligation while creating a situation that makes it

impossible to fulfill this obligation would perhaps violate a similar principle of equity. I currently have thousands of pages of data related to my case and I have no idea how to proceed.

I feel that I have been discriminated against on the grounds of “political opinion”- both small “p” and large “P” political opinion. I appeal to you to address, at the highest level, in some way, the years of injustice and discrimination that I have undergone. I know that under the Optional Protocol of the Covenant of Civil and Political Rights- to which Canada is a signatory, that if I have exhausted all domestic remedies, I have the right to take my case before the UN Human Rights Commission charged with the implementation of the Covenant. I believe that I am close to having exhausted all domestic remedies available for justice in Canada.

As you said in your address to the Canadian Bar Association, you want to create a culture of

justice, and to further the public trust.

Yours very truly

Joan Russow (PhD)

1230 St. Patrick St.

Victoria, B.C. V8S4Y4

1 250 598-0071

Last Updated on Saturday, 09 March 2019 09:11

514 readings

[House Dems reveal new info on a shady White House plan to sell nuclear tech to Saudi Arabia](#)

[Justice News](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 07 March 2019 22:47

BY Michael Flynn, Trump's disgraced former national security adviser, was behind it.

Alex Ward Feb 19, 2019, <https://www.vox.com/world/2019/2/19/18231812/saudi-arabia-nuclear-flynn-trump-democrats>

[trump-democrats](#)

President Donald Trump meets Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the Oval Office at the White House on March 20, 2018, in Washington, DC. Kevin Dietsch-Pool/Getty Images

President Donald Trump meets Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the Oval Office at the White House on March 20, 2018, in Washington, DC.

Kevin Dietsch-Pool/Getty Images

A new report from House Democrats reveals disturbing new details about a secretive effort by top Trump administration officials to sell sensitive nuclear technology to Saudi Arabia — in defiance of at least some of the nation's ethics statutes.

The House Oversight and Reform Committee on Tuesday released a report — accompanied by a tranche of internal White House emails — detailing a scheme spearheaded by now-disgraced former National Security Adviser Michael Flynn to sell technology for roughly 40 nuclear power plants to Saudi Arabia.

The plan was already known due to previous reporting by the Wall Street Journal, for example, but the Democrats' report does add more insight into what was happening behind the scenes to push the proposal through.

The effort was part of a broader Middle East economic development plan Flynn began putting together before Trump's inauguration while he was serving as an

adviser to Trump's campaign and transition team.

During that same time period, though, Flynn was also working as an adviser for a private company called IP3 International — a firm run by retired US military generals that bills itself as a “global enterprise to develop sustainable energy and security infrastructure.”

In other words, a company that had a clear financial interest in exporting US nuclear energy technology to Saudi Arabia.

Once Trump was inaugurated, Flynn, along with longtime Trump associate Thomas Barrack, worked with other senior officials in the new Trump administration to make the plan a reality.

And it seems they got pretty far: On January 27, 2017 — just seven days after the inauguration — several of the retired generals from IP3 went to the White House to meet with Derek Harvey, a senior staffer on Trump's National Security Council at the time, to discuss the nuclear plan for Saudi Arabia.

“Immediately after the meeting,” the House report states, “Mr. Harvey directed the NSC staff to add information about IP3's ‘plan for 40 nuclear power plants’ to the briefing package for President Trump's call with [Saudi Arabia's] King Salman.”

As of now it seems the proposal is still under consideration, but there's no indication one way or the other that the president will agree to it. At a minimum, the White House is still in discussions to sell nuclear equipment to Saudi Arabia despite fierce Democratic opposition.

On the surface, the proposed nuclear deal makes sense: An American business would make a lot of money — possibly billions of dollars — selling nuclear technology to Saudi Arabia, and Riyadh would get a new energy source to power its economy.

But the problem, as some White House officials warned those involved, is that Flynn and Barrack's scheme was potentially illegal.

What it takes for the US to sell nuclear equipment to Saudi Arabia

For the US to sell nuclear technology to a foreign country, it must sign what's known as a "123 agreement." That comes from Section 123 of the 1954 US Atomic Energy Act, which establishes the criteria for the US to sell nuclear materials to other countries.

If a country wants to buy nuclear equipment from the US — say, a nuclear reactor — it must meet nine conditions, including a guarantee that it will not use the technology to make nuclear weapons. Congress doesn't have to approve the sale.

But according to the Democrats' report, Harvey, the senior National Security Council staffer (who is also a close Flynn ally), ignored all of that "and insisted that the decision to transfer nuclear technology to Saudi Arabia had already been made."

If true, that means Harvey tried to make the deal happen without arranging for Saudi Arabia to sign the 123 agreement. That's potentially dangerous, as that could allow Riyadh to pursue a nuclear weapon with US-sold equipment down the line.

On top of that, there's also the issue of Michael Flynn's personal involvement in the deal. Flynn used to consult for IP3, and "whistleblowers" who spoke with House Democrats were concerned about the national security adviser skirting ethics rules.

White House ethics officials apparently brought all of this up. According to the report, one senior political official apparently felt Harvey's proposal was "not a business plan," but rather "a scheme for these generals to make some money." That same official then added: "Okay, you know we cannot do this."

Clearly, their warnings were ignored — which may be why the whistleblowers spoke to congressional Democrats in the first place.

The big story here is Democrats stepping up their oversight of Trump's foreign policy

As I said earlier, the broad outlines of this scheme have already been known for a while now, thanks to reporting from the Wall Street Journal and others.

Flynn's history of pushing specific policies while being on the payroll of the primary beneficiaries of said policies is also well documented. And Barrack, the longtime Trump associate who worked with Flynn to make the Saudi nuclear deal happen, has been extremely vocal about his support for Saudi Arabia.

But armed with insider information and internal documents from those whistleblowers, House Democrats were able to put together a report that fills in a lot of the gaps and shines new light on how this whole Saudi nuclear deal went from being an idea cooked up by Flynn and a few retired generals to a serious policy being pursued at the highest levels of the White House.

This is exactly what Democrats promised to do when they took the House last November. Democratic Congress members and staffers told me they would oversee every aspect of Trump's foreign policy, from his use of the military to his foreign connections.

If the report didn't come out, it's entirely possible that the White House would have an easier time signing the nuclear deal with Saudi Arabia. That outcome is now in doubt, and any effort to make an agreement will likely be met with stiff resistance from Democrats in Congress.

That means Trump's ability to conduct global affairs as he wishes is now curtailed. Tuesday's report is at least a warning shot — but it could be a sign of bigger things to come.

Here's the House Oversight and Reform Committee's report.

Last Updated on Saturday, 09 March 2019 19:17

443 readings

[Canada's SNC-Lavalin Affair: The Site C Dam Project and Bulk Water Export](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 13 March 2019 12:51

By Joyce Nelson

<https://www.globalresearch.ca/snc-lavalin-site-c-bulk-water-export/5671247>Global Research, March 13, 2019

Region: Canada

Theme: History, Media Disinformation, Oil and Energy



In all the press coverage of the “the SNC-Lavalin affair,” not enough attention has been paid to the company’s involvement in Site C - the contentious \$11 billion dam being constructed in B.C.’s Peace River valley.

The Liberals say that any pressure they put on Jody Wilson-Raybould to rubber-stamp a “deferred prosecution agreement” for SNC-Lavalin was to protect jobs at the company. But the pressure may have been to protect something much bigger: the Liberals’ vision for Canada’s future. Site C epitomises that vision.

The “Many Lives” of Site C

Birthered in 1959 on the drawing boards of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and BC Electric (then owned by Montreal-based Power Corp), the Site C dam has been declared dead, then alive, then dead again several times over the next five decades until 2010, when BC Premier Gordon Campbell announced that Site C would proceed. [1]

Tracking SNC-Lavalin’s involvement in Site C during recent years has been difficult, but Charlie Smith, editor of The Georgia Straight, has filled in some of the missing information.

Site C dam is located in British Columbia

Site C dam (Source: CC BY-SA 3.0)



Site C dam (Source: CC BY-SA 3.0)

Sometime in 2007, the Site C dam project was quietly moved to Stage 2 of a five-stage process. Smith wrote,

“SNC-Lavalin and Klohn Crippen Berger were prime consultants for Stage 2 of the Site C project. This had to occur before the project could proceed to Stage 3 in the five-stage planning process. The decision to advance to Stage 3 was based on a prediction in the Stage 2 report that demand for B.C. electricity will increase 20 to 40 percent over the next 20 years. ‘As extensive as BC Hydro’s hydroelectric assets are, they will not be enough to provide future British Columbians with electricity self-sufficiency if demand continues to grow as projected,’ the Stage 2 report [Fall, 2009] declared. Bingo. This gave the pro-Site C politicians in the B.C. Liberal party … all the justification they needed.” [2]

On April 19, 2010 Premier Campbell announced that Site C would proceed. At the time, Chief Roland Willson of the West Moberly First Nation called the entire five-stage process a “’ farce,’

and said the government hadn't finished the second stage of the development process, so he doesn't know how it can go ahead to the third. Willson said First Nations in the area haven't seen studies on land use, wildlife, the fishery or the cultural significance of the region, and the process can't move on to environmental assessments [Stage 3] without that work." [3]

Nevertheless, the process did move on, and SNC-Lavalin may have been involved in the next stage of the planning process, as well. The Dogwood Institute recently reported that SNC Lavalin was "an environmental consultant for Site C." [4]

Image result for Gwyn Morgan SNC

In 2011, SNC-Lavalin Chair Gwyn Morgan (image on the right) became an advisor to BC Liberal leadership winner Christy Clark during her transition to the premiership. Morgan had joined the SNC-Lavalin board in 2005 and was chair of the company from 2007 until 2013. As The Tyee reported in 2014,

"Morgan retired in May 2013, the month after SNC-Lavalin agreed to a 10-year corruption-related ban from the World Bank related to a power project in Cambodia and a bridge in Bangladesh. Among the SNC-Lavalin companies on the World Bank [corruption] blacklist are divisions involved in publicly funded B.C. projects like the Bill Bennett Bridge, Canada Line and Evergreen Line." [5]

Going Forward

At the time of Gwyn Morgan's 2013 retirement from the SNC-Lavalin Chairmanship, the company was being investigated in at least ten countries, including: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ghana, India, Kazakhstan, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Uganda and Zambia. [6]

While we have no way of knowing whether Gwyn Morgan, as an advisor to Christy Clark as of 2011, in any way lobbied on behalf of SNC-Lavalin, we do know that "Morgan's personal, family and corporate donations to the BC Liberals totalled more than \$1.5 million." [7]

At the same time, in 2011 SNC-Lavalin had won the engineering, procurement and construction management (EPCM) contract for the Muskrat Falls hydro project in Newfoundland. But the company was

apparently so “distracted” by corruption charges internationally that eventually crown utility Nalcor had to take over the project, which went way over budget and is now the subject of an inquiry. [8]

That didn’ t dissuade the B.C. Premier from going forward. On December 16, 2014, the Christy Clark provincial government gave approval for Site C, despite recommendations by the Joint Review Panel (JRP), which had concluded two months previous that Site C’ s hydropower was not needed in the time-frame that BC Hydro was arguing. (Recall that the Stage 2 report had claimed a 20-40% increase in demand over the next 20 years.) JRP member Harry Swain had concluded that demand for electricity in B.C. has been flat dating back to 2005.

While the newly elected B.C. NDP government in 2017 debated the cancellation or suspension of Site C, the Financial Post reported that Montreal’ s SNC-Lavalin is “part of the lead design team for the [Site C] project.” [9] That little-known contract may have been signed much earlier.

On February 21, 2018 the Journal of Commerce reported on the progress being made by Site C’ s lead design team, comprised of SNC-Lavalin and Klohn Crippen Berger and involving “approximately 40-plus engineers, nine modellers and 15 drafters” . [10] SNC-Lavalin Building Information Modeling (BIM) Manager Rodrigo Freig told the Journal that,

“In three years and 43 models later, we only had two model crashes, related to slow server speeds.” [11]

That comment would suggest that the lead design contract had quietly been issued to SNC-Lavalin and Klohn Crippen Berger sometime in 2015.

Turning off the Tap: Site C and Water Privatization in Canada
A few days ago (March 7), the Canadian Press reported:

“SNC-Lavalin is working on the five biggest infrastructure projects in Canada, according to trade magazine ReNew Canada. Those contracts alone amount of \$52.8 billion, and include projects for Bruce Power and the Darlington nuclear plant in Ontario as well as the Site C dam in B.C.” [12]

While the exact amount of the Site C lead design contract is not known, it is likely at least \$1 billion in B.C. taxpayer dollars. If the lead design contract was indeed issued in 2015, this would fit with Christy Clark's effort to push the project past "the point of no return."

Help From Trudeau

In February 2015, under the Harper government, federal fraud and corruption charges were filed against three of SNC-Lavalin's legal entities over its dealings in Libya. But after the Trudeau Liberals were elected in Fall 2015, the company "signed a deal with Ottawa that will allow the engineering and construction company to continue bidding on federal contracts until criminal charges it faces are resolved." [13]

As we know now, SNC-Lavalin also began lobbying extensively for a Deferred Prosecution Agreement (DPA) that would effectively free the company of charges without forcing it to admit wrongdoing. In exchange, the company would pay a fine and prove that it has changed its practices to prevent a repeat of any wrongdoing. The Trudeau government quietly inserted changes to the criminal code allowing for DPAs in its 2018 Budget. According to recent report by the Buffalo Chronicle (March 11), SNC-Lavalin's in-house attorney Frank Iacobucci "was instrumental in persuading" Trudeau to insert that new legal provision into the budget bill. [14]

The Buffalo Chronicle also notes that in October 2018, Trudeau asked Iacobucci to lead the government's negotiations with indigenous communities in B.C. regarding the TransMountain Pipeline expansion project - a project that SNC-Lavalin hopes to construct. Quoting an unnamed source, the Chronicle states:

"Iacobucci, who was already angry that [Jody] Wilson-Raybould was refusing to allow his client [SNC-Lavalin] to negotiate a deferred prosecution agreement, feared that his consultations in British Columbia could be construed as improper. He would only agree to take the role on the condition that Trudeau replaced her with a 'more dotting' Member of Parliament." [15]

The full story of Iacobucci's role in the SNC-Lavalin scandal has

yet to emerge, but it's clear that the Trudeau government has been exceedingly accommodating to the company's wishes.

The Georgia Straight's Charlie Smith has further spelled out the Trudeau government's help:

“Keep in mind that Trudeau helped SNC-Lavalin with its World Bank problem by endorsing the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. This entity was created by China as a rival to the U.S.-led World Bank on infrastructure financing. SNC-Lavalin might be debarred from World Bank financings, but it can bid on AIIB-backed projects. Trudeau also helped SNC-Lavalin and other companies involved in huge public projects by creating the Canada Infrastructure Bank. And the Trudeau government accelerated construction of the Site C dam by awarding federal permits over the opposition of First Nations in the area.” [16]

Bulk Water Export

In two slightly different chapters within two recent books, I have argued that the Site C dam on the Peace River is perfectly placed to facilitate bulk water export east of the Rockies and into the American Southwest. Readers can consult my Chapter 10, “Water Export: The Site C End-Game” in editor Wendy Holm's *Damming the Peace: The Hidden Costs of the Site C Dam* (Lorimer 2018), and the chapter entitled “Site C and NAWAPA: Continental Water Sharing” in my latest book *Bypassing Dystopia: Hope-filled Challenges to Corporate Rule* (Watershed Sentinel Books 2018).

SNC-Lavalin's involvement in Site C has been so well-hidden that the company name does not appear anywhere in *Damming the Peace*. But by the time I was writing the water-chapter for my own book, SNC-Lavalin's connections to Site C were becoming clear enough for me to state that the company “is intricately involved in Site C”. Only now are we learning just how involved they are.

SNC-Lavalin has had its eye on continental water-sharing for at least three decades. Back in the 1980s the SNC Group (as it was called at the time) was part of a consortium called Grandco, which was promoting a continental water-sharing plan entitled the Grand Canal Project. Grandco's other consortium members included the UMA Group of Calgary, Underwood McLellan Ltd. of Saskatoon, Rousseau, Sauve & Warren Inc. of Montreal, and Bechtel Canada Ltd.

(son of U.S. Bechtel, the world's largest engineering firm).

Grandco's head lobbyist was Canadian financier Simon Reisman (uncle of current Bilderberg member Heather Reisman). After Simon Reisman publicly advocated for Canadian water export, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney (himself an advocate for large-scale water exports) appointed him as Chief Negotiator for the 1988 Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA), the predecessor to NAFTA, signed by Jean Chretien in 1994. Both the FTA and NAFTA essentially strip Canada's sovereign right to protect our water resources and make Canada vulnerable to massive water export.

While Site C may provide energy and water for fracking in B.C. and potentially for tar sands mining in Alberta, in the long term the "end-game" of Site C, according to Wendy Holm, is water export because that freshwater water "will have a far higher value" than oil and gas. The vast 83-kilometres-long reservoir needed for the Site C dam will submerge 78 First Nations heritage sites (including burial grounds) and flood about 3,816 hectares (9,430 acres) of prime agricultural land in the Peace River Valley

A similar scenario is being played out in Quebec with Hydro-Quebec's massive \$5 billion Romaine Complex, which is damming the River Romaine and flooding 100 square miles of land; in Newfoundland where the Muskrat Falls mega-dam project "boondoggle" is now the subject of a public inquiry; in Manitoba where several mega-dam projects are poised to flood First Nations land.

Now, thanks to the Trudeau government's Mid-Century Long-term Strategy, that same scenario is poised to repeat itself many times in the coming years.

Long-Term Strategy

In 2017, the Trudeau government released its Mid-Century Long-Term Strategy (MCS) intended to reduce emissions of greenhouse gas (GHG) at rates to comply with its Paris Climate commitments.

Scientist David Schindler has summarized the MCS:

"In brief, Canada has agreed to reduce its GHG emissions by 80 per cent by 2050, using 2005 emissions as a baseline. This sounds

wonderful, until one reads how this is to be done, as described in the report. All the scenarios used to achieve the miraculous carbon reduction goals rely on replacing fossil fuels by generating massive amounts of hydroelectric power, which is assumed to emit no GHG. ... The required hydro development would require the equivalent of building over one hundred Site C dams in the next thirty-two years, an extraordinary plan...” [17]

Once all that water has been impounded behind the dams, it is subject to NAFTA treatment (including in the rewritten USMCA agreement) as a tradable “good” or commodity. Chrystia Freeland and the negotiators for the USMCA did not secure an explicit exemption for water under the goods, services, and investment provisions of the deal. According to Bill C-6 (which became law in 2001), as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Freeland has water-export licensing authority and can issue permits for water export.

As I explain in some detail in *Damming the Peace and Bypassing Dystopia*, massive drought and over-use of freshwater in the Colorado River region and in the U.S. Southwest have prompted big investors like the Blackstone Group (with Brian Mulroney on its board) to look north for water-investment opportunities. The Blackstone Group has been involved in water issues for years, and in 2014 it announced a new portfolio company called Global Water Development Partners to “identify, develop, finance, construct, and operate large-scale independent water development projects.”

The Blackstone Group is just one of many investment firms eyeing Canada’s freshwater resources. The Bank of America Merrill Lynch - which designed the Canada Infrastructure Bank - has predicted a global water market worth \$1 trillion by 2020.

Obviously, SNC-Lavalin wants to be in on all that MCS hydroelectric development and other projects to be financed by Trudeau’s Canada Infrastructure Bank in the coming years. But if they have to face prosecution, the company risks being barred from federal contracts for ten years.

The Trudeau government says it is attempting to protect SNC-Lavalin jobs. That may be true, but it is also likely that the Trudeau government is attempting to protect its long-term vision for Canada: a vision that jettisons “reconciliation” and the environment in favour of damming the country and then draining it.

Freshwater has been turned into a commodity and it will be worth far more than oil or gold in the near future. Follow the money. That's what SNC-Lavalin is doing.

*

Note to readers: please click the share buttons below. Forward this article to your email lists. Crosspost on your blog site, internet forums. etc.

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[Civil Society Organisations Under Attack by Rightwing Governments & Extremist Groups](#)

[Justice News](#)



Posted by Joan Russov

Thursday, 28 March 2019 14:19

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

This article is part of a series on the current state of civil society organisations (CSOs), which will be the focus of International Civil Society Week (ICSW), sponsored by CIVICUS, and scheduled to take place in Belgrade, April 8-12.



UNITED NATIONS, Mar 28 2019 (IPS) - The widespread political repression in countries such as the Philippines, Egypt and Saudi Arabia– and rising right-wing nationalism in the US, Brazil, Italy, India, Poland and Hungary– have increasingly triggered attacks on human rights and civil society organisations (CSOs).

The annual 2019 “State of Civil Society” report released March 27 details a “terrifying picture of fundamental freedoms under serious threat in 111 of the world’s countries”– well over half of all the countries globally.”

Only four per cent of the world’s population live in countries where fundamental freedoms of association, peaceful assembly and expression are respected and enabled.

Authored by the Johannesburg-based CIVICUS, a global alliance of CSOs and activists dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society worldwide, the study warns that the rise of right-wing populism and the influence of anti-rights extremist groups are helping to fuel these threats to democracy in so many nations.

But the report also outlines the various ways, in various countries, that civil society and citizens are fighting back, and claiming victories in defence of their rights.

As one of the “alarming examples,” it singles out the Italian government’s decision to impose a hefty fine on one of the world’s best known humanitarian organisations, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), while simultaneously freezing their assets, impounding their rescue vessel and investigating their staff for human trafficking...in retaliation for their efforts to save refugees from drowning in the Mediterranean Sea.

And there were also instances of activists being charged, tried and convicted in the United States for providing water supplies for migrants crossing the deadly Sonoran

desert on the US/Mexico border.

Lysa John, CIVICUS Secretary General, says “civil society, acting on humanitarian impulses, confronts a rising tide of global mean spiritedness, challenging humanitarian values in a way unparalleled since the Second World War.”

“We need a new campaign, at both global and domestic levels, to reinforce humanitarian values and the rights of progressive civil society groups to act,” added John.

The theme of this year’s ICSW, which takes place in Belgrade April 8-12, is “The Power of Togetherness” focusing on harnessing the power of collective action to respond to rights restrictions and rightwing globalism.

According to the CIVICUS report, in Europe, the US and beyond – from Brazil to India – right wing populists, nationalists and extremist groups are mobilising dominant populations to attack the most vulnerable.

This has led to an attack on the values behind humanitarian response as people are being encouraged to blame minorities and vulnerable groups for their concerns about insecurity, inequality, economic hardship and isolation from power.

This means that civil society organisations that support the rights of excluded populations such as women and LGBTQI people and stand up for labour rights are being attacked.

As narrow notions of national sovereignty are being asserted, the report points out, the international system is being rewritten by powerful states, such as China, Russia and the USA, that refuse to play by the rules.

“Borders and walls are being reinforced by rogue leaders who are bringing their styles of personal rule into international affairs by ignoring existing institutions, agreements and norms”.

The report also points to a startling spike in protests relating to economic exclusion, inequality and poverty, which are often met with violent repression, and highlights a series of flawed and fake elections held in countries around the world in the last year.

“Democratic values are under strain around the globe from unaccountable strong men attacking civil society and the media in unprecedented – and often brutal – ways,” said Andrew Firmin, CIVICUS’ Editor-in-Chief and the report’s lead author.

And 2018 is being billed as a year in which regressive forces appeared to gain ground.

But the past year was also one in which committed civil society activists fought back against the rising repression of rights.

The report points out to the successes of the global #MeToo women’s rights movement to the March for Our Lives gun reform movement led by high school students in the US– to the growing school strike climate change movement, collective action gained ground to claim breakthroughs.

“Despite the negative trends, active citizens and civil society organisations have been able to achieve change in Armenia, where a new political dispensation is in place, and in Ethiopia, where scores of prisoners of conscience have been released,” said John.

The report makes several recommendations for civil society and citizen action. The report calls for new strategies to argue against right-wing populism while urging progressive civil society to engage citizens towards better, more positive alternatives.

These include developing and promoting new ideas on economic democracy for fairer economies that put people and rights at their centre. Notably, the report calls for

reinforcing the spirit of internationalism, shared humanity and the central importance of compassion in everything we say and do.

Meanwhile, says the report, international institutions mostly struggled, hamstrung by the interests and alliances of powerful states, doing little to respond to the great challenges of the day, failing to fight overwhelming inequality, silent on the human rights abuses of states such as Saudi Arabia and Sudan, letting down the people of Syria and the Rohingya people of Myanmar, among many others.

Asked if the United Nations shouldn't name and shame these countries where right wing extremism is on the rise, Mandeep Tiwana, Chief Programmes Officer at CIVICUS, told IPS the UN is facing serious funding challenges which make it dependent on the contributions of big countries for its operating budget.

"This might be leading to situations where ultra-nationalist leaders or those who subscribe to authoritarian precepts are getting a free pass for their actions that flagrantly violate the spirit of the UN Charter and also international law".

He also pointed out that the funding situation is so dire that a number of UN bodies are courting private corporations to shore up their funding including with regards to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which could lead to undesirable policy influence in the fight against inequality, on labour rights and on efforts to reduce high level corruption.

Often restrictions on civil society are worsened when the increasingly close partnerships between governments and the private sector go unscrutinised.

It's also important to remember, said Tiwana, that while the UN is increasingly turning to the private sector for assistance in achieving sustainable development, it is often civil society organisations that are working hand in hand with the UN in delivering humanitarian services on the frontlines, and risking their lives doing so.

"The divisive and selfish actions of nationalist leaders indicate that we might be heading towards a full-blown crisis of the multilateral system".

"In the present situation where we are facing a crisis of compassion from the actions of meanspirited right wing populists, it's important that the UN stands with civil society organisations and activists working towards just, equal and sustainable societies".

He argued that public statements from senior UN officials across the institutions' various pillars, followed by actions and willingness by UN officials on the ground to engage governments that attack human rights and civil society, are urgently needed in the present scenario.

The UN needs to make common cause with political leaders and governments committed to strengthening multilateralism and the international human rights framework in these testing times, he declared.

The writer can be contacted at thalifdeen@ips.org

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[NATO AT 70 TIME TO
DISBAND NATO](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 04 April 2019 21:15

The Enlargement of NATO, 1949–2018



EXPANSION OF NATO

AWARE that NATO states have been complicit or responsible for using the following pretexts for aggressive interventions in other sovereign states

“human security” (Iraq 1991), “Humanitarian intervention” (Kosovo, 1999), “self-defence” (Afghanistan 2001), “Pre-emptive/ preventive” attack (Iraq, 2003) “Responsibility to Protect” (Haiti, 2004, Libya, 2011) or “will to intervene” (Mali, 2013). Each time the pretext was discredited, a new pretext emerged.

RECOGNIZING that true security does **not** arise: through NATO expansion, through being a nuclear weapons alliance, and opposing the abolition of nuclear weapons, through coercing other states to increase their military budget, and purchase weapons like F 35 and armed drones, through destabilizing other nations, through setting up military bases around the world, through war games and military exercises, through circulating nuclear powered and nuclear arms capable vessel. Etc.

AFFIRMING that true security exists when all are secure, through “common security” (Olaf Palme, 1982) whose objectives could be the following:

- (i) to achieve a state of peace, and disarmament; through reallocation

of military expenses and delegitimization of war

(ii) to create a global structure that respects the rule of law, the international court of justice, and the international criminal court,

(iii) to promote and fully guarantee respect for human rights including labour rights, women's rights LGBTQ rights civil and political rights, migrant and indigenous rights, social and cultural rights – right to food, right to housing, right to safe drinking water and sewage treatment, right to education and right to universally accessible not for profit health care system;

(iv) to enable socially equitable and environmentally sound employment, energy and transportation, and just transition and ensure the right to development and social justice

(v) to ensure the preservation, conservation and protection of the environment, the respect for the inherent worth of nature beyond human purpose, to reduce the ecological footprint and to move away from the current model of unsustainable and excessive overconsumption.

UPDATE OF

NATO's 60th Anniversary: TIME TO DISBAND NATO

http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7649

[:nato-60th-anniversary-2009-time-to-disband-nato-long-over-](#)

[due&catid=104:i-peace-news&Itemid=204](#)

**AT LEAST 12 REASONS FOR DISBANDING NATO
COMPLIANCE RESEARCH PROJECT**

1

IGNORING YEARS OF COMMITMENT TO REDUCE THE MILITARY BUDGET

In 1976, all member states made this assessment of the military budget:

The waste and misuse of resources in war and armaments should be prevented. All countries should make a firm commitment to promote 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 people of developing countries" (II, 12 Habitat 1). (ii 12. Habitat 1)

In 2019 currently the global community spends over 1.73 trillion billion on the military budget at a time when the right to housing, the right to food, the right to health care, the right to equality of all, the right to education, the right to safe drinking water, and the right to a safe environment have not been fulfilled. in 2018 and had a total military budget 1043 and it is estimated that it will rise by 100 billion because of US demand to SPEND 2 % OF GDP

2.

RENEGING ON COMMITMENT: NATO EXPANSION

Provocative eastern expansion after promising Russia to that, if Russia agreed to the unification of Germany, NATO would not move one more inch to the East.

3.

DESTABILIZING OTHER NATIONS

NATO destabilized an area by offering one state an association with NATO; In 2006, during the election in El Salvador, Bush offered the Right-wing party in El Salvador a special association with NATO; this association intimidated both Nicaragua and Honduras (2006 Article in the Nicaraguan newspaper).

4

ENGAGING IN PROPAGANDA FOR WAR WAR GAMES AND MILITARY EXERCISES, INTERNATIONAL ARMS TRADE EXHIBITION

Over the years, NATO has engaged in provocation for war through war games. culminating in 2018 the exercise, code-named Trident Juncture. A NATO is conducting its largest military exercise since the end of the cold war — close to the arctic circle in Norway — the alliance wants to keep the high north an area of low tension, NATO secretary general Jens Stoltenberg said of the exercise. Yet code-named Trident Juncture, has drawn Moscow's ire, accusing the alliance of stoking tensions in the region.

Nearly 50,000 NATO soldiers — including about 2,000 Canadians — backed by some 250 aircraft, 65 ships and up to 10,000 vehicles from all 29 NATO countries, they began massive war games which involve land, sea, air and cyber capabilities. Every NATO state has ratified the legally binding 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political rights (ICCPR and under Article 20 "propaganda for war is prohibited."

NATO has engaged in war games, such as Exercise Trident Fury, which have been flagrant displays of militarism flouting the rules related to the prohibition of the propaganda of war under the International Covenant on Civil Article 20 1. Any propaganda for war shall be prohibited by law.

5. INITIATING OR BEING COMPLICIT IN ACTS OF AGGRESSION AGAINST OTHER STATES,

NATO states have been complicit or responsible for using the following pretexts for aggressive interventions in other sovereign states with or without UNSC approval "human security" (Iraq 1991), "humanitarian intervention" (Kosovo, 1999), "self-defense" (Afghanistan 2001), "pre-emptive/ preventive" attack (Iraq, 2003) "responsibility to protect (Haiti, 2004, Libya, 2011) or "will to intervene" (Mali, 2013). each time the pretext was discredited, a new pretext emerged.

1991 GULF WAR US and its allies used cluster bombs in gulf war operation desert storm Desert Shield (1990–91) — American buildup prior to Gulf War Desert Storm (1991) — Gulf War

1999 KOSOVO

. First, NATO's decision to engage in large-scale military action without prior security council OPERATION Allied Force At the international Court of justice (ICJ) NATO refused to accept the jurisdiction of the ICJ. I attended a NATO Headquarters' international press Conference and asked the NATO spokesman, Jaime Shea, "if NATO leaders would also refuse to respect the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity; He responded that NATO had created the ICJ

1999 CASE AGAINST NATO IAN BROMLY JEAN PUY

Legality of Use of Force (Yugoslavia v. United States of America)

2001 AFGHANISTAN SELF DEFENCE the following nations were involved in the War in Afghanistan:

Resolution 1386 (2001) Adopted by the Security Council at its 4443rd meeting, on 20 December 2001 The Security Council, reaffirming its previous resolutions on Afghanistan, in particular its resolutions 1378 (2001) of 14 November 2001 and 1383 (2001) of 6 December 2001,

, and reaffirming also its resolutions 1368 (2001) of 12 September 2001 and 1373 (2001) of 28 September 2001, UNSC gave conditional support to NATO;

• to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and respecting the Charter. NATO failed to respect the conditions because NATO's ISAF violated the Convention Against Torture ISAF by transferring prisoners to states that permit torture

,

NATIONS

2003 IRAQ ALMOST HALF OF THE STATES IN THE COALITION OF THE WILING WERE MEMBERS OF NATO CONTRIBUTION TO CREATION OF ISIS

Operation Iraqi Freedom

• Former UN chief Kofi Annan blamed the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq for the rise of the Islamic State (ISIS), warning that the Middle East must evolve and adapt for lasting peace.

DEFYING THE SECURITY IN COUNCIL 2003

• The Security Council did not authorize the March 20, 2003 attack on Iraq. It unanimously passed Resolution 1441 on November 8, 2002, calling for new inspections intended to find and eliminate Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. (The Arms Control Association provides a chronology of previous weapons inspections in Iraq.) Iraq accepted the renewed inspections, which were to be carried out by UNMOVIC and the IAEA.

2011 LIBYA

In 2004, Responsibility To Protect (R2P) was used in Haiti. In August 2005, at the UN, the G77 group of 130 developing states had great reservations about the responsibility to protect (R2P). They anticipated that R2P would most likely be used against them

it eventually was used against Libya.

the US and NATO allies decried the Libyan treatment of its citizens while engaging in illegal and aggressive violent acts of war against citizens of other countries and dismissing the consequences 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; in Max Boot's term it is "A Savage War of Peace" or in Obama's term, "a just war"

Concern grew as Sergei Lavrov, Russia's foreign minister, said he believed the military action was in breach of international law. "We consider that intervention by the coalition in what is essentially an internal civil war is not sanctioned by the UN security council resolution," he said. Russia abstained from the vote which resulted in resolution 1973.

• Adopting resolution 1973 (2011) by a vote of 10 in favour to none

4

against, with 5 abstentions (Brazil, China, Germany, India, Russian Federation), the Council authorized Member States, acting nationally or through regional organizations or arrangements, to take all necessary measures to protect civilians under threat of attack in the country, including Benghazi, while excluding a foreign occupation force of any form on any part of Libyan territory — requesting them to immediately inform the Secretary-General of such measures.

in August 2005, at the UN, the G77 group of 130 developing states had great reservations about the responsibility to protect (R2P). They anticipated that R2P would most likely be used against them. they knew it was used in Haiti...

it eventually was used against Libya.

The US and NATO allies decried the Libyan treatment of its citizens while engaging in illegal and aggressive violent acts of war against citizens of other countries and dismissing the consequences as "collateral damage"

6.

BYPASSING CHAPTER VI OF THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS- PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES,

• NATO ignored chapter vi - peaceful resolution of disputes, of the Charter of the United Nations, and the provisioning in chapter VI disputes to take to the international court of justice. p. NATO has failed to act on the commitment made

under the platform of action of the UN Conference of Women this [encourage diplomacy, [preventive diplomacy,] negotiation and peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the charter of the united nations, in particular article 2, paragraphs 3 and 4] (art. 147 b., advance draft, platform of action, the UN Conference on Women, may 15);

7.

**DEFYING INTERNATIONAL LAW, BY NOTCOMPLYING WITH CONVENTIONS
THE SUPPORTING INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO ROOT OUT TERRORISM,
IN KEEPING WITH THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

Resolution 1386 (2001) Adopted by the Security Council at its 4443rd meeting, on 20 December 2001 The Security Council, reaffirmed its previous resolutions on Afghanistan, in particular its resolutions 1378 (2001) of 14 November 2001 and 1383 (2001) of 6 December 2001, and reaffirming also its resolutions 1368 (2001) of 12 September 2001 and 1373 (2001) of 28 September 2001, 5

• to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained,

CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE ISAF VIOLATIONS OF THE CONVENTION
AGAINST TORTURE BY TRANSFERRING PRISONERS TO STATES THAT
PERMIT TORTURE

7.

USING PROHIBITED CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS AND NEW WEAPONS

DEPLETED URANIUM

Depleted Uranium or DU [1] encased bombs that have been used since 1991 by US and NATO forces knowing well that the use of DU weapons is illegal being weapons of mass destruction [WMD] and amounts to War Crimes.

Article 35. BASIC RULES. 1. In any armed conflict, the right of the Parties to the conflict to choose methods or means of warfare is not unlimited. 2. It is prohibited to employ weapons, projectiles and material and methods of warfare of a nature to cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering It is prohibited to employ methods or means of warfare which are intended, or may be expected, to cause widespread, long-term and severe damage to the natural environment.

****DRONES

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

Article 35. BASIC RULES. 1. In any armed conflict, the right of the Parties to the conflict to choose methods or means of warfare is not unlimited. 2. It is prohibited to employ weapons, projectiles and material and methods of warfare of a nature to cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering It is prohibited to employ methods or means of warfare which are intended, or 6

may be expected, to cause widespread, long-term and severe damage to the natural environment.

Article 36 -- New weapons in the study, development, acquisition or adoption of a new weapon, means or method of warfare, a High Contracting Party is under an obligation to determine whether its employment would, in some or all

circumstances, be prohibited by this Protocol or by any other rule of international law applicable to the High Contracting Party.

8.

**BEING A NUCLEAR WEAPONS ORGANIZATION AND UNDERMINING THE
TREATY ON THE PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS**

NATO HAS REFUSED TO AGREE TO ARTICLE 1 OF THE TREATY

Article 1 Prohibitions 1. Each State Party 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;
- (f) Seek or receive any assistance, in any way, from 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.

• YET It commits NATO to the goal of creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons – but reconfirms that, as long as there are nuclear weapons in the world, NATO will remain a nuclear Alliance. (from NATO site)

IN 2016 The US has stated that the treaty to ban nuclear weapons would be ineffective, with adverse consequences for security and would hinder the implementation of Article VI of the US constitution on international treaties. It is, rather, NATO's nuclear policy which contravenes Article VI, as well as some of the Thirteen Steps Towards Nuclear Disarmament, and has consequences for common security:

- 1) nuclear weapons must be maintained indefinitely
- 2) We will improve their use and accuracy (modernize them)
- 3) We can use them first.
- 4) We can target non-nuclear weapon states
- 5) We can threaten to use them
- 6) We can keep them in Europe, as they are now doing
- 7) We can launch some on 15 minutes warning.
- 8) We say "they are essential for peace"

Over the years there have been regular visits of us nuclear powered and nuclear arms capable vessels the us has a policy of neither confirm or deny

15,350 nuclear weapons remain in the arsenals of 9 States, approximately 1,800 of which are on "high alert" status and can be launched within minutes;

NATO countries failed to support the /international campaign to abolish nuclear weapons

<http://www.icanw.org/why-a-ban/positions>

e NATO has condoned the possession of nuclear weapons by "friendly states², but has been willing to entertain strikes on the nuclear facilities of a" NATO-designed rogue states "and risk the release of radiation.

US HAS A FIRST USE NUCLEAR POLICY ASA DETERRENCE AGAINST THE USE OF CHEMICAL OR BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

https://fsi.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/51-3_12_Sagan_author_proof.pdf

****CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Most of the vast available literature on chemical weapons, their characteristics and numbers, are quite general in nature but tend to focus on the status of chemical weapons creation and stockpiling by rogue 7

states. The researchers were met with almost complete silence when trying to ascertain the status of chemical weapon stockpiling and preparation for military uses by NATO forces (a similar situation exists as regards the individual Alliance partners) even where their use is foreseen only in defensive situations. The exceptional secrecy of the subject is proven by the generic and evasive substance of the analysis and documents produced on the topic by the most accredited research centers on arms control (e.g. SIPRI). Such silence, seen as necessary on significant points, seems disproportional with respect to the topic. Maybe - because of the contiguity of the N (nuclear) – on the B (biological) and, as here we are interested in, on the C (chemical) a curtain has left. But this sounds to be a legacy of the Cold War, excessive and dangerous both from a military point of view and from a political one. <http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/99-01/labanca.pdf>

9.

FAILING TO REALLOCATE EXORBITANT MILITARY SPENDING ETC EXORBITANT MILITARY BUDGETS

The NATO states collectively spend Approximately 60% of the current 1.75 trillion global military budget in contravention of years of international Commitments are reallocate military expenses.

For example, 1976 assessment of the military budget....

the waste and misuse of resources in war and armaments should be prevented. all countries should make a firm commitment to promote complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, in particular in the field of nuclear arms. ... part of the resources thus released should be utilized so as to achieve. a better quality of life for humanity (Habitat I)

Currently the global community spends 1.73 trillion billion on the military budget at a when the right to housing, the right to food, the right to education, water, sanitation health etc

NATO states, in 2018 had a total military budget \$1043 and it is estimated that it will rise by 100 billion because of us pressure from the US to raise it to 2 % of GDP

<http://www.canadianpeacecongress.ca/nato/f-35-dangers-far-beyond-costs-and-corruption/#more-79>

A single Air Force F-35A costs a whopping \$148 million. One Marine Corps F-35B costs an unbelievable \$251 million. A lone Navy F-35C costs a mind-boggling \$337 million. Average the three models together, and a “generic” F-35 costs \$178 million. The F-35 program is driven by the United States military and its NATO allies. In 1997, Canada signed onto the Joint Strike Fighter program, which was developed as a vehicle for the United States to capture international funding for a replacement jet fighter. Canada’s initial investment in 1997 was \$10 million. In 2001 the JSF contract was awarded to Lockheed Martin, who developed what is now known as the F-35. By 2010, the international procurement process was 8

underway and Stephen Harper announced that Canada would purchase 65 fighter jets, through an untendered purchase.

The member states of the United Nations spend 1.7 trillion per year on the military budget at a time when many basic and fundamental rights have not been fulfilled: the right to affordable and safe housing; the right to unadulterated food (pesticide-free and genetically engineered-free food); the right to safe drinking water; the right to a safe environment; the right to universally accessible, not for profit health care; and the right to free and accessible education.

10.

CONDONING THE EXEMPTION OF MILITARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSION

The Pentagon’s Hidden Contribution to Climate Change

by gar smith – January 18, 2016

http://www.earthisland.org/journal/index.php/elist/elistread/the_pentagons_hidden_impact_on_climate_change/

World’s single greatest institutional consumer of fossil fuels remains exempt from reporting its pollution

But there is another looming threat that needs to be addressed. Put simply: War and militarism also fuel climate change, and the Pentagon is one of the biggest culprits.

The Pentagon occupies 6,000 bases in the US and more than 1,000 bases (the exact number is disputed) in 60-plus foreign countries. According to its Fiscal Year 2010 Base Structure Report, the Pentagon’s global empire includes 9

more than 539,000 facilities at 5,000 sites covering more than 28 million acres.

11.

PROPAGATING UNTENABLE MYTHS AND RHETORIC OF PEACE AND COERCING CONFORMITY PARTNERS FOR PEACE 22 COUNTRIES

Thirteen former member states of the PIP (namely Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia), have subsequently joined NATO.

Current members[edit]

Former republics of the Soviet Union[edit]

- Armenia (October 5, 1994)[5]
- Azerbaijan (May 4, 1994)[5]
- Belarus (January 11, 1995)[5]
- Georgia (March 23, 1994)[5]
- Kazakhstan (May 27, 1994)[5]
- Kyrgyzstan (June 1, 1994)[5]
- Moldova (March 16, 1994)[5]
- Russia (June 22, 1994)[5]
- Tajikistan (February 20, 2002)[5]
- Turkmenistan (May 10, 1994)[5]
- Ukraine (February 8, 1994)[5]
- Uzbekistan (July 13, 1994)[5]

Former republics of Yugoslavia[edit]

- Bosnia and Herzegovina (December 14, 2006)[5]
- North Macedonia[a] (November 15, 1995)[5]
- Serbia (December 14, 2006)[5]

European Union members[edit]

- Austria (February 10, 1995)[5]
- Finland (May 9, 1994)[5]
- Ireland (December 1, 1999)[5]
- Malta (joined April 26, 1995;[5][6] withdrew on October 27, 1996;[7] reactivated its membership on March 20, 2008;[8] this was accepted by NATO on April 3, 2008.[9])
- Sweden (May 9, 1994)[5]

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-
- o

- 2.1.1Former republics of the Soviet Union
- 2.1.2Former republics of Yugoslavia
- 2.1.3European Union members
- 2.1.4European Free Trade Association member

o 2.2Membership history

o 2.3Aspiring members

o 2.4Former members

- 2.4.1Countries that became full NATO members on March 12, 1999
- 2.4.2Countries that became full NATO members on March 29, 2004
- 2.4.3Countries that became full NATO members on April 1, 2009
- 2.4.4Country that became full NATO member on June 5, 2017

- 3See also
- 4References
- 5External links

Activities[edit]

NATO builds relationships with partners through military-to-military cooperation on training, exercises, disaster planning and response, science and environmental issues, professionalization, policy planning, and relations with civilian

government.[4]

12.

PERCEIVING NATO MEMBERS TO BE BEYOND THE JUDGMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

• For more than half a century since the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials, states have largely failed to bring to justice those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. With the creation of the International Criminal Court (ICC), the world has begun to fulfill the post-World War II promise of “never again.”

PHILIPPE Kirsch the first President of ICC stated that the ICC would only take on the case if the state does not have a credible national judicial system to press charges against the perpetrator.

Would this provision not exclude the leaders of NATO states and make them immune to prosecution?

world’s first permanent, international judicial body capable of bringing perpetrators to justice and providing redress to victims when states are unable or unwilling to do so.

Last Updated on Sunday, 07 April 2019 12:37

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83 readings

[NGOs Blast US for Undermining Criminal Court](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 08 April 2019 14:02

By [Thalif Deen](#)

This article is part of a series on the role of civil society organisations (CSOs), which will be the focus of International Civil Society Week (ICSW), sponsored by CIVICUS, and scheduled to take place in Belgrade, April 8-12.



UNITED NATIONS, Apr 8 2019 (IPS) - As it paves a destructive path against international institutions and multilateralism, the Trump administration is slowly but steadily undermining the United Nations and its affiliated agencies.

The US has already withdrawn both from the Human Rights Council in Geneva and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris while, at the same time, it has either cut off, or drastically reduced, funding for the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and for UN peacekeeping operations (by a hefty \$500 million).

The most recent attack has been directed at the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Hague which was planning to investigate war crimes committed in Afghanistan, focusing both on the Taliban and US soldiers.

The US action to revoke the visa of Fatou Bensouda, Chief Prosecutor of the ICC, has not only triggered protests from academics and from human rights and civil society organizations (CSOs) but also left several lingering questions unanswered.

When the United Nations decided to locate its secretariat in the city of New York, the United States, as host nation, signed a “headquarters agreement” back in 1947 ensuring diplomatic immunity to foreign diplomats and pledging to facilitate the day-to-day activities of the world body– without any hindrance.

So, is the revocation of the visa a violation of the 1947 US- UN headquarters agreement? Or has the US a right to impose proposed sanctions on ICC judges when it is not even a member of the ICC?

And is the revocation of the visa the shape of things to come, with political leaders from countries such as Iran, Venezuela and Cuba– blacklisted by the Trump administration– being refused admission when they are due in New York next September for the annual General Assembly sessions?

The protests against the US decision have come from several CSOs, including the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR) and the World Federalist Movement- Institute for Global Policy (WFM/IGP).

The letter from the three non-governmental organizations (NGOs) states “the purpose of the visa restrictions is to block and deter legitimate criminal investigation into serious crimes under international law”.

“Not only might they have a chilling effect on ICC personnel and others advocating for accountability, but they will set a dangerous precedent with serious implications on the overall fight for impunity, especially the right of victims and their legal representatives to seek justice and reparations without fear of retaliation.”

Dr. Tawanda Hondora, Executive Director of WFM-IGP, told IPS the Trump administration has been consistent in its reckless application of retrogressive policies that undermine a rules-based international order.

He said its policies are seriously damaging the post-WWII system of international law and practice, and have exponentially increased the risk of armed conflict in a world in which many more states now possess weapons of mass destruction.

“The revocation by the US of Fatou Bensouda’s visa violates Article IV of the UN-US headquarters agreement”.

There is no question that the US is applying its immigration laws with the objective of improperly influencing the ICC Prosecutor’s investigations into crimes committed by all parties to the conflict in Afghanistan, he argued.

“It is wholly unacceptable that this administration is using Bensouda’s personal situation to coerce her to breach her mandate under the Rome Statute and to the UN Security Council,” he declared.

Dr Martin S. Edwards, Associate Professor of Diplomacy and International Relations at Seton Hall University in the US, told IPS both civil society and other countries are right to be critical here.

“I would hope that this is solely intended to make life difficult for Bensouda and not part of a more general trend of denying visas for General Assembly visits”.

However, said Dr Edwards, there is little about this administration and its

mix of insecurity and unwarranted bluster that should surprise anyone.

“I would think that this could lead to similar attempts to deny visas for General Assembly visits” He pointed out that the Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro could be a natural target here as an extension of diplomatic efforts to isolate him.

It would be ironic that a President that frames his accomplishment as a reassertion of American power would be afraid of what he would say from the podium, said Dr Edwards.

But the hallmark of this US Presidency has been a singular focus on controlling perceptions and information, rather than confidently relying on our diplomatic prowess to produce results.

Historically, the US has grumbled about leaders coming to New York (denying Arafat was legally easier than a Head of State), but one can imagine this White House pushing the envelope here, since it's perfect “red meat” for the President's base, he added.

The legal basis for doing this is incredibly thin, based on a false reading of Section 6 of the Headquarters Agreement, which grants leaders a right to access to the UN, and the US would surely lose in arbitration, Dr Edwards noted.

Briefing reporters on March 15, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said since 1998, the United States has declined to join the ICC because of its broad, unaccountable prosecutorial powers and the threat it poses to American national sovereignty.

“We are determined to protect the American and allied military and civilian personnel from living in fear of unjust prosecution for actions taken to defend our great nation. We feared that the court could eventually pursue politically motivated prosecutions of Americans, and our fears were warranted,” he declared.

Dr Palitha Kohona, a former Chief of the UN Treaty Section, told IPS the US is not only, not a party to the Statute of the ICC, but it also inserted Article 98 of the Statute during its negotiations excluding US nationals from its jurisdiction.

Subsequently, the US formally advised the UN Secretary-General that it will not ratify the Statute thereby exempting it from any obligations arising from signature.

Thus, the US has emphatically signalled its position with regard to the Statute of the ICC. Therefore, denying a visa to the prosecutor only underlines its consistent opposition to the Statute, said Dr Kohona a former Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations.

While one could raise one's eye brows about the US action, said Dr Kohona, one is reminded again that we still live in a world where the powerful dictate the terms and modify the rules to suit their convenience, despite the dreams of those idealists who had hoped to create a world

governed by a transparent and predictable framework of rules equally applicable to all.

“Unfortunately, the rules, especially those relating to human rights and humanitarian affairs, tend to be applied with vigour only to the weak and the meek and not to the powerful. This is the reality of the world that we inhabit,” he noted.

Dr Edwards of Seton Hall University said: “As for the ICC, Bensouda is caught between a need to investigate non-African cases to signal her independence, but picking the biggest fight imaginable in the process”.

This does fit a general US pattern of using ICC as a tool against other countries while exempting itself from investigation in the process, so in one sense it is not surprising.

“The bigger danger for the ICC is that this might set a precedent for other countries to try to tamper with its work in similar ways moving forward,” he declared.

Dr Hondora of WFM-IGP called on the United Kingdom and France – members states to UN Security Council (UNSC) and the Rome Statute – to initiate a debate in the UNSC regarding the lawfulness and propriety of the US decision to revoke Bensouda’s visa in the peculiar circumstances of this case.

He said WFM-IGP calls on the UN General Assembly to object to the revocation of Bensouda’s US visa as it sets a precedence that will see representatives of governments and international bodies that different US administrations object to being personally targeted with punitive personal US sanctions with the intention of prejudicing how they discharge their roles and responsibilities under key treaties.

WFM-IGP also calls on the General Assembly to seek an Advisory Opinion from the International Court of Justice regarding the lawfulness – under the US-UN Hosting Agreement – of the US decision revoking Bensouda’s visa to the US in retaliation to a decision taken by the Office of the Prosecutor to investigate allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Afghanistan.

Last Updated on Monday, 08 April 2019 14:06

660 readings

[Canadian Military Spying Activities Require More Scrutiny: Watchdog](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 11 April 2019 06:51

A committee flagged the possibility that Canadians' rights may be infringed.

By Jim Bronskill

https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2019/04/09/canadian-military-spying-activities-require-more-scrutiny-watchdog_a_23709085/



ADRIAN WYLD/CP

The facade of the headquarters of the Department of National Defence is pictured in Ottawa, on April 3, 2013.

ADRIAN WYLD/CP

OTTAWA — A national-security watchdog has called for stricter controls on the Canadian military's spying, including the possibility of legislation spelling out when and how defence intelligence operations can take place.

In a report issued Tuesday, the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians said National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces have one of the largest intelligence programs in Canada, yet these operations get

little outside scrutiny.

The committee, which examined thousands of pages and received several closed-door briefings, found that defence agencies carry out a full range of intelligence activities, collecting information through sensitive methods including technical means, human sources and investigations.

It says these activities entail considerable risks, including possible infringements on Canadians' rights.

Crown prerogative is main source of authority

The main source of authority for deploying the Canadian Forces and conducting defence intelligence activities is known as the Crown prerogative. It allows the government to make decisions as it sees fit unless its hands are otherwise tied by statutes or the courts.

As a result, while certain administrative directives and rules govern defence intelligence, there is no legislation that explicitly guides these activities. The committee notes this amounts to "an anomaly" in the intelligence world, given that the domestic spies at the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and the cyberspies of the Communications Security Establishment have laws spelling out what they can and cannot do.

It means the scope and authority of defence intelligence are "unknown to Canadians" and have not been subject to parliamentary scrutiny, the report says.

Also unlike CSIS and the CSE, military intelligence activities are not subject to regular review by an independent and external body, the committee adds. "Review can, among other things, strengthen accountability for an organization's compliance with the law."

Officials say legislation would undermine information sharing

The MPs and senators on the committee said the government should consider legislation to govern defence intelligence work. They also recommended the military be required to report annually on its intelligence operations.

However, National Defence and Forces officials "raised a number of concerns" with the idea of a statutory framework for intelligence, the report says.

Among them: the comparisons to Canada's major spy agencies are inappropriate because intelligence is just one of many things the military does, not its sole mission. In addition, legislation could undermine information sharing with Canada's closest allies and make the military less flexible when it comes to operations.

The committee said legislation could bring significant benefits, including greater accountability, although it would have to be "carefully crafted" to account for the military's unique mandate.

Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan said his department would look at the idea.

"There are internal processes that we have in place. Can we improve those? Of course we are looking at those," he said after a cabinet meeting Tuesday.

But he added that Canada needs to ensure "we have the flexibility to keep our soldiers safe."

At a news conference, Liberal MP David McGuinty, chairman of the committee, said the MPs and senators found "no evidence of wrongdoing" by defence personnel.

Still, the committee plans a follow-up report that will look at the military's authority and directives to collect, use, keep and distribute information and intelligence on Canadians.

COMMENT BY JOAN RUSSOW dr.joanrussow@gmail.com

My rights were infringed on when I was put on an RCMP Threat Assessment list in 1997.

i could never find out the reason even through access to information because of "security reasons"

i have had to live with this stigma for years. i believe i was discriminated against for political opinion in violation of a listed ground for which there must not be discrimination: "political and other opinion" in the International Covenant on civil and Political Rights

Last Updated on Thursday, 11 April 2019 07:51

600 readings

[Civil Society Under Attack in Name of Counterterrorism](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 15 April 2019 15:27

This article is part of a series on the current state of civil society organisations (CSOs), which was the focus of International Civil Society Week (ICSW), sponsored by CIVICUS, and which took place in Belgrade, April 8-12.



More than 200 civil society leaders and human rights activists from some 100 countries took to the streets of Belgrade, Serbia in solidarity with those whose basic freedoms are at risk. They participated in the International Civil Society Week (ICSW), sponsored by CIVICUS, which took place in Belgrade, April 8-12. Courtesy: CIVICUS

UNITED NATIONS, Apr 15 2019 (IPS) - Counterterrorism measures are not only affecting extremist groups, but are also impacting a crucial sector for peace and security in the world: civil society.

Civil society has long played a crucial role in society, providing life-saving assistance and upholding human rights for all.

Related IPS Articles

- [When Youth Take on The Fight to Defend Rights](#)
- [Shining a Spotlight on the Strengths & Challenges of Civil Society in the Balkans](#)
- [Civil Society, Press Freedom & Human Rights Under Attack in Africa](#)

However, counterterrorism measures, which are meant to protect civilians, are directly, and often intentionally, undermining such critical work.

“Civil society is under increased assault in the name of countering terrorism,” [Human Rights Watch’s](#) senior counterterrorism researcher Letta Tayler

told IPS, pointing to a number of United Nations Security Council resolutions as among the culprits.

“Nearly two decades after the September 11 attacks, we are seeing a very clear pattern of overly broad counterterrorism resolutions. We are seeing a clear pattern of violations on the ground that are being carried out in the name of complying with binding Security Council counterterrorism resolutions,” she added.

Just two weeks after September 11, 2001, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1373 which called states to adopt and implement measures to prevent and combat terrorism.

Since then, more than 140 countries have adopted counterterrorism laws.

The newly approved Resolution 2462, passed at the end of March, requires member states to criminalise financial assistance to terrorist individuals or groups “for any purpose” even if the aid is indirect and provided “in the absence of a link to a specific terrorist act.”

While the resolution does include some language on human rights protections, Tayler noted that it is not sufficient.

“It is not sufficiently spelled out to make very clear to member states what they can and cannot do that might violate human rights on the ground,” she said.

Blurred Lines

Among the major issues concerning these resolutions is that there is no universal, legal definition of terrorism, allowing states to craft their own, usually broad, definitions. This has put civil society organisations and human rights defenders (HRDs) alike at risk of detention and left vulnerable populations without essential life-saving assistance.

“I think it is irresponsible of the Security Council to pass binding resolutions that leave up to States to craft their own definitions of terrorism...that’s how you end up with counterterrorism laws that criminalise peaceful protest or criticising the state,” Tayler said.

[Oxfam’s](#) Humanitarian Policy Lead Paul Scott echoed similar sentiments to IPS, stating: “The Security Council, by being overly broad, is just giving [governments] the tools to restrict civil society.”

According to [Front Line Defenders](#), an Irish-based human rights organisation, 58 percent of its cases in 2018 saw HRDs charged under national security legislation.

Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights while countering terrorism Fionnuala Ní Aoláin found that 67 percent of her mandate’s communications regarding civil society were related to the use of counterterrorism, and noted that country’s counterterrorism laws are being used as a

“shortcut to targeting democratic protest and dissent.”

In April 2018, thousands of people took to the streets in Nicaragua to protest controversial reforms to the country’s social security system.

According to the [Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights](#), over 300 people have been killed, more than 2,000 injured, and 2,000 arrested—some of whom were reportedly subject to torture and sexual violence when detained.

Many of those arrested will also be tried as terrorists due to a new law that expanded the definition of terrorism to include a range of crimes such as damage to public and private property.

At least 300 people, including human rights defenders, face charges of terrorism.

The Central American country said that the law was passed to comply with the [Financial Action Task Force \(FATF\)](#), an intergovernmental body that works alongside the Security Council to combat terrorist financing.

A Civil Society Facing Uncivility

Taylor also pointed to the lack of consequences for States that pass counterterrorism laws that do not abide by their obligations under international law.

In Resolution 2462, member states are told to comply with international humanitarian law when cracking down on terrorist financing but does not require countries to consider the effect of such measures on humanitarian activities such as providing food and medical care.

“In the zeal to be as tough looking as they can possibly can, governments have overlooked very very easy ways to protect those of us who are providing life-saving aid,” Paul told IPS.

The lack of protections for civil society and its impacts was most visible during the 2011 famine in Somalia.

In an effort to restrict “material support” to terrorist groups, countries such as the United States enacted counterterrorism legislation which blocked aid into areas controlled by Al-Shabab.

This not only impeded local and international organisations from doing their job, but one [report](#) noted that the constraints contributed to the deaths of over 250,000 people in the East African nation.

The problem has only gotten worse since then, Paul noted.

“The measures imposed by governments are unnecessarily broad and they prevent us from working in areas that are controlled by designated terrorist entities. What

they have essentially done is criminalise humanitarian assistance,” he said.

Tunisia has used its terrorism financing laws to shut down a number of civil society organisations.

According to the Euro-Mediterranean [Human Rights Monitor](#), approximately 200 organisations were dissolved and almost 950 others were delivered notices, referring them to courts on charges of “financial irregularities” or “receiving foreign funds to support terrorism” despite the lack of substantive evidence.

Many of the dissolved organisations provided aid and relief for orphans and the disabled.

All Eyes on Deck

Taylor highlighted the importance of the UN and civil society to monitor how counterterrorism resolutions such as Resolution 2462 are used on the ground.

“While we would love to see amendments to this resolution, pragmatically the next best step is for all eyes—the eyes of civil society, the UN, regional organisations—to focus on just how states implement this resolution to make sure that overly broad language is not used by states to become a tool of repression,” she said.

“The UN and leaders of countries around the world should use [International Civil Society Week](#) as an opportunity to take stock of the risk that this trend has posed on both to life-saving aid organisations and human rights defenders and to reverse this dangerous trend,” Taylor added.

Paul pointed to the need to educate both the public and policymakers on counterterrorism and its spillover effects as well as the importance of civil society in the global system.

“Civil society is a key part of effective governance. We don’t get effective public services, we don’t get peace, we don’t get to move forward with the anti-poverty agenda if civil society actors aren’t strong and empowered,” he said.

“If governments aren’t careful about protecting our right to stand up for marginalised and vulnerable populations, everyone will hurt. Not just those populations. It will have an effect broadly on our societies,” Paul added.

Last Updated on Tuesday, 21 May 2019 11:25

557 readings

[Thawing Permafrost Emitting Higher Levels of Potent Greenhouse Gas Than Previously Thought: Study](#)



[PEJ Events](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 17 April 2019 07:38

by

[Jessica Corbett, staff writer](#) Common Dreams



Point Barrow, the northern-most location in the United States sits between the Chukchi Sea (west) and the Beaufort Sea on the east. (Photo: NASA/GSFC/Jeff Schmaltz/MODIS Land Rapid Response Team/Flickr)

new study shows that emissions of a potent greenhouse gas from thawing permafrost in the planet's northernmost region may be 12 times higher than previously thought.

[https://www.commondreams.org/news/2019/04/16/thawing-permafrost-emitting-higher-levels-potent-greenhouse-gas-Nitrous oxide is nearly 300 times more potent than carbon dioxide](https://www.commondreams.org/news/2019/04/16/thawing-permafrost-emitting-higher-levels-potent-greenhouse-gas-Nitrous-oxide-is-nearly-300-times-more-potent-than-carbon-dioxide)

**"This needs to be taken more seriously than it is right now."
—Jordan Wilkerson, lead author**

That's according to a [study](#) published this month in the journal *Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics*. The paper's findings add even more weight to scientists' urgent [warnings](#) about the mounting threats of [permafrost thaw](#).

Permafrost is a frozen mix of soil, rocks, and sand that covers about a fourth of the Northern Hemisphere—and is [primarily found](#) in the uppermost areas, where temperatures [are rising more rapidly](#) than the rest of the world.

When permafrost melts because of human-caused global warming, it pours greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide (CO₂) and methane (CH₄) into the atmosphere, further heating the planet.

Nitrous oxide (N₂O), a greenhouse gas nearly 300 times more potent than CO₂, stays in the atmosphere for an average of 114 years, [per](#) the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

N₂O "has conventionally been assumed to have minimal emissions in permafrost regions," the report said, citing research published in the 1990s.

But the new study's findings challenge that assumption.

A team of researchers, led by Harvard University scientists, used a small plane to measure greenhouse gas levels over 120 square miles of thawing permafrost in the North Slope of Alaska. They found that in just one month of 2013, emissions of nitrous oxide in the region reached what was previously believed to be the yearly total.

"This revelation could mean that the Arctic—and our global climate—are in more danger than we thought," [explained](#) a statement from Harvard.

"This is widespread, pretty high emissions," lead author and Harvard graduate student Jordan Wilkerson said of his team's findings.

"We don't know how much more [N₂O is] going to increase," he added, "and we didn't know it was significant at all until this study came out."

What is clear, though, is that "much smaller increases in nitrous oxide would entail the same kind of climate change that a large plume of CO₂ would cause," Wilkerson said.

The team's findings align with other recent studies that have relied on chambers—or "covered, pie plate-sized containers planted into tundra"—or the extraction of cylindrical "cores" from the permafrost to measure greenhouse gases, according to Harvard's statement.

The new study, said Wilkerson, "makes those findings quite a bit more serious."

The findings also bolster experts' previous [warnings](#) that policymakers around the world aren't adequately considering the impacts of permafrost thaw in their plans—based on the goals of the Paris climate agreement—to cut down planet-heating emissions and prevent [climate catastrophe](#).

And, as the Harvard statement pointed out, more planetary warming isn't the only threat posed by rising N₂O emissions.

"Nitrous oxide poses a second, special threat," the statement said. "Up in the stratosphere, sunlight and oxygen team up to convert the gas into nitrogen oxides,

which eat at the ozone."

Wilkerson called for further research on the greenhouses gases—particularly N₂O—released by melting permafrost and delivered a warning.

"This needs to be taken more seriously than it is right now," he said.

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Last Updated on Wednesday, 17 April 2019 07:53

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[Port Renfrew chamber decries logging plan](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 04 May 2019 09:44

Lindsay Kines / Times Colonist

<https://www.timescolonist.com/news/local/port-renfrew-chamber-decries-logging-plan-1.23811698>MAY 4, 2019 06:00 AM

An aerial photo of the old-growth forests where B.C. Timber Sales has seven pending cutblocks totalling 109 hectares. Juan de Fuca Provincial Park is along the coast and the town of Port Renfrew in the background. Photograph By TJ WATT



Port Renfrew Chamber of Commerce has joined a growing outcry against B.C. government plans to log old-growth forests near Juan de Fuca Provincial Park.

President Dan Hager said Friday that clearcutting the ancient trees will hurt tourism and damage a regional economy already hard hit by chinook fishing restrictions.

“I’m in the accommodation business in Renfrew. People ask about it. I’m the one that responds to all the inquiries that come in off the chamber email and people are asking about the trees.”

Hager said that will be put in jeopardy if B.C. Timber Sales proceeds with plans to sell off 109 hectares of the region’s old-growth forest in seven cutblocks — including two that come within 50 metres of Juan de Fuca Provincial Park.

“If I was an editor of a newspaper, I would say: ‘Canada’s tall tree capital is now Canada’s clearcut capital,’ ” Hager said.

“What kind of damage is that going to do our reputation in the long term?”

Forests Minister Doug Donaldson said this week that B.C. Timber Sales, which is a government agency, was not aware of any direct impacts from logging on ecotourism in the area.

But he said the timber auction has been delayed two weeks so officials can investigate concerns raised by conservationists and others.

Environmental groups have launched a campaign to protect the trees, arguing that they’re more valuable as a tourist attraction and a buffer against climate change and the loss of endangered species.

The Port Renfrew chamber, meanwhile, has appealed directly to the office of Premier John Horgan, who represents the Langford-Juan de Fuca constituency.

“He’s familiar with Renfrew,” Hager said. “He knows that it’s a community recovering and that our economy revolves around trees and revolves around the fish.

“So we’re optimistic that we’re going to get good results here.”

Horgan was unavailable for comment Friday, but Hager said the chamber was encouraged that the government has delayed the timber sale and hopes it eventually will decide to protect the ancient trees.

Hager said the main message the chamber hopes to get across is that the trees are worth more standing — as demonstrated by the global appeal of Avatar Grove about 20 minutes from Port Renfrew.

“We know from the Avatar experience that old-growth forests attract tourists — not just locally but from all over the world,” he said. “And those tourists have money. They bring money and the more of it that we have in the immediate driving area of Renfrew, the better it is for our local economy.

“It’s a lot better than cutting them down, because you cut them down once, you run them through the sawmill, they build somebody’s deck and that’s it. But, if you leave them standing, people come over and over again to look.”

Al Jones, one of the driving forces behind the creation of the Juan de Fuca Marine Trail in the 1990s, said he, too, contacted Horgan’s office to complain about the logging plans.

“Yesterday, I was on the phone all day, phoning people that I don’t even know to help us out and speak out against it,” he said Friday. “It’s just a beautiful spot. Renfrew’s a beautiful area and I just think the logging should be over with.”

Jones said he’d like to see the old growth preserved for future generations, as opposed to clearcutting the trees to turn a quick profit.

“Mostly, that cedar is going to be sent to China,” he said. “There’s not going to be the jobs that they say that there is.

“I have been a logging superintendent and they could go in there for three or four months and log the whole thing and be in and out of there. So it’s a short-term [gain] for a big expense on such a beautiful spot.”

lkines@timescolonist.com

Last Updated on Wednesday, 08 May 2019 15:14

328 readings

[Fossil Fuel Subsidies Exceed Pentagon Spending](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 08 May 2019 15:15

Study: U.S. Fossil Fuel Subsidies Exceed Pentagon Spending
The world would be richer and healthier if the full costs of fossil fuels were paid, according to a new report from the International Monetary Fund

Tim Dickinson May 8, 2019

<https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-news/fossil-fuel-subsidies-pentagon-spending-imf-report-833035/>

The dome of the U.S. Capitol is seen behind the smoke stacks of the Capitol Power Plant, the only coal-burning power plant in Washington, D.C.

Jim Lo Scalzo/EPA/REX/Shutterstocko

The dome of the U.S. Capitol is seen behind the smoke stacks of the Capitol Power Plant, the only coal-burning power plant in Washington, D.C.

Jim Lo Scalzo/EPA/REX/Shutterstocko

The United States has spent more subsidizing fossil fuels in recent years than it has on defense spending, according to a new report from the International Monetary Fund.

The IMF found that direct and indirect subsidies for coal, oil and gas in the U.S. reached \$649 billion in 2015. Pentagon spending that same year was \$599 billion.

The study defines “subsidy” very broadly, as many economists do. It accounts for the “differences between actual consumer fuel prices and how much consumers would pay if prices fully reflected supply costs plus the taxes needed to reflect environmental costs” and other damage, including premature deaths from air pollution.

These subsidies are largely invisible to the public, and don't appear in national budgets. But according to the IMF, the world spent \$4.7 trillion — or 6.3 percent of global GDP — in 2015 to subsidize fossil fuel use, a figure it estimated rose to \$5.2 trillion in 2017. China, which is heavily reliant on coal and has major air-pollution problems, was the largest subsidizer by far, at \$1.4 trillion in 2015. But the U.S. ranked second in the

world.

The human, environmental and economic toll of these subsidies is shocking to the conscience. The authors found that if fossil fuels had been fairly priced in 2015, global carbon emissions would have been slashed by 28 percent. Deaths from fossil fuel-linked air pollution would have dropped by nearly half.

Oil, gas and coal companies — and their stooges in public office — have long argued that making consumers pay for the full impacts of fossil fuel use would cripple the economy. The IMF experts call bullshit on this idea, revealing that the world would, in fact, be more prosperous. Eliminating subsidies for fossil fuels would have created global “net economic welfare gains” in 2015 of “more than \$1.3 trillion, or 1.7 percent of global GDP,” the study found. (These net gains are “calculated as the benefits from reduced environmental damage and higher revenue minus the losses from consumers facing higher energy prices.”)

For the United States, the \$649 billion in fossil fuel subsidies exceeded even the extravagant amount of money the country spent on defense. To offer a sense of scale, Pentagon spending accounted for 54 percent of the discretionary federal budget in 2015. In comparison to another important, but less well-funded part of the federal budget, fossil fuel subsidies were nearly 10 times what Congress spent on education. Broken down to an individual level, fossil fuel subsidies cost every man, woman and child in the United States \$2,028 that year.

At the opening of the IMF’s spring meetings in April, Managing Director Christine Lagarde laid out the benefits she sees in properly pricing fossil fuels. “The numbers are quite staggering” she said, referring to the savings that could be achieved “fiscally, but also in terms of human life, if there had been the right price on carbon emission as of 2015.”

Lagarde continued to rattle off the benefits to humanity of realizing these savings. “There would be more public spending available to build hospitals, to build roads, to build schools and to support education and health for the people,” she said.

For Lagarde and the IMF, the conclusion was obvious: “We believe that removing fossil fuel subsidies is the right way to go.”

465 readings

[The US Is Spending \\$1.25 Trillion Annually](#)



[Peace News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 13 May 2019 05:07

on War May 7, 2019

By William D. Hartung, Mandy Smithberger & Tom Dispatch

<https://truthout.org/articles/the-us-is-spending-1-25-trillion-annually-on-war/>



The military gravy train is running full speed ahead. – AIRMAN 1ST CLASS VALERIE SEELYE /

U. S. AIR FORCE May 7, 2019

In its latest budget request, the Trump administration is asking

U. S. AIR FORCE May 7, 2019

In its latest budget request, the Trump administration is asking for a near-record \$750

billion for the Pentagon and related defense activities, an astonishing figure by any

measure. If passed by Congress, it will, in fact, be one of the largest military budgets in

American history, topping peak levels reached during the Korean and Vietnam Wars. And keep one thing in mind: that \$750 billion represents only part of the actual annual cost of our national security state.

There are at least 10 separate pots of money dedicated to fighting wars, preparing for yet more wars, and dealing with the consequences of wars already fought. So the next time a president, a general, a secretary of defense, or a hawkish member of Congress insists that

the U.S. military is woefully underfunded, think twice. A careful look at U.S. defense expenditures offers a healthy corrective to such wildly inaccurate claims.

Now, let's take a brief dollar-by-dollar tour of the U.S. national security state of 2019, tallying the sums up as we go, and see just where we finally land (or perhaps the word should be "soar"), financially speaking.

The Pentagon's "Base" Budget: The Pentagon's regular, or "base," budget is slated to be \$544.5 billion in Fiscal Year 2020, a healthy sum but only a modest down payment on total military spending.

As you might imagine, that base budget provides basic operating funds for the Department of Defense, much of which will actually be squandered on preparations for ongoing wars never authorized by Congress, overpriced weapons systems that aren't actually needed, or outright waste, an expansive category that includes everything from cost overruns to unnecessary bureaucracy. That \$544.5 billion is the amount publicly reported by the Pentagon for its essential expenses and includes as well \$9.6 billion in mandatory spending that goes toward items like military retirement.

Among those basic expenses, let's start with waste, a category even the biggest boosters of Pentagon spending can't defend. The Pentagon's own Defense Business Board found that cutting unnecessary overhead, including a bloated bureaucracy and a startlingly large shadow workforce of private contractors, would save \$125 billion over five years. Perhaps you won't be surprised to learn that the board's proposal has done little to quiet calls for more money. Instead, from the highest reaches of the Pentagon (and the president himself) came a proposal to create a Space Force, a sixth military service that's all but guaranteed to further bloat its bureaucracy and duplicate work already being done by the other services. Even Pentagon planners estimate that the future Space Force will cost \$13 billion over the next five years (and that's undoubtedly a low-ball figure).

In addition, the Defense Department employs an army of private contractors — more than 600,000 of them — many doing jobs that could be done far more cheaply by civilian government employees. Cutting the private contractor work force by 15% to a mere half-million people would promptly save more than \$20 billion per year. And don't forget the cost overruns on major weapons programs like the Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent — the Pentagon's unwieldy name for the Air Force's new intercontinental ballistic missile — and routine overpayments for even minor spare parts (like \$8,000 for a helicopter gear worth less than \$500, a markup of more than 1,500%).

Then there are the overpriced weapons systems the military can't even afford to operate like the \$13-billion aircraft carrier, 200 nuclear bombers at \$564 million a pop, and the F-35 combat aircraft, the most expensive weapons system in history,

at a price tag of at least \$1.4 trillion over the lifetime of the program. The Project On Government Oversight (POGO) has found — and the Government Accountability Office recently substantiated — that, despite years of work and staggering costs, the F-35 may never perform as advertised.

And don't forget the Pentagon's recent push for long-range strike weapons and new reconnaissance systems designed for future wars with a nuclear-armed Russia or China, the kind of conflicts that could easily escalate into World War III, where such weaponry

would be beside the point. Imagine if any of that money were devoted to figuring out how to prevent such conflicts, rather than hatching yet more schemes for how to fight them.

Base Budget total: \$554.1 billion

The War Budget: As if its regular budget weren't enough, the Pentagon also maintains its very own slush fund, formally known as the Overseas Contingency Operations account, or OCO. In theory, the fund is meant to pay for the war on terror — that is, the U.S. wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Syria, and elsewhere across the Middle East and Africa. In practice, it does that and so much more.

After a fight over shutting down the government led to the formation of a bipartisan commission on deficit reduction — known as Simpson-Bowles after its co-chairs, former Clinton Chief of Staff Erskine Bowles and former Republican Senator Alan Simpson — Congress passed the Budget Control Act of 2011. It officially put caps on both military and domestic spending that were supposed to save a total of \$2 trillion over 10 years. Half of that figure was to come from the Pentagon, as well as from nuclear

weapons spending at the Department of Energy. As it happened, though, there was a huge loophole: that war budget was exempt from the caps. The Pentagon promptly began to put tens of billions of dollars into it for pet projects that had nothing whatsoever to do with current wars (and the process has never stopped). The level of abuse of this fund remained largely secret for years, with the Pentagon admitting only in 2016 that just half of the money in the OCO went to actual wars, prompting critics and numerous members of Congress — including then-Congressman Mick Mulvaney, now President Trump's latest chief of staff — to dub it a “slush fund.”

This year's budget proposal supersedes the slush in that fund to a figure that would likely be considered absurd if it weren't part of the Pentagon budget. Of the nearly \$174 billion proposed for the war budget and “emergency” funding, only a little more than \$25 billion is meant to directly pay for the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. The rest will be set aside for what's termed “enduring” activities that would continue even if those wars ended, or to pay for routine Pentagon activities that couldn't be funded within the constraints of the budget caps. The Democratic-controlled House of Representatives is expected to work to alter this arrangement. Even if the House leadership were to have its way, however, most of its reductions in the war budget would be offset by lifting caps on the regular Pentagon budget by corresponding amounts. (It's worth noting that President Trump's budget calls for someday eliminating the slush fund.)

The 2020 OCO also includes \$9.2 billion in “emergency” spending for building Trump's beloved wall on the U.S.-Mexico border, among other things. Talk about a slush fund!

There is no emergency, of course. The executive branch is just seizing taxpayer dollars that Congress refused to provide. Even supporters of the president's wall should be troubled by this money grab. As 36 former Republican members of Congress recently argued, "What powers are ceded to a president whose policies you support may also be used by presidents whose policies you abhor." Of all of Trump's "security"-related proposals, this is undoubtedly the most likely to be eliminated, or at least scaled back, given the congressional Democrats against it.

War Budget total: \$173.8 billion

Running tally: \$727.9 billion

The Department of Energy/Nuclear Budget: It may surprise you to know that work on the deadliest weapons in the U.S. arsenal, nuclear warheads, is housed in the Department of Energy (DOE), not the Pentagon. The DOE's National Nuclear Security Administration runs a nationwide research, development, and production network for nuclear warheads and naval nuclear reactors that stretches from Livermore, California, to Albuquerque and Los Alamos, New Mexico, to Kansas City, Missouri, to Oak Ridge, Tennessee, to Savannah River, South Carolina. Its laboratories also have a long history of program mismanagement, with some projects coming in at nearly eight times the initial estimates.

Nuclear Budget total: \$24.8 billion

Running tally: \$752.7 billion

"Defense Related Activities" : This category covers the \$9 billion that annually goes to agencies other than the Pentagon, the bulk of it to the FBI for

homeland security-related activities.

Defense Related Activities total: \$9 billion

Running tally: \$761.7 billion

The five categories outlined above make up the budget of what's officially known as "national defense." Under the Budget Control Act, this spending should have been capped at \$630 billion. The \$761.7 billion proposed for the 2020 budget is, however, only the beginning of the story.

The Veterans Affairs Budget: The wars of this century have created a new generation of veterans. In all, over 2.7 million U.S. military personnel have cycled through the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001. Many of them remain in need of substantial support to deal with the physical and mental wounds of war. As a result, the budget for the Department of Veterans Affairs has gone through the roof, more than tripling in this century to a proposed \$216 billion. And this massive figure may not even prove enough to provide the necessary services.

More than 6,900 U.S. military personnel have died in Washington's post-9/11 wars, with more than 30,000 wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan alone. These casualties are, however, just the tip of the iceberg. Hundreds of thousands of returning troops suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), illnesses created by exposure to toxic burn pits, or traumatic brain injuries. The U.S. government is committed to providing care for these veterans for the rest of their lives. An analysis by the Costs of War Project at Brown University has determined that obligations to veterans of the Iraq and Afghan wars alone

will total more than \$1 trillion in the years to come. This cost of war is rarely considered when leaders in Washington decide to send U.S. troops into combat.

Veterans Affairs total: \$216 billion

Running tally: \$977.7 billion

The Homeland Security Budget: The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is a mega-agency created after the 9/11 attacks. At the time, it swallowed 22 then-existing government organizations, creating a massive department that currently has nearly a quarter of a million employees. Agencies that are now part of DHS include the Coast

Guard, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Customs and Border Protection, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Citizenship and Immigration Services, the Secret Service, the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office, and the Office of Intelligence and Analysis.

While some of DHS' s activities — such as airport security and defense against the smuggling of a nuclear weapon or “dirty bomb” into our midst — have a clear security rationale, many others do not. ICE — America' s deportation force — has done far more to cause suffering among innocent people than to thwart criminals or terrorists. Other questionable DHS activities include grants to local law enforcement agencies to help them buy military-grade equipment.

Homeland Security total: \$69.2 billion

Running tally: \$1.0469 trillion

The International Affairs Budget: This includes the budgets of the

State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Diplomacy is one of the most effective ways to make the United States and the world more secure, but it has been under assault in the Trump years. The Fiscal Year 2020 budget calls for a one-third cut in international affairs spending, leaving it at about one-fifteenth of the amount allocated for the Pentagon and related agencies grouped under the category of “national defense.” And that doesn’t even account for the fact that more than 10% of the international affairs budget supports military aid efforts, most notably the \$5.4 billion Foreign Military Financing (FMF) program. The bulk of FMF goes to Israel and Egypt, but in all over a

dozen countries receive funding under it, including Jordan, Lebanon, Djibouti, Tunisia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Georgia, the Philippines, and Vietnam.

International Affairs total: \$51 billion

Running tally: \$1.0979 trillion

The Intelligence Budget: The United States has 17 separate intelligence agencies. In addition to the DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis and the FBI, mentioned above, they are the CIA; the National Security Agency; the Defense Intelligence Agency; the State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research; the Drug Enforcement Agency’s Office of National Security Intelligence; the Treasury Department’s Office of Intelligence and Analysis; the Department of Energy’s Office of Intelligence and Counterintelligence; the National Reconnaissance Office; the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency; Air Force Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance; the Army’s Intelligence and Security

Command; the Office of Naval Intelligence; Marine Corps Intelligence; and Coast Guard Intelligence. And then there's that 17th one, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, set up to coordinate the activities of the other 16.

We know remarkably little about the nature of the nation's intelligence spending, other than its supposed total, released in a report every year. By now, it's more than \$80 billion. The bulk of this funding, including for the CIA and NSA, is believed to be hidden under obscure line items in the Pentagon budget. Since intelligence spending is not a separate funding stream, it's not counted in our tally below (though, for all we know, some of it should be).

Intelligence Budget total: \$80 billion

Running tally (still): \$1.0979 trillion

Defense Share of Interest on the National Debt: The interest on the national debt is well on its way to becoming one of the most expensive items in the federal budget. Within a decade, it is projected to exceed the Pentagon's regular budget in size. For now, of the more than \$500 billion in interest taxpayers fork over to service the government's debt each year, about \$156 billion can be attributed to Pentagon spending.

Defense Share of National Debt total: \$156.3 billion

Final tally: \$1.2542 trillion

So, our final annual tally for war, preparations for war, and the impact of war comes to more than \$1.25 trillion — more than double the Pentagon's base budget. If the average taxpayer were aware that this amount was being spent in the name of national defense —

with much of it wasted, misguided, or simply counterproductive — it might be far harder for the national security state to consume ever-growing sums with minimal public pushback. For now, however, the gravy train is running full speed ahead and its main beneficiaries — Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Northrop Grumman, and their cohorts — are laughing all the way to the bank.

William D. Hartung is the director of the Arms and Security Project at the Center for International Policy, a TomDispatch regular and the author of Prophets of War: Lockheed Martin and the Making of the Military-Industrial Complex.

Mandy Smithberger is the director of the Straus Military Reform Project at the Project On Government Oversight.

Last Updated on Monday, 13 May 2019 05:20

458 readings

[Open Letter to Jason Kenny](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Dragon Slayer

Monday, 13 May 2019 10:45

Dear Jason Kenny,

Thank you so much for accepting responsibility for turning off the taps to BC.

Your friendly "overworked and underrepresented" environmentalist.

What the %^&*\$#@ are you thinking shutting down Alberta's oil exports to BC?

Your not so friendly oil industry.

Your not so happy oil patch worker.

Last Updated on Monday, 13 May 2019 11:11

446 readings

[Internal Displacement “Deserves
Visibility”](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 13 May 2019 12:45

Gul Jan, 90, and her family fled their village in Ab Kamari district and went to Qala-e-Naw in search of drinking water and food during the 2018 drought in Afghanistan. When this photo was taken in 2018, she, her son Ahmad and her four grandchildren had been living in a makeshift home in the Farestan settlement for internally displaced people for at least four months. Courtesy: NRC/Enayatullah Azad

UNITED NATIONS, May 11 2019 (IPS) - More people are displaced inside their own countries than ever before, and only higher figures can be expected without urgent long-term action, a new report found.

Launched by the [Internal Displacement Monitoring Center \(IDMC\)](#) of the [Norwegian Refugee Council \(NRC\)](#), the new [Global Report on Internal Displacement](#) examines trends in internal displacement worldwide and has found a dismal picture.

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“This year’s report is a sad reminder of the recurrence of displacement, and of the severity and urgency of IDPs’ needs. Many of the same factors that drove people from their homes now prevent them from returning or finding solutions in the places they have settled,” said IDMC’s Director Alexandra Bilak.

“The findings of this report are a wake-up call to world leaders. Millions of people forced to flee their homes last year are being failed by ineffective national governance and insufficient international diplomacy. Because they haven’t crossed a border, they receive pitiful global attention,” echoed NRC’s Secretary-General Jan Egeland.

According to the report, over 41 million people were estimated to be living in

internal displacement as of the end of 2018, 28 million of which were new displacements.

A majority were due to natural disasters and just three countries accounted for 60 percent of all new disaster-related displacements.

While many were saved, many are also still without homes.

“Of course, evacuating people saves their lives but doesn’t mean that they don’t remain displaced after the crisis ends particularly if their houses have been destroyed,” IDMC’s Head of Policy and Advocacy Bina Desai told IPS.

For instance, the Philippines alone recorded almost four million displacements, more than any other country worldwide. A significant portion were displaced as a result of pre-emptive evacuations to mitigate the impacts of typhoons between July and December 2018.

Desai expressed concern that despite investment in disaster risk reduction, communities continue to be highly exposed and remain vulnerable.

“Displacement is becoming not a one-off issue but more and more cyclical and repeated experience for people,” she said.



Displaced families receive household items in North Kivu province, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Photo: Norwegian Refugee Council/Martin Lukongo.

The report also found that internal displacement is an increasingly urban phenomenon, both as communities become displaced from conflict in cities such as Hodeidah in Yemen to IDPs seeking refuge in urban centres such as Mogadishu in Somalia.

Desai also noted that those in search of safety in cities are often at risk of displacement again.

In Somalia, authorities have forcibly evicted thousands of IDPs who often live in informal settlements and have even demolished houses, leaving them homeless again.

Among the worst mass eviction incidents occurred in December 2017 when 35,000 people living in 38 IDP settlements were evicted after a dispute about land ownership.

As cities continue to be a sanctuary and grow exponentially in size, local residents also face heightened risk of displacement as a result of natural disasters.

IDMC calculated that approximately 17.8 million people worldwide are at risk of being displaced by floods every year, 80 percent of whom live in urban or periurban areas.

Desai highlighted the need for long-term investment in long-term measures in order to help prevent displacement in the first place including disaster-resilient infrastructure and resilience-building. Understanding displacement risks must therefore be an essential component in development plans.

“Any investment decision you make in development planning, be it in education or health infrastructure or security measures, will have an impact on future risk which will go either up or down,” she told IPS.

“It is not like an external event that actually pushes people out of their homes, but it is the way that they are exposed or vulnerable to that hazard event that will determine whether they are at risk of displacement,” Desai added.

However, funding for disaster risk reduction (DDR) remains woefully insufficient.

According to the [Overseas Development Institute](#), just 0.4 percent of the total amount spent on international aid went to DDR in the last two decades.

But at the end of the day, the solution is largely political.

“Ultimately, if national governments do not have an interest and do not have an incentive in investing in and reducing internal displacement, it won’t happen,” Desai said, pointing to the need to provide strong data and evidence that relates to political priorities and provide incentive to act.

While most governments continue to be concerned with refugee flows, it is imperative to also focus on IDPs who often turn into refugees when there are no solutions or options left for them.

“We do think IDPs deserve much more visibility...the urgency is clear because we have seen those places where we do have strong data that not just people themselves are immensely affected but also development gains are being eroded,” Desai said.

“Host communities and countries that have high levels of internal displacement are

not going to be able to achieve their national development goals or the international sustainable development goals,” she added.

“All displaced people have a right to protection and the international community has a duty to ensure it,” Egeland echoed.

Last Updated on Tuesday, 21 May 2019 11:06

447 readings

[Warnings of 'Gulf of Tonkin 2.0' as Trump Officials Blame Iran for Oil Tanker Attacks](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 15 May 2019 07:18

Originally Published on Tuesday, May 14, 2019 by Common Dreams



The Al Marzoqah oil tanker on Monday, a day after it was attacked outside the Fujairah port in the United Arab Emirates. (Photo: EPA-EFE)

Is the Trump administration attempting to concoct a false pretext to justify launching a war against Iran?

Gareth Porter without citing any concrete evidence blamed Iran for reported attacks on Saudi and UAE oil tankers in the Strait of Hormuz over the weekend.

Commentators quickly likened the accusations to the Gulf of Tonkin incident, referring to the "[fabricated](#)" event that President Lyndon Johnson used to massively escalate America's war in Vietnam.

Last Updated on Tuesday, 21 May 2019 10:40

533 readings

[UN chief concerned nuclear 'coffin' leaking in Pacific](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 16 May 2019 09:05



A huge concrete dome built over a crater left by one of the 43 nuclear blasts on Runit Island photographed in 1980 (AFP Photo/)

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres raised concerns Thursday that a concrete dome built last century to contain waste from atomic bomb tests is leaking radioactive material into the Pacific.

Speaking to students in Fiji, Guterres described the structure on Enewetak atoll in the Marshall Islands as "a kind of coffin" and said it was a legacy of Cold War-era nuclear tests in the Pacific

"The Pacific was victimised in the past as we all know," he said, referring to nuclear explosions carried out by the United States and France in the region.

In the Marshalls, numerous islanders were forcibly evacuated from ancestral lands and resettled, while thousands more were exposed to radioactive fallout.

The island nation was ground zero for 67 American nuclear weapons tests from

1946-58 at Bikini and Enewetak atolls, when it was under US administration.

The tests included the 1954 "Bravo" hydrogen bomb, the most powerful ever detonated by the United States, about 1,000 times bigger than the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

Guterres, who is touring the South Pacific to raise awareness of climate change issues, said Pacific islanders still needed help to deal with the fallout of the nuclear testing.

"The consequences of these have been quite dramatic, in relation to health, in relation to the poisoning of waters in some areas," he said.

"I've just been with the President of the Marshall Islands (Hilda Heine), who is very worried because there is a risk of leaking of radioactive materials that are contained in a kind of coffin in the area."

The "coffin" is a concrete dome, built in the late 1970s on Runit island, part of Enewetak atoll, as a dumping ground for waste from the nuclear tests.

Radioactive soil and ash from the explosions was tipped into a crater and capped with a concrete dome 45 centimetres (18 inches) thick.

However, it was only envisaged as a temporary fix and the bottom of the crater was never lined leading to fears the waste is leaching into the Pacific.

Cracks have also developed in the concrete after decades of exposure and there are concerns it could break apart if hit by a tropical cyclone.

Guterres did not directly address what should be done with the dome but said the Pacific's nuclear history still needed to be addressed.




"A lot needs to be done in relation to the explosions that took place in French Polynesia and the Marshall Islands," he said.

"This is in relation to the health consequences, the impact on communities and other aspects.

"Of course there are questions of compensation and mechanisms to allow these impacts to be minimised."

Last Updated on Tuesday, 21 May 2019 10:26

461 readings

[Monsanto's "Rain of Death" on Canada's Forests](#)   

[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 16 May 2019 13:42

By Joyce Nelson

Global Research, May 16,

2019 <https://www.globalresearch.ca/monsantos-rain-death-forests/5677614>

region: Canada

Theme: Biotechnology and GMO, Law and Justice



First Nations in Ontario have run out of patience. For 43 years, the forest industry has been conducting aerial spraying of glyphosate herbicide on Indigenous lands - a “rain of death” used in forest management practice that has slowly been killing off a wide range of animals, plants, fish and insects. First Nations have tried to stop this practice since the 1990s through a variety of measures including meetings with logging companies and government officials, protests and reports, but all to no avail. The “rain of death” keeps coming.

Now, members of the Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) Elders

of the North Shore of Lake Huron say they will be going to court to force the Canadian federal government to live up to Robinson Huron Treaty of 1850. That treaty guarantees First Nations in the area the right to hunt, fish, gather berries and use plant medicines in traditional territories. The TEK Elders say that by allowing the aerial spraying to continue, the Trudeau government is violating this treaty and the Constitution Act of 1982, which reaffirms those rights.

“We’ re done waiting,” Raymond Owl, one of the founding members of TEK, told the press in April. [1] Formed in 2014, the TEK Elders group is comprised of Elders from 21 bands in the area.

Sue Chiblow, a Garden River First Nation Councillor assisting the TEK Elders, has stated:

“We went to the Ministry of Natural Resources and they said ‘well no we just issued the license so that’ s not our problem; it’ s Health Canada’ s problem’ ... So we went to Health Canada and they said ‘we don’ t actually do the spraying; we’ re just saying that’ s it’ s ok and it’ s up to the companies to use or not use it’ .” [2]

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry recently provided a statement to APTN News which said in part:

“Herbicide use is very limited in Ontario and they are only used when absolutely necessary - usually amounts to less than 0.2 per cent of Ontario’ s forested area in any given year ... Health Canada recently re-evaluated the use of glyphosate, finding no unacceptable risks to human health or the environment when used as directed.” [3]

Health Canada is taking this stance even as Bayer-Monsanto has been losing court case after court case in the U.S. to juries awarding billions in damages to individuals harmed by the pesticide. Some 13,000 more cancer victims’ cases against Bayer-Monsanto await trial.

The TEK Elders’ website (tekelders.weebly.com) states that “In Ontario, the forest management planning process begins with Crown approval for aerial spraying already in place.” There has never been any consultation with First Nations on this issue. As TEK Elder Raymond Owl has stated on the website,

“The announcements for spraying are printed in local newspapers to say when and where - and that’s it. We are told by Health Canada that the chemicals are safe, not harmful to humans, yet we are witness to absolute destruction of natural habitat and ecosystems.”

Creating a Monoculture

The forest industry across Canada (and in parts of Oregon and Washington) has relied on aerial herbicide spraying for more than 40 years, in line with its practice of clear-cutting, followed by replanting for monocultures.

The purpose of the glyphosate and other herbicides is to wipe out the so-called “weed” species that start re-growing after clearcutting. Those species include aspen, alder, birch, oak, maple, willow and other broad-leaf plants and shrubs - all considered of less commercial value than needle-leaf softwoods like Lodgepole Pine and Douglas Fir.

Catastrophic Fresh Wave of Logging Threatens US National Forests
Forester and Forest Ecologist Herb Hammond told me by email,

“the presence of dense ‘brush’ following logging is a sign of ecological degradation from logging, which is dominated by clearcutting. There is nothing natural about clearcutting,” he noted, but it is “the cheapest, fastest way to turn forests into money.”

So after the clearcutting, “natural processes activate restoration procedures for soil and microclimate, resulting in high densities of herbaceous and woody vegetation other than coniferous trees.” These so-called “weed” species “are vital for biological diversity, building soil nutrient capital, slowing the spread of wildfire, and [they are] superior to conifers in sequestering and storing carbon - an important forest assist in this climate change world,” Hammond told me.

The irony is that “conifers will emerge from under the other vegetation and will grow better over time than those trees where ‘competing vegetation’ was removed” by aerial spraying. But, noted Hammond, “people prescribing pesticides give little value to other life that depend upon the plants being sprayed, or the water,

soil and air affected by pesticide treatments.”

Also a BC Problem

According to The Prince George Daily News,

“timber companies are required by government legislation to eliminate the so-called weed trees in area they have logged or face penalties. A preferred way to accomplish this is to dump herbicide in massive doses on the land base. Manual, non-spray brushing could potentially create many more seasonal jobs in the forest. Yet that method is little utilized today.” [4]

According to the NGO Stop The Spray BC, between 10,000 and 20,000 hectares of BC forests are sprayed with glyphosate and other herbicides every year, mostly in the Central Interior.

“This vast conversion of our forests from bio-diverse stands with many broadleaf species to conifer monocultures is required by law, signed off on by Registered Professional Foresters, and is supported by the Association of British Columbia Professional Foresters.”

Stop the Spray BC spokesman James Steidle states that wildlife are “incredibly dependent” on the broadleaf trees considered “weeds” by industry and government. And those same trees in a mixed forest are better at sequestering carbon and controlling wildfires. Steidle notes,

“As our planet continues to warm, biodiversity fades and forest fires grow worse, does it make sense to keep eliminating the trees with the highest biodiversity values, lower probability of flammability, and best ability to sequester CO₂ and reflect solar radiation from our forests? Obviously not.” [5]

But timber companies and our provincial governments are actually spending millions every year to do precisely that.

Quebec, however, is the exception. Chemical herbicides were banned on Crown forest lands in Quebec in 2001 - about 90% of the provincial forest land base. In 2008, the Quebec government reaffirmed its commitment to ecosystem-based management of public forests. [6]

In March, the Prince George Citizen reported that B.C. MLA Mike Morris is working on a private members bill to ban the use of glyphosate on provincial forests. [7]

Stopping the Rain of Death

Clearly, the Traditional Ecological Knowledge Elders of Ontario have raised a huge issue with their pending lawsuit. SumOfUs is raising funding for their legal fees and helping to alert the wider community. The TEK Elders are also planning to contact the World Health Organization (WHO) for assistance. The WHO's International Agency for Research on Cancer has already classified glyphosate as "probably carcinogenic to humans". [8]

Information about the TEK Elders' pending lawsuit also comes just days after the UN's shocking biodiversity report, warning that one million species are at risk of extinction. That report was issued by the UN's Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). UBC professor Kai Chan, one of the lead authors of the report, told the Toronto Star that "...the scale of change now requires us to pressure political systems and other institutions to overhaul national and global economies. 'Nature isn't broken. But you could say that our institutions are not fit for purpose,' Chan says. 'Really, what we need to do is fix them'." [9]

That comment may be applicable to Health Canada, which seems to have been captured by Bayer-Monsanto and the pesticide industry.

The UN biodiversity report also specifically urged policy-makers "to recognize and respect Indigenous institutions, values, innovations, practices and knowledge, and to engage with and consider Indigenous communities, something they note is currently sorely lacking." [10] The Traditional Ecological Knowledge Elders of Ontario know the brutal truth of this, and now they're going to court. That seems to be the only way to stop the "rain of death".

*

Note to readers: please click the share buttons below. Forward this article to your email lists. Crosspost on your blog site, internet forums. etc.

Joyce Nelson is the author of seven books. She can be reached via

www.joycenelson.ca

Notes

[1] Helen Morley, “TEK Elders will take government to court,” Mid North Monitor, April 4, 2019.

[2] Quoted in Christopher Read, “Trappers in Robinson Huron treaty want aerial herbicide spraying to end,” APTN News, March 22, 2019.

[3] Quoted in Ibid.

[4] Peter Ewart, “Death from the sky in northern B.C.,” The Prince George Daily News, March 31, 2018.

[5]<http://stopthespraybc.com/>

[6] Dave Mance III, “The Great Glyphosate Debate,” Northern Woodlands, Spring 2012.

[7] Mark Nielsen, “Morris calling for ban on glyphosate in B.C. forests,” Prince George Citizen, March 7, 2019.

[8] Read, op. cit.

[9] Quoted in Kate Allen, “One million species face possibility of extinction, report warns,” Toronto Star, May 6, 2019.

[10] Ibid.

417 readings

[Do We Need a Global Convention of Common Principles for Building Peace?](#)



[Peace News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 17 May 2019 12:45

By [Thalif Deen](#) - Reprint

Sweden’s Minister for International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson

STOCKHOLM, May 17 2019 (IPS) - When the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) concluded a three-day forum on “Peace and Development” on May 16, the primary focus was the daunting challenges

threatening global security, including growing military interventions, spreading humanitarian emergencies, forced migration, increasing civil wars, extreme weather conditions triggered by climate change and widespread poverty and conflict-related hunger.

For many decades, said the Swedish Minister for International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson, the rules of war were designed by the Geneva Conventions.

“Do we need to develop and adopt common principles for building peace?” he asked, before a gathering of more than 400 high-level policymakers, researchers and practitioners in the Swedish capital during the opening session of the sixth annual Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development

The United Nations, he pointed out, is currently implementing reforms for improved delivery on crisis response, sustaining peace and sustainable development while the World Bank has initiated the development of a new strategy for “Fragility, Conflict and Violence.”

At the same time, the European Union (EU) is implementing its “Integrated Approach to Conflict and Crises” while the African Union (AU) is stepping up its “engagement beyond crisis response.”

And the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) has developed new recommendations on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus.

Are there sufficient mechanisms in place for bringing actors in crisis-response together with peace building and development actors? If not, what is needed?, Eriksson asked.

Jan Eliasson addressing the SIPRI Forum

Addressing the Forum, Jan Eliasson, chair of the Governing Board of SIPRI and a former UN Deputy Secretary-General, said over the past five years the Forum has shaped global discussions, developed innovative policies and built crucial bridges.

He said SIPRI has a Sahel programme focusing on local perspectives on peace and security, and local perspectives on international interventions in Mali and the region.

The Forum was co-hosted by SIPRI and the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

SIPRI, in cooperation with the UN World Food Programme (WFP), has been embarking on a project to better understand the linkages between food security and hunger and help improve the conflict-sensitivity of one of the most important crisis-response programmes, he noted.

“Our work on gender and social inclusivity in peace processes continues to move

forward as we advance the knowledge-base and linkages between the SDGs.

SIPRI's Deputy Director has joined the newly launched Lancet–Sight Commission, evaluating how health and gender equality contributes to peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

The global challenges can never be overcome in isolation but can only be tackled through dialogue and cooperation, Eliasson declared.

Asked for a response, Susan Wilding, who heads the Geneva Office of CIVICUS, the global alliance of civil society organisations (CSOs), told IPS: “The answer to the Minister’s question should be yes, we do need to develop common principles for building peace.”

She said the OECD/DAC recommendations speak about ‘prevention always, development wherever possible, humanitarian action when necessary’ and the ‘humanitarian, development and peace nexus’.

But what they fail to take into account, especially with regards to the prevention portion, is the nexus with human rights.

“How can we expect to prevent conflict if we do not first focus on the prevention of human rights abuses? How can we expect to achieve the SDGs at a national level while human rights abuses and civic space restrictions prevail?,” she asked.

“If we do not start to see the link between human rights, civic space and the humanitarian, development and peace agenda, we will surely fail in our endeavours to reach any of the goals.”

Alex Shoebridge, Oxfam Novib’s Peacebuilding Advisor, told IPS that while the World Bank, the UN, and some donors have sought to reflect on and rework their contribution to building peace, there is a need for a more fundamental shift in international support.

Sustainable peace can only be achieved by locally-led efforts that are inclusive, interconnected, and go beyond Governments alone, he noted.

This is especially the case in contexts where Governments themselves are part of the conflict, as we see in an increasing number of contexts, including Middle Income Countries, Shoebridge pointed out.

“Women and young people must play a key role in shaping peaceful futures for their countries, and not be side-lined or involved in a tokenistic way.”

He said it also requires that external support to peacebuilding go beyond the project cycle and beyond technical solutions focussing on reform of state led institutions.

Research shows that it takes at least two decades for a country to emerge from and transform legacies of conflict. Conflicts are relational, with deep seated inequalities,

historical grievances and negative gender norms sustaining and perpetuating conflicts between groups.

And 60 percent of conflicts take place in countries that have experienced conflict before, meaning that development and humanitarian assistance must do more to ensure peacebuilding outcomes are supported in the short, medium, and longer-term, he added.

“We can’t take our eye off the ball, when structural causes of conflict such as inequality and marginalization remain unaddressed,” declared Shoebridge.

comment by joan Russow

We could start with redefining what constitute security as true security; "common security"

“The US nuclear weapons are essential for our security” is the reason given, in Common Security a Programme for Disarmament.

The Global Compliance Research Project has been working on an educational programme which includes: (a) Redefining “security” as common security. (b) Identifying threats to common security. (c) Placing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) --the most recent international expression of common security – within the context of international precedents. (d) Delineating some UN systemic constraints, which could be overcome, to achieve common security? (e) Making a modest proposal for a Universal Declaration of Common Security.

nn

REDEFINING WHAT CONSTITUTES TRUE SECURITY:

COMMON SECURITY

. “True security exists when all are secure, through common security.” (Olof Palme, 1982) whose objectives could be extended to include but not limited to the following:

(a) To achieve a state of peace, and disarmament; through reallocation of military expenses and delegitimization of war;

(b) To ensure the preservation, conservation and protection of the environment, the respect for the inherent worth of nature beyond human purpose, to reduce the ecological footprint and to move away from the current model of unsustainable and

excessive overconsumption

(c) To enable socially equitable and environmentally sound employment, energy and transportation and the right to development,

(d) To promote and fully guarantee respect for human rights including labour rights, civil and political rights, indigenous rights, social and cultural rights – right to food, to housing, to safe drinking water and sanitation , right to education and right to universally accessible not for profit health care system; right to water and sanitation

(e) To fulfill the Sustainable Development Goals.

(f) To respect the international rule of law, its instruments and the jurisdiction and decisions of the international Court of Justice

Last Updated on Tuesday, 21 May 2019 10:06

307 readings

[WITH INDUSTRY DATING BACK TO 1859, PENNSYLVANIA STRUGGLES WITH 200,000+ ORPHAN WELLS](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 27 May 2019 10:58

FULL STORY: E&E; NEWS @EENEWSUPDATES

MAY 26, 2019 PRIMARY AUTHOR MIKE LEE @MIKELEEFWO

Jeremy Buckingham/flickr

<https://theenergymix.com/2019/05/26/with-industry-dating-back-to-1859-pennsylvania-struggles-with-200000-orphan-wells/>



Although pressure is building on the fossil industry to address fugitive emissions from abandoned oil and gas wells, deadbeat drillers and insufficient public funds for cleanup mean Pennsylvania landowners who once played host to oil and gas extraction remain captive to all that was left behind.

While orphan wells have emerged as a tough, legally contentious issue in Alberta and British Columbia, they're a much more established problem in Pennsylvania, where the United States' first well was drilled in 1859, E&E News reports. Today, the state is "home to between 200,000 and 750,000 so-called orphan wells that have been abandoned and that have no apparent owner." Taken together, these wells "emit 40,000 to 70,000 tonnes of methane a year, between 5% and 8% of the state's human-caused methane emissions."

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Ohio and West Virginia largely share the remainder of what may be "as many as three million orphan wells" across the United States.

That the drilling industry once escaped all responsibility for the

wells it left behind owes to a near-century of virtually zero regulation, E&E; states. Pennsylvania did not even “require drillers to post a cleanup bond until the 1980s.”

And while bond rates were raised in response to the shale drilling boom in 2012, “the amounts aren’ t nearly enough to cover the cost” of plugging an abandoned well.

Shale well owners are now required to put up a \$US10,000 bond per well, or “a blanket bond amount [of] \$US600,000 for 150 or more wells,” but those monies hardly count towards the full cost of plugging a well. E&E; reports on the recent experience of Pennsylvanian Charlie Brethauer who was able to plug an orphan well on his property—thanks to a US\$125,000 grant from a state-run entity called the Commonwealth Financing Authority (CFA), which collects bonds from drillers and directs the proceeds towards plugging the wells that will all too soon be abandoned.

But Brethauer was lucky. While “for the most part, the states are in charge of preventing pollution from those wells,” reports E&E;, most of them “don’ t have enough funds to clean up the legacy wells left from the oil industry’ s first century, and most aren’ t ready to clean up the tens of thousands of wells drilled during the first decades of the shale drilling boom.”

Pennsylvania’ s Department of Environmental Protection “has about \$400,000 a year to spend on well plugging,” in addition to funds collected via the CFA. “At the current rate of 10 to 12 wells a year, it would take 17,500 years to work through the state’ s backlog,” said Scott Perry, head of the DEP’ s oil and gas division.

Things are no better on the other frontiers of America’ s much-lauded oil and gas boom. The Texas Railroad Commission “spent \$23.4 million to plug about 1,200 orphan wells in fiscal 2018,” reports E&E.; But that amount was insufficient “to keep up with the number of wells that were abandoned by their operators, so the state’ s orphan well population increased from 5,687 to 6,285 during the fiscal year.”

Beleaguered states are beginning to pay attention, however. Colorado has “ordered the state Oil and Gas Conservation Commission to overhaul its bonding requirements as part of a broad rewrite of energy regulations,” and Ohio “voted last year to

roughly double the amount of oil and gas production taxes the state spends on well plugging.”

And while Pennsylvania’s legislators have yet to address the lack of funding, the DEP “has become more aggressive about overseeing transfers of old oil and gas wells, to prevent those wells from being handed off to companies that can’t afford to plug them.”

It’s also working with Diversified Oil and Gas, an Alabama company that bought thousands of the state’s older shale wells from some of its biggest producers. Diversified has put up a \$7-million bond, on a promise to plug 1,400 wells within the next 15 years.

231 readings

[Elementary students restore, reclaim neighbourhood park](#)



[PEJ Events](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 30 May 2019 18:50

Students from Janet Langston's Grade 3 and 4 class at Margaret Jenkins elementary celebrate the school's efforts to remove invasive species from Trafalgar Park (below King George Terrace). The park was covered in gorse and blackberry and wild flowers and roses are now thriving. (Travis Paterson/News Staff)

Margaret Jenkins students 2.5 years into restoration

- [TRAVIS PATERSON](#)
- May. 30, 2019 9:45 a.m.
- [COMMUNITY](#)

The reclamation of Trafalgar Park continues but to anyone who has visited in the past three years, the removal of invasive species has revealed a landscape unseen for decades.

And the work has been done by a pair of Margarets.

Well known Uplands Park advocate and volunteer Margaret Lidkea helped lead a

program for nearby Margaret Jenkins elementary school students. Lidkea provides the know-how and the students provide the muscle.

The park was covered with rows of entrenched blackberry and gorse.

The students prove their knowledge by munching on a piece of Miner's lettuce growing next to the six-foot-tall wild roses in Trafalgar.

"We gave them clippers, saws, and shears, and they've done the work," Lidkea said. "It's amazing,"

READ MORE: [Student work sessions clear Trafalgar Park](#)

Vice-principal Janet Langston's Grade 3-4 class is one of the classes that makes regular trips to Trafalgar to remove invasives.

Last year Langston took it to the next level as the school r

Last Updated on Sunday, 02 June 2019 14:50

192 readings

[We Must do More to Speed up Ending Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 05 June 2019 11:43

By [Niklas Hagelberg](#)

[Reprint](#) |  [Print](#) |

Niklas Hagelberg is Coordinator, Climate Change Programme, UN Environment



NAIROBI, Kenya, Jun 5 2019 (IPS) - Fossil fuels—oil, gas, coal and their derivatives—pollute the atmosphere and emit the greenhouse gases that are ramping up global heating to dangerous levels. But did you know that governments around the world are subsidizing this pollution?

Historically, governments around the world have used fossil fuel subsidies for a variety of reasons, including to promote energy independence, encourage industry and cushion the poorest in society.

But they never took sufficient account of what economists call “externalities” such as air pollution and the resulting impacts on our health.

There is a special kind of madness in a system that funds the healthcare burden from asthma, respiratory diseases and lung cancer, and at the same time funds companies that pollute the air and contribute towards these health issues in the first place.



Niklas Hagelberg

Ordinary people pay the price three times over—taxes for healthcare, taxes to support fossil fuel subsidies, and then the ultimate price of compromises to their health.

Air pollution claims the lives of one in nine every year and is the single biggest health risk facing people across the world. Fossil fuel subsidies often fail to benefit targeted groups and are a significant drain on national budgets.

Global fossil fuel subsidies cost taxpayers about US\$400 billion. Imagine if these public resources were directed to finance sustainable development, clean energy and [climate action](#).

Fossil fuel subsidies disproportionately benefit the top oil majors, help their profit margins and serve as a powerful disincentive to develop renewable energy. They also reduce the available pot of resources for investment in renewables.

Countries that heavily subsidize these fuels of the past are stifling the current and future business and economic opportunities that renewable energy provides.

Redirecting the money used for fossil fuel subsidies has the potential to accelerate our ability to address the global climate crisis, and ensure a just decarbonization. The additional resources could also be used for other development priorities such as health, education or infrastructure.



The planet can no longer afford these subsidies. We should move to scrap them as soon as possible and make the switch to a green economy.

The energy landscape is changing quickly

The energy transition is happening now, all around us. The growth rate of renewables is three times faster than fossil and nuclear fuel, with record growth rates in solar and wind power. The United Kingdom just went 100

days on 100 per cent renewable energy sources, and no one noticed.

However, despite the rapid pace of change, the bulk of all our power for heating, lighting, cooking, transport and industry still comes from fossil fuels.

A major way to reduce air pollution, which is above World Health Organization safe levels in many cities around the world, is to switch more quickly away from fossil fuels. We should eliminate fossil fuel subsidies, except for liquefied petroleum gas cooking programmes.

UN Environment, in collaboration with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and the International Institute for Sustainable Development Global Service Initiative, has developed a methodology to measure fossil fuel subsidies, providing comparable data to allow the tracking of national and global trends.

The [report](#) helps governments to understand the extent of the problem (for example what percentage of their Gross Domestic Product they spend on fossil fuel subsidies) and take action to reduce or abolish these subsidies.

Air pollution is the theme for [World Environment Day](#) on 5 June 2019. The quality of the air we breathe depends on the lifestyle choices we make every day. Learn more about how air pollution affects you, and what is being done to clean the air. What are you doing to reduce your emissions footprint and [#BeatAirPollution?](#)

Further resources:

[Calling time on fossil fuel subsidies](#)

[Measuring Fossil Fuel Subsidies in the Context of the Sustainable Development Goals](#)

Last Updated on Friday, 07 June 2019 09:02

5651 readings

[Consent Means Consent Not Consultation, Coercion or “after the Decision”, Notification](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 13 June 2019 07:22

1.The Lubicon Cree: Ongoing human rights violations



The Lubicon Cree: Ongoing human rights violations

The Lubicon Cree: A case study in ongoing human rights violations excerpts from article by Amnesty International

The Lubicon Cree: A case study in ongoing human rights violations. ...

Territory that the Lubicon have relied on to hunt, fish and trap is now crisscrossed by more than 2400 km of oil and gas pipelines.

That's more than five wells for every Lubicon person.“..

.the basic health and resistance to infection of community members has deteriorated dramatically.

The lack of running water and sanitary facilities in the community, needed to replace

the traditional systems of water and sanitary management...is leading to the development of diseases associated

with poverty and poor sanitary and health conditions.” Lubicon complaint upheld by the United Nations Human Rights Committee in 1990

2. Melina Laboucan-Massimo speaking at the Defend Our Coast Rally; No Tar sands No Pipelines No Tankers



WATCH <http://youtu.be/HqNu-m4zcG4>

filmed by Joan Russow } Photo courtesy of Greenpeace.

Melina Laboucan Massimo, a long-time Indigenous and environmental activist. Since 2009 Melina has been working as a tar sands campaigner for Greenpeace Canada.

<http://nobelwomensinitiative.org/2012/10/meet-melina-laboucan-massimo-indigenous-environmental->

Melina is a Lubicon Cree activist from Northern Alberta who knows the reality of the oil sands too well.

Having grown up in the oil sands region, she witnessed first-hand the impacts of oil sands development on her Nation's people, culture, and land.

She now spends most of her days traveling inside Canada and around the world to share her their stories and realities with a larger audience.

Watch a video of her presentation at the October 22 2012 "Defend our Coast
"Rally in Victoria BC, Canada <http://youtu.be/HqNu-m4zcG4>

3. Rally in Front of the BC Legislature



In front of the legislature, at this rally the large First Nation's banner read "no Tar sands no Pipelines no Tankers".

After Melina's speech the non-First Nations speakers, ignored, Melina and the first Nation's banner, by saying, only "no pipe lines no tankers"!

4. Tarsands A Globally Recognized Disaster

Tar sands (also known as oil sands) are a mixture of mostly sand, clay, water, and a thick, molasses-like substance called bitumen.

Bitumen is made of hydrocarbons—the same molecules in liquid oil—and is used to produce gasoline and other petroleum products.

Tar sands are an increasingly common—but expensive and dirty—source of oil.

5. The Kinder Morgan Pipeline Will Carry Bitumen from the Tar sands From Alberta to British Columbia



Source: Vancouver Observer.

Measurement conversions taken from Google Conversions: 1 barrel = 160 litres

6. Increased Kinder Morgan tankers traffic moving through the Salish Sea

(which should be nominated for a PSSA (Particularly Sensitive Sea Area))

<https://www.raincoast.org/2011/12/tankers-and-tar-sands-oil-threaten-the-salish-sea>

Tankers and tarsands threaten the Salish Sea

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british.../kinder-morgan.../article35043172/>

The Trans Mountain pipeline **expansion would** bring billions in new revenue, but **it** ... an increase in coast-**to**-port tanker traffic,

and with that, a risk of **more** oil spills. We follow a tanker as **it** threads the needle from Burnaby **to** the open ocean. ... increasing

the full capacity of the system from 300,000 **barrels a day to** 890,000

7. Tsawout First Nations presentation at National Energy (NEB) Hearing on Kinder Morgan Expansion-

Photo by Heather Tufts
List of Impacts: Potential Project Impacts from Increased Marine Shipping, Accidents and Malfunctions:

By Chief Eric Pelkey

Potential Project Impacts from increased marine shipping, accidents and malfunctions:

1. Disruption to Tsawout's way of life, including increased alienation and interruption with Tsawout's sacred relationship

and reliance on the waters and lands of our Territory

2. Disturbance to burial sites, other spiritual and cultural sites
3. Disturbance to food gathering locations, including fishing, harvesting aquatic resources, plant gathering and hunting activities
4. Disturbance to distribution, health, abundance and long-term sustainability of fishery and aquatic resources, birds, mammals, vegetation, threatened and endangered species, benthic communities and other resources from increased shipping operations and from oil spills
5. Impacts and disturbance throughout the marine ecosystems from wake, noise, air emissions, and lighting
6. Disruption to historic, modern and future marine travel ways and marine access throughout the Territory, including areas now considered within the U.S.
7. Decreased water quality and increased pollution, including introduction of non-native invasive species,
8. Increased risk of collision and accidents, including water contamination, shoreline contamination and physical contact between a tanker's hull and marine sub-tidal habitat from vessel grounding
9. Increased risk of impacts because of insufficient knowledge and capacity to contain and clean up diluted bitumen in the marine environment
10. Continued and cumulative effects throughout the Territory, including contributing to climate change impacts, ecosystem effects, and the health/physical, emotional/social and mental well-being of Tsawout
11. Infringements of s. 35 Rights, including our Treaty right to carry on our fisheries as formerly

8. To be determined whether there is Evidence of Coercion, by Kinder Morgan or the federal government,

of First Nations Through Kinder Morgan Offering "Financial Incentives"

Under Canadian law it is against the law to bribe foreign officials (see recent case where a Canadian Company bribed

elected officials in Libya. would the same principle apply to offering financial

to First Nations Chiefs?

9. Thousands of citizens walked 76 k. from Victoria to Burnaby against Kinder Morgan



Chris Cook from CFUV REPORTING

<https://gorillaradioblog.blogspot.com/2018/03/ten-thousand-voices-against-kinder.html>

itozens

10. Misconstrued Injunction: Citizens Arrested for Violating Kinder Morgan's Injunction



Ruth Campbell, a 66-year-old Vancouver resident and former lawyer for the Attorney General of B.C., became the

most recent person in a series of arrests at Kinder Morgan's oil terminal in Burnaby on Aug. 1.

An injunction should be for preventing harm not for preventing those who strive to prevent harm

In the "Conduct of Civil Litigation in B.C. 1991", J.A. Norris indicated the nature of the remedy injunctions:

The remedy [of injunction] of course, is an equitable one. ' The exercise of the equitable jurisdiction is not to be restricted

by the straitjacket of rigid rules but is to be based on broad principles of justice and convenience, equity regarding the substance

and not merely the facade or the shadow. It moves with time and circumstances. (Norris, J.A.) "

(Conduct of Civil Litigation in B.C., Chapter 42, August, 1991)

11. Trudeau government Will Buy Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain Pipeline System

(Trudeau,Inc.)

by Charlie Smith on May 29th, 2018

- Bill Morneau and Justin Trudeau think it's a good idea to spend \$4.5 billion of federal funds on the Trans Mountain pipeline.



12. Wide-spread Opposition to the Purchase of Kinder Morgan



13 Adoption of United Nations Declaration on the Rights of indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) with free prior informed Consent

Canada's former attorney, Jody Wilson-Raybould speaks at the UN

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mJM8nZxM0GQ>

Article 19 states

Article 19 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states: 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.

Kinder Morgan: Canada's Interpretation of Free Prior Informed is out of Sync with the International Interpretation
http://pejnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10807:kinder-morgan-canadas-interpretation-of-free-prior-informed-is-out-of-sync-with-the-international-interpretation&catid=77:bc-justice-news&Itemid=219

Under the Vienna Article 31.1 of Convention on the Law of Treaties

"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.”

14 Federal court quashed approval for Kinder Morgan Expansion

Court ruled that Canada had not adequately consulted six First Nations and had not addressed tanker traffic impact on whales orcas

The Federal Court neglected to require the government to obtain "free prior informed consent"



[/www.orcanetwork.org/nathist/salishorcas1.html](http://www.orcanetwork.org/nathist/salishorcas1.html)

15. Trudeau Contravenes Article 19

Trudeau ignored free prior and informed consent when he stated the pipeline is going to be built we will consult with First Nations i.e we will decide and notify you later

16. Dead line approaches

While Alberta is engulfed in fires, Jason Kenney, Andrew Scheer, and other their Conservative cohorts are lobbying for the Kinder Morgan to go through.

June 18 2019 is scheduled to be the day that Trudeau finally decides will he will abide by the principle of free prior informed consent

Will he realize that the rights of the The Lubicon Cree and of the First Nations to be affected by the pipe line and tankers, be respected and will he abide by the UNDRIP and only proceed if there is free prior informed consen or will decide and after the fact, notify

NOTE ON JANUARY 15, FACEBOOK WOULD NOT POST THIS ARTICLE BECAUSE FB HAS CHACTERIZED PEACE EARTH AND JUSTICE NEWS, AS A SITE WITH POTENTIAL DANGEROUS MATERIAL

LIKE PEACE EARTH OR JUSTICE?

UPDATE; AFTER MAKING THE BLOCKING, PUBLIC ON TWITTER, IT SEEMS TODAY, FACEBOOK HAS ALLOWED IT TO BE POSTED ON JANUARY 16



Last Updated on Thursday, 13 February 2020 08:49

723 readings

[Tomgram: Allegra Harpootlian, Ending the Forever Wars?](#)



[Peace News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 23 June 2019 17:40

Tomgram: Allegra Harpootlian, Ending the Forever Wars?

Posted by [Allegra Harpootlian](#) at 3:15pm, June 23, 2019.

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I remember well the antiwar movement of the Vietnam era. I was in it and it was distinctly in the streets, big time. I was typical, for instance, in traveling to Washington in October 1967 for a march on the Pentagon, which proved to be the [largest antiwar protest](#) ever staged to that point -- a crowd so vast I had never seen the likes of it before. And I returned to the capital a year or two later for a far more chaotic antiwar demonstration in which I remember having to choose between staying with a bold friend eager to rush further into the tear-gas-laced streets around the Washington Mall or run for it -- alone. (I reluctantly chose to stay.) And then there were all the little moments of work and opposition over so many years, the moments when you weren't with crowds of people in those streets, but you were still focused on opposing that American war from hell.

And then, of course, I remember that [second antiwar moment](#) of vast crowds on a [global scale](#) in the winter and early spring of 2003, when I found myself once again [marching](#) with staggering numbers of other people against a grim American war, this time one still to come. It was already obvious, though, that the top officials of the Bush administration were intent on invading Saddam Hussein's Iraq, no matter what. Still, I suspect the crowds of demonstrators then put even the Vietnam protests to shame. Strangely, however, when that war began and essentially didn't end but spread, when it came to embroil, in one way or another, much of the Greater Middle East and then parts of Africa, when the Arab Spring broke out, Syria cracked open, and ISIS appeared -- when, to use a [phrase](#) of former Arab League head Amr Mussa, it was clearer that we had passed through "the gates of Hell" in the Greater Middle East -- it seemed as if no one in the U.S. was in the streets or anywhere else.

Yes, there were some places [like TomDispatch](#) that continued to focus on those never-ending wars and the [chaos](#), [death](#), [displacement](#), and [destruction](#) they caused, but generally it felt -- at least to me -- as if, in a period of [never-ending](#) and disastrous conflicts across vast (and distant) stretches of the planet, the American public was nowhere to be found. That's why, when I read [TomDispatch regular](#) Allegra Harpootlian's take on the situation, I found a certain genuine hope there. No, there still isn't an antiwar movement in the streets of America, but that doesn't mean nothing is happening, nothing is forming, nothing is brewing when it comes to our twenty-first-century wars from hell, not if you look in the right way and in the right places. Check out her piece and see what I mean. *Tom*

The Antiwar Movement No One Can See

Will It Put a Crimp in the War on Terror?

By [Allegra Harpootlian](#)

When Donald Trump entered the Oval Office in January 2017, Americans took to the streets all across the country to protest their instantly endangered rights. Conspicuously absent from the newfound civic engagement, despite more than a decade and a half of this country's fruitless, destructive wars across the Greater Middle East and northern Africa, was antiwar sentiment, much less an actual movement.

Those like me working against America's seemingly [endless wars](#) wondered why the subject merited so little discussion, attention, or protest. Was it because the still-spreading war on terror remained shrouded in government secrecy? Was the lack of media coverage about what America was doing overseas to blame? Or was it simply that most Americans didn't care about what was happening past the water's edge? If you had asked me two years ago, I would have chosen "all of the above." Now, I'm not so sure.

After the [enormous demonstrations](#) against the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the antiwar movement disappeared almost as suddenly as it began, with some even openly [declaring](#) it dead. Critics noted the long-term absence of significant protests against those wars, a lack of political will in Congress to deal with them, and ultimately, [apathy](#) on matters of war and peace when compared to issues like health care, gun control, or recently even [climate change](#).

The pessimists have been right to point out that none of the plethora of marches on Washington since Donald Trump was elected have had even a secondary focus on America's fruitless wars. They're certainly right to question why Congress, with the constitutional duty to declare war, has until recently allowed both presidents Barack Obama and Donald Trump to wage war as they wished without even consulting them. They're right to feel nervous when a national [poll](#) shows that more Americans think we're fighting a war in Iran (we're not) than a war in Somalia ([we are](#)).

But here's what I've been wondering recently: What if there's an antiwar movement growing right under our noses and we just haven't noticed? What if we don't see it, in part, because it doesn't look like any antiwar movement we've even imagined?

If a movement is only a movement when people fill the streets, then maybe the critics are right. It might also be fair to say, however, that protest marches do not always a movement make. Movements are [defined](#) by their ability to challenge the status quo and, right now, that's what might be beginning to happen when it comes to America's wars.

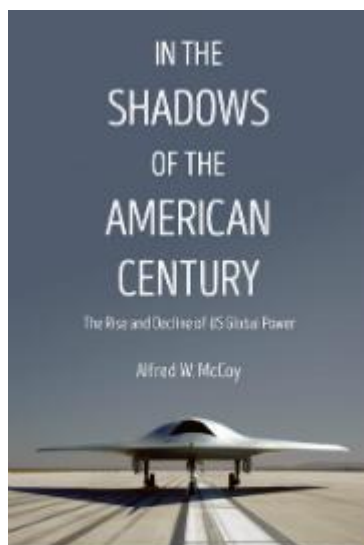
What if it's Parkland students [condemning](#) American imperialism or groups fighting the [Muslim Ban](#) that are [also](#) fighting the war on terror? It's veterans not only trying to take on the wars they fought in, but putting themselves on the front lines of the [gun control](#), [climate change](#), and [police brutality](#) debates. It's Congress [passing](#) the first War Powers Resolution in almost 50 years. It's Democratic presidential candidates [signing](#) a pledge to end America's endless wars.

For the last decade and a half, Americans -- and their elected representatives -- looked at our endless wars and essentially shrugged. In 2019, however, an antiwar movement seems to be brewing. It just doesn't look like the ones that some remember from the Vietnam era and others from the pre-invasion-of-Iraq moment. Instead, it's a movement that's being woven into just about every other issue that Americans are fighting for right now -- which is exactly why it might actually work.

A Veteran's Antiwar Movement in the Making?

During the [Vietnam War](#) of the 1960s and early 1970s, protests began with religious groups and peace organizations morally opposed to war. As that conflict intensified, however, students began to join the movement, then civil rights leaders like [Martin Luther King, Jr.](#) got involved, then war veterans who had witnessed the horror firsthand stepped in -- until, with a seemingly constant storm of protest in the streets, Washington eventually withdrew from Indochina.

You might look at the lack of public outrage now, or perhaps the [exhaustion](#) of having been outraged and nothing changing, and think an antiwar movement doesn't exist. Certainly, there's nothing like the active one that fought against America's involvement in Vietnam for so long and so persistently. Yet it's important to notice that, among some of the very same groups (like veterans, students, and even politicians) that fought against that war, a healthy [skepticism](#) about America's twenty-first-century wars, the Pentagon, the military industrial complex, and even the very idea of American exceptionalism is finally on the rise -- or so the [polls](#) tell us.



Buy the book

Right after the midterms last year, an organization named Foundation for Liberty and American Greatness [reported](#) mournfully that younger Americans were “turning on the country and forgetting its ideals,” with nearly half believing that this country isn’t “great” and many eyeing the U.S. flag as “a sign of intolerance and hatred.” With millennials and Generation Z rapidly becoming the [largest](#) voting bloc in America for the next 20 years, their priorities are taking center stage. When it comes to foreign policy and war, as it happens, they’re quite different from the generations that preceded them. According to the [Chicago Council](#)

[of Global Affairs](#),

“Each successor generation is less likely than the previous to prioritize maintaining superior military power worldwide as a goal of U.S. foreign policy, to see U.S. military superiority as a very effective way of achieving U.S. foreign policy goals, and to support expanding defense spending. At the same time, support for international cooperation and free trade remains high across the generations. In fact, younger Americans are more inclined to support cooperative approaches to U.S. foreign policy and more likely to feel favorably towards trade and globalization.”

Although marches are the most public way to protest, another striking but understated way is simply not to engage with the systems one doesn't agree with. For instance, the vast majority of today's teenagers aren't at all interested in joining the all-volunteer military. Last year, for the first time since the height of the Iraq war 13 years ago, the Army [fell](#) thousands of troops short of its recruiting goals. That trend was emphasized in a 2017 [Department of Defense](#) poll that found only 14% of respondents ages 16 to 24 said it was likely they'd serve in the military in the coming years. This has the Army so worried that it has been refocusing its recruitment efforts on [creating](#) an entirely new strategy aimed specifically at Generation Z.

In addition, we're finally seeing what happens when soldiers from America's post-9/11 wars come home infused with a sense of hopelessness in relation to those conflicts. These days, significant numbers of young veterans have been returning [disillusioned](#) and ready to lobby Congress [against](#) wars they once, however unknowingly, bought into. Look no farther than a new left-right [alliance](#) between two influential veterans groups, VoteVets and Concerned Veterans for America, to stop those forever wars. Their campaign, aimed specifically at getting Congress to weigh in on issues of war and peace, is emblematic of what may be a diverse potential movement coming together to oppose America's conflicts. Another veterans group, Common Defense, is similarly asking politicians to sign a [pledge](#) to end those wars. In just a couple of months, they've gotten on board 10 congressional sponsors, including freshmen heavyweights in the House of Representatives Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Ilhan Omar.

And this may just be the tip of a growing antiwar iceberg. A misconception about movement-building is that everyone is there for the same reason, however broadly defined. That's often not the case and sometimes it's possible that you're in a movement and don't even know it. If, for instance, I asked a room full of climate-change activists whether they also considered themselves part of an antiwar movement, I can imagine the denials I'd get. And yet, whether they know it or not, sooner or later fighting climate change will mean taking on the Pentagon's global footprint, too.

Think about it: not only is the U.S. military the world's [largest](#) institutional consumer of fossil fuels but, according to a [new report](#) from Brown University's Costs of War Project, between 2001 and 2017, it released more than 1.2 billion metric tons of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere (400 million of which were related to the war on terror). That's equivalent to the emissions of 257 million passenger cars, more than double the number currently on the road in the U.S.

A Growing Antiwar Movement in Congress

One way to sense the growth of antiwar sentiment in this country is to look not at the empty streets or even at veterans organizations or recruitment polls, but at Congress. After all, one [indicator](#) of a successful movement, however incipient, is its power to influence and change those making the decisions in Washington. Since Donald Trump was elected, the most visible evidence of growing antiwar sentiment is the way America's congressional policymakers have increasingly become engaged with issues of war and peace. Politicians, after all, tend to follow the voters and, right now, growing numbers of them seem to be following rising antiwar sentiment back home into an expanding set of debates about war and peace in the age of Trump.

In campaign season 2016, in an op-ed in the [Washington Post](#), political scientist Elizabeth Saunders wondered whether foreign policy would play a significant role in the presidential election. "Not likely," she concluded. "Voters do not pay much attention to foreign policy." And at the time, she was on to something. For instance, Senator Bernie Sanders, then competing for the Democratic presidential nomination against Hillary Clinton, didn't [even](#) prepare stock answers to basic national security questions, choosing instead, if asked at all, to quickly pivot back to more familiar topics. In a debate with Clinton, for instance, he was asked whether he would keep troops in Afghanistan to deal with the growing success of the Taliban. In his answer, he skipped Afghanistan entirely, while warning only vaguely against a "quagmire" in Iraq and Syria.

Heading for 2020, Sanders is once again competing for the nomination, but instead of shying away from foreign policy, starting in 2017, he became the face of what could be a [new American way](#) of thinking when it comes to how we see our role in the world.

In February 2018, Sanders also became the first senator to risk [introducing](#) a war powers resolution to end American support for the [brutal](#) Saudi-led war in Yemen. In April 2019, with the sponsorship of other senators added to his, the bill [ultimately passed](#) the House and the Senate in an extremely rare showing of bipartisanship, only to be [vetoed](#) by President Trump. That such a bill might pass the House, no less a still-Republican Senate, even if not by a veto-proof majority, would have been unthinkable in 2016. So much has changed since the last election that support for the Yemen resolution has now become what Tara Golshan at [Vox](#) termed "a litmus test of the Democratic Party's progressive shift on foreign policy."

Nor, strikingly enough, is Sanders the only Democratic presidential candidate now running on what is essentially an antiwar platform. One of the main aspects of [Elizabeth Warren's](#) foreign policy plan, for instance, is to "seriously review the country's military commitments overseas, and that includes bringing U.S. troops home from Afghanistan and Iraq." Entrepreneur Andrew Yang and former Alaska Senator Mike Gravel have [joined](#) Sanders and Warren in signing a pledge to end America's forever wars if elected. [Beto O'Rourke](#) has called for the repeal of Congress's 2001 Authorization to Use Military Force that presidents have cited ever since whenever they've sent American forces into battle. [Marianne Williamson](#), one of the many (unlikely) Democratic candidates seeking the nomination, has even proposed a plan to transform America's "wartime economy into a peace-time

economy, repurposing the tremendous talents and infrastructure of [America's] military industrial complex... to the work of promoting life instead of death.”

And for the first time ever, three veterans of America's post-9/11 wars -- Seth Moulton and Tulsi Gabbard of the House of Representatives, and South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg -- are running for president, bringing their [skepticism](#) about American interventionism with them. The very inclusion of such viewpoints in the presidential race is bound to change the conversation, putting a spotlight on America's wars in the months to come.

Get on Board or Get Out of the Way

When trying to create a movement, there are three likely [outcomes](#): you will be accepted by the establishment, or rejected for your efforts, or the establishment will be replaced, in part or in whole, by those who agree with you. That last point is exactly what we've been seeing, at least among Democrats, in the Trump years. While 2020 Democratic candidates for president, some of whom have been in the political arena for decades, are gradually hopping on the end-the-endless-wars bandwagon, the real antiwar momentum in Washington has begun to come from new members of Congress like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC) and Ilhan Omar who are unwilling to accept business as usual when it comes to either the Pentagon or the country's forever wars. In doing so, moreover, they are responding to what their constituents actually want.

As far back as 2014, when a [University of Texas-Austin Energy Poll](#) asked people where the U.S. government should spend their tax dollars, only 7% of respondents under 35 said it should go toward military and defense spending. Instead, in a “pretty significant political shift” at the time, they overwhelmingly opted for their tax dollars to go toward job creation and education. Such a trend has only become more apparent as those [calling](#) for free public college, Medicare-for-all, or a Green New Deal have come to [realize](#) that they could pay for such ideas if America would stop pouring [trillions of dollars](#) into wars that never should have been launched.

The new members of the House of Representatives, in particular, part of the youngest, most diverse crew [to date](#), have begun to replace the old guard and are increasingly signalling their readiness to throw out policies that don't work for the American people, especially those reinforcing the American war machine. They understand that by ending the wars and beginning to scale back the military-industrial complex, this country could once again have the resources it needs to fix so many other problems.

In May, for instance, Omar [tweeted](#), “We have to recognize that foreign policy IS domestic policy. We can't invest in health care, climate resilience, or education if we continue to spend more than half of discretionary spending on endless wars and Pentagon contracts. When I say we need something equivalent to the Green New Deal for foreign policy, it's this.”

A few days before that, at a House Committee on Oversight and Reform hearing, Ocasio-Cortez [confronted](#) executives from military contractor TransDigm about the way they were price-gouging the American taxpayer by selling a \$32 “non-vehicular clutch disc” to the Department of Defense for \$1,443 per disc. “A pair of jeans can

cost \$32; imagine paying over \$1,000 for that,” she said. “Are you aware of how many doses of insulin we could get for that margin? I could’ve gotten over 1,500 people insulin for the cost of the margin of your price gouging for these vehicular discs alone.”

And while such ridiculous waste [isn't news](#) to those of us who follow Pentagon spending closely, this was undoubtedly something many of her millions of supporters hadn't thought about before. After the hearing, [Teen Vogue](#) created a list of the “5 most ridiculous things the United States military has spent money on,” comedian [Sarah Silverman](#) tweeted out the AOC hearing clip to her 12.6 million followers, *Will and Grace* actress [Debra Messing](#) publicly expressed her gratitude to AOC, and according to Crowdtangle, a social media analytics tool, the [NowThis](#) clip of her in that congressional hearing garnered more than 20 million impressions.

Not only are members of Congress beginning to call attention to such undercovered issues, but perhaps they're even starting to accomplish something. Just two weeks after that contentious hearing, TransDigm [agreed](#) to return \$16.1 million in excess profits to the Department of Defense. “We saved more money today for the American people than our committee's entire budget for the year,” said House Oversight Committee Chair Elijah Cummings.

Of course, antiwar demonstrators have yet to pour into the streets, even though the wars we're already involved in continue to drag on and a possible new one with Iran looms on the horizon. Still, there seems to be a notable trend in antiwar opinion and activism. Somewhere just under the surface of American life lurks a genuine, diverse antiwar movement that appears to be coalescing around a common goal: getting Washington politicians to believe that antiwar policies are supportable, even potentially popular. Call me an eternal optimist, but someday I can imagine such a movement helping end those disastrous wars.

Allegra Harpootlian, a [TomDispatch regular](#), is a senior media associate at [ReThink Media](#) where she works with leading experts and organizations at the intersection of national security, politics, and the media. She principally focuses on U.S. drone policies and related use-of-force issues. She is also a political partner with the [Truman National Security Project](#). Find her on Twitter [@ally_harp](#).

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2020

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[I oversaw the U.S. nuclear power industry. Now I think it should be banned.](#)



[PEJ Events](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 05 May 2020 18:42

By Gregory Jaczko

The danger from climate change no longer outweighs the risks of nuclear accidents. Gregory Jaczko served on the Nuclear Regulatory Commission from 2005 to 2009, and as its chairman from 2009 to 2012. The author of "Confessions of a Rogue Nuclear Regulator," he is the founder of Wind Future LLC and teaches at Georgetown University and Princeton University.

Nuclear power was supposed to save the planet. The plants that used this technology could produce enormous amounts of electricity without the pollution caused by burning coal, oil or natural gas, which would help slow the catastrophic changes humans have forced on the Earth's climate. As a physicist who studied esoteric properties of subatomic particles, I admired the science and the technological innovation behind the industry. And by the time I started working on nuclear issues on Capitol Hill in 1999 as an aide to Democratic lawmakers, the risks from human-caused global warming seemed to outweigh the dangers of nuclear power, which hadn't had an accident since Chernobyl, 13 years earlier.

By 2005, my views had begun to shift.

I'd spent almost four years working on nuclear policy and witnessed the influence of the industry on the political process. Now I was serving on the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, where I saw that nuclear power was more complicated than I knew; it was a powerful business as well as an impressive feat of science. In 2009, President Barack Obama named me the agency's chairman.

Two years into my term, an earthquake and tsunami destroyed four nuclear reactors in Japan. I spent months reassuring the American public that nuclear energy, and the U.S. nuclear industry in particular, was safe. But by then, I was starting to doubt those claims myself.

Before the accident, it was easier to accept the industry's potential risks, because nuclear power plants had kept many coal and gas plants from spewing air pollutants and greenhouse gases into the air. Afterward, the falling cost of renewable power

changed the calculus. Despite working in the industry for more than a decade, I now believe that nuclear power's benefits are no longer enough to risk the welfare of people living near these plants. I became so convinced that, years after departing office, I've now made alternative energy development my new career, leaving nuclear power behind. The current and potential costs — in lives and dollars — are just too high.

Nuclear plants generate power through fission, the separation of one large atom into two or more smaller ones. This atomic engine yields none of the air pollutants produced by the combustion of carbon-based fuels. Over the decades since its inception in the 1950s, nuclear power has prevented hundreds of fossil-fuel plants from being built, meaning fewer people have suffered or died from diseases caused by their emissions.

But fission reactors have a dark side, too: If the energy they produce is not closely controlled, they can fail in catastrophic ways that kill people and render large tracts of land uninhabitable. Nuclear power is also the path to nuclear weapons, themselves an existential threat.

As the certainty of climate change grew clearer, nuclear power presented a dilemma for environmentalists: Was the risk of accidents or further spread of nuclear weapons greater than the hazard of climate change? In the late 2000s, the arguments in support of nuclear power were gaining traction with Congress, academia and even some environmentalists, as the Chernobyl accident faded into the past and the effects of climate change became harder to ignore. No new plants had been proposed in decades, because of the industry's dismal record of construction oversight and cost controls, but now utilities were beginning to pitch new reactors — as many as 30 around the country.

This is what happens when climate change forces an entire country to seek higher ground

But the Fukushima Daiichi crisis reversed that momentum. A massive release of radiation from that plant, as its four reactors failed, lasted for months. The world watched as hydrogen explosions sent huge chunks of concrete into the air — a reminder that radiation was streaming, unseen, from the reactor core. More than 100,000 people were evacuated from their homes and their communities.

Most have not returned, because only select areas have been remediated, making the surrounding region seem like a giant chessboard with hazardous areas next to safer ones. The crisis hobbled the Japanese economy for years. The government [estimated](#) that the accident would cost at least \$180 billion. Independent estimates suggest that the cost could be [three times more](#).

There were obvious ramifications for the entire industry: Could what happened in Japan happen elsewhere? This accident consumed my work at the NRC for the next six months. I assured the public of the safety of U.S. plants, because I did not have enough information or a legal basis at that point to say otherwise. But I also promised

to thoroughly review the safety measures we had in place and to swiftly implement any necessary reforms the agency identified. Agency staffers soon produced a reasonable set of plant improvements that would reduce the chance of a similar accident here. The staff found weaknesses in the programs for dealing with fires, earthquakes and flooding — the kinds of natural disasters that could trigger a catastrophe like Fukushima.

Yet after the disaster, my fellow commissioners, as well as many in Congress and the nuclear industry, fretted that the proposed new U.S. reactors might never be built, because Fukushima would focus too much attention on the potential downsides. Westinghouse and the new plant owners worried that acknowledging the need for reforms would raise even more concern about the safety of reactors. The industry wanted the NRC to say that everything was fine and nothing needed to change. So my colleagues on the commission and supporters of the industry pushed to license the first of these projects without delay and stonewalled implementation of the safety reforms. My colleagues [objected](#) to making the staff report public. I ultimately prevailed, but then the lobbying intensified: The industry almost immediately started pushing back on the staff report. They lobbied the commission and [enlisted allies in Congress](#) to disapprove, water down or defer many of the recommendations.

Within a year of the accident at Fukushima — and [over my objections](#) — the NRC implemented just a few of the modest safety reforms that the agency’s employees had proposed, and then approved the first four new reactor licenses in decades, in Georgia and in South Carolina.

[The Green New Deal isn’t big enough](#)

But there was a problem. After Fukushima, people all over the world demanded a different approach to nuclear safety. Germany closed several older plants and required the rest to shut down by 2022. Japan closed most of its plants. Last year, even France, which gets about 80 percent of its electricity from nuclear power, proposed reducing that figure to 50 percent by 2035, because safety could not be guaranteed. Trying to make accidents unlikely wasn’t enough.

And here in the United States, those four new reactors — the vanguard of the “nuclear renaissance” — still haven’t opened. The South Carolina companies building two of the reactors [canceled](#) the project in 2017, after spending \$9 billion of their customers’ money without producing a single electron of power. The construction company behind the utilities, Westinghouse, [went bankrupt](#), almost destroying its parent company, the global conglomerate Toshiba. The other two reactors licensed while I chaired the NRC are still under construction in Georgia and years behind schedule. Their cost has ballooned from \$14 billion to \$28 billion and continues to grow.

History shows that the expense involved in nuclear power will never change. Past construction in the United States exhibited similar cost increases throughout the design, engineering and construction process. The technology and the safety needs are

just too complex and demanding to translate into a facility that is simple to design and build. No matter your views on nuclear power in principle, no one can afford to pay this much for two electricity plants. New nuclear is simply off the table in the United States.

After I left the NRC in 2012, I argued that we needed new ways to prevent accidents altogether. When a reactor incident occurs, the plant should not release any harmful radiation outside the plant itself. I was not yet antinuclear, just pro-public-safety. But nuclear proponents still see this as “[antinuclear](#).” They knew, as I did, that most plants operating today do not meet the “no off-site release” test. I think a reasonable standard for any source of electricity should be that it doesn’t contaminate your community for decades.

Coal and natural gas do not create this kind of acute accident hazard, though they do present a different kind of danger. Large dams for hydroelectric power could require evacuation of nearby communities if they failed — but without the lasting contamination effect of radiation. And solar, wind and geothermal energy pose no safety threat at all.

For years, my concerns about nuclear energy’s cost and safety were always tempered by a growing fear of climate catastrophe. But Fukushima provided a good test of just how important nuclear power was to slowing climate change: In the months after the accident, all nuclear reactors in Japan were [shuttered](#) indefinitely, eliminating production of almost all of the country’s carbon-free electricity and about 30 percent of its total electricity production. Naturally, [carbon emissions rose, and future emissions-reduction targets were slashed](#).

Would shutting down plants all over the world lead to similar results? Eight years after Fukushima, that question has been answered. Fewer than 10 of Japan’s 50 reactors have resumed operations, yet the country’s carbon emissions have dropped below their levels before the accident. How? Japan has made significant gains in energy efficiency and solar power. It turns out that relying on nuclear energy is actually a bad strategy for combating climate change: One accident wiped out Japan’s carbon gains. Only a turn to renewables and conservation brought the country back on target.

What about the United States? Nuclear accounts for about [19 percent](#) of U.S. electricity production and most of our carbon-free electricity. Could reactors be phased out here without increasing carbon emissions? If it were completely up to the free market, the answer would be yes, because nuclear is more expensive than almost any other source of electricity today. Renewables such as solar, wind and hydroelectric power generate electricity for less than the nuclear plants under construction in Georgia, and in most places, they produce cheaper electricity than existing nuclear plants that have paid off all their construction costs.

In 2016, observing these trends, I launched a company devoted to building offshore wind turbines. My journey, from admiring nuclear power to fearing it, was complete: This tech is no longer a viable strategy for dealing with climate change, nor is it a competitive source of power. It is hazardous, expensive and unreliable, and

abandoning it wouldn't bring on climate doom.

The real choice now is between saving the planet and saving the dying nuclear industry. I vote for the planet.

[Five myths about nuclear energy](#)

[In Europe, the Green Party is a force. In the U.S., it's irrelevant.](#)

Last Updated on Tuesday, 05 May 2020 21:57

446 readings

[Moving Forward, Not Backward: A Regional Agenda for Caring,
Low-Carbon Communities After Covid-19](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 11 May 2020 19:36

www.commonaction.ca

May 2020

This Solutions Statement was developed with input from more than a hundred people representing dozens of community organizations, in a collaborative policy-development process in April 2020 facilitated by Common Vision, Common Action.

Common Vision, Common Action is a grassroots initiative in

British Columbia's Capital Region, Coastal Salish and Nuu-chah-nulth Territory,

to create and implement a regional agenda for social and ecological justice.

To get involved or provide feedback on this Solutions Statement, please contact us at contact@commonaction.ca.

Preamble

The Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated the fragility of the private enterprise economy in

British Columbia's capital region - how a temporary shift in consumer spending habits and

government policy can immediately result in unemployment and economic insecurity for tens of

thousands of working people in the region, and the closure of thousands of businesses.

The pandemic has also demonstrated enduring sources of strength, including the

natural human inclinations toward co-operation, care, compassion and the rendering of mutual aid. Finally, the pandemic has demonstrated ecological benefits arising from reduced impacts from human activity on the atmosphere and on fragile ecosystems, with substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions (CO₂), which contribute to climate change, and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), which impacts air quality and human health. Natural ecosystems are already demonstrating signs of recovery within the very short timeframe of declining economic activity.

2 As we look ahead to the post-Covid-19 recovery, and begin to consider the measures that individuals, communities and public and private institutions can take, it is worth considering retaining elements of the Covid crisis response on a steady-state basis, to respond effectively to three major crises that pre-dated Covid-19 in BC's capital region and beyond:

(1) the **Climate and Ecological Crisis**: which threatens the ability of species including humans to survive on planet Earth long term if greenhouse-gas emissions are not reduced sufficiently to keep historic global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels;

(2) the **Inequality Crisis**: which leaves thousands of people in the capital region, and more than a billion people globally, lacking access to the basic necessities of life, including secure housing and healthy food, while other segments of the regional and global population have hoarded wealth and resources far in excess of what can be consumed in a person's lifetime; and

(3) the **Opioid and Overdose Crisis**, which has resulted in the untimely death of an estimated 5,000 people in British Columbia, 15,000 people in Canada and 500,000 globally since 2016.

The capital region is also confronted with the ongoing impacts of **Colonization**, which has resulted in dispossession of Indigenous lands and disruption of Indigenous laws, culture, subsistence practices and governance systems, leaving Indigenous communities

particularly vulnerable to the impacts of the pandemic and the associated social and economic crises. Faced with the ongoing threat of the Climate and Ecological Crisis, the Inequality Crisis and the Opioid and Overdose Crisis, and the ongoing impacts of Colonization, **it is imperative that individuals, communities and public and private institutions act now** to implement the following measures to retain Caring, Low-Carbon Communities in the post-Covid-19 world.

Local Measures for Caring, Local-Carbon Communities

1. Endorse the following principles as the basis for post-Covid-19 economic recovery efforts:

(a) The goal of economic activity is to meet the core needs of all, living within the limits of Earth's life-support systems, while caring for one another and caring for the planet.

(b) Recovery efforts must align with recognition of human rights including Indigenous rights, with a focus on advancing equity, redistributing power and wealth, and eliminating systemic barriers to living full, safe and healthy lives, which are disproportionately faced by Indigenous people, women, people of colour, people living in poverty, people with disabilities, people with precarious immigration status, newcomers, refugees, people from ethno-cultural minority backgrounds and LGBTQ2S people.

2

2. Maintain a permanent reduction in retail and commercial sales of gasoline and other fossil fuels, to ensure that GHG reductions arising from the Covid-19 shutdown are retained on a steady-state basis in BC's capital region, through the following measures:

(a) Retain the current **fare-free public transit** program on a 1-year trial basis.

(b) Deploy the existing BC Transit fleet with **maximum service hours** for bus and handyDart to substantially improve service and equity, alongside fast-tracking

the
purchase of new buses and expansion of fleet maintenance facilities.

c) Immediately **implement transit priority** such as bus lanes on existing roads,
to
increase transit capacity, speed and reliability at peak periods.

d) Substantially increase public investment in **sidewalks, crosswalks and cycling infrastructure** in all areas, to support active transportation, public health and economic stimulus, including **road closures** to create **pedestrian greenways** within neighbourhoods.

(e) Rapidly phase out the **installation of new fossil-fuel heating systems** in residential, commercial and institutional properties, and **expand rebate programs for zero-emissions heating systems**, solar power and other sustainable technologies, including front-end rebates to ensure equity.

(f) Initiate a major program of **energy and seismic retrofits** for existing residential, commercial and institutional buildings, to pursue energy efficiency, seismic resilience, work-from-home capability and economic stimulus.

3. **Ensure every person can live with security and dignity with access to the basic necessities of life, including housing, food, clean water, sanitation, health services, education, recreation and culture, through the following measures:**

(a) Permanently convert a portion of the regional supply of **transient accommodation** (hotels, motels and short-term rental units) into residential housing, with supports as necessary appropriate to individual needs.

(b) Expand construction of **purpose-built, energy-efficient nonmarket housing** with supports appropriate to individual needs, to ensure a person's housing costs do not exceed 30 per cent of their gross income.

(c) Maintain access to safer supply and supervised consumption services for people managing addictions, as part of a general policy of harm reduction and

decriminalization,

(d) Facilitate a major **expansion of childcare facilities and services**, advocating to senior levels of government for proper training and compensation for early childhood educators.

2B

(e) Support the **regeneration of Indigenous food systems** and revitalization of Indigenous land-management practices, working in partnership with Indigenous peoples and communities.

(f) Increase regional food security by implementing a **Regional Farmland Trust** without delay, to protect and ensure active use of the agricultural land base for food production, with encouragement for organic, regenerative and low-emissions farming methods, fair labour standards and increased access to healthy food for low-income people.

(g) Expand **municipal support for food production** on private and public land, including distribution of gardening materials including soil, plants and educational resources.

(h) Maintain and expand a high-quality network of **natural areas, trails and recreational facilities** throughout the region, including wilderness areas, parks, playgrounds and fitness facilities.

(i) Develop a long-term strategy to **diversify the regional economy beyond the tourism sector**, including expanding **low-carbon and co-operative sectors** of the economy.

(j) Introduce permanent income-support and funding programs to **sustain Arts and Culture** and promote community-building / cultural activities and facilities, through joint action by all levels of government.

4. Advocate to the Provincial and Federal governments to support Caring, Low-Carbon Communities through the following measures:

(a) Provide **financial and regulatory support** for the programs and actions identified

above.

(b) Increase public revenues through the immediate **introduction of a Wealth Tax**, levied on a progressive basis on personal and corporate assets, a more progressive Income Tax and closing loopholes that allow Canadians to take advantage of tax havens.

(c) Focus economic recovery stimulus spending on **building a robust non-market housing system**, integrated with health and social care, to permanently end homelessness and to ensure that everyone has access to housing and supports.

(d) Support **expansion of the low-carbon sectors of our economy**, including caregiving, health and wellness, education, and arts and culture, to foster strong, resilient communities.

(e) Support working people, economic stimulus and climate action by investing immediately in the **electrification and expansion** of local, regional and national **inter-city rail and bus networks**, under public ownership, operation and control, including bus priority lanes, LRT and other modes.

2

(f) **Support Indigenous people and communities** to rapidly improve health, housing, water and social service systems, in a manner consistent with Indigenous rights, title and self-government.

(g) Increase **income-support programs for unemployed people, low-income people, people with disabilities, senior citizens and people with precarious immigration** status through joint action by all levels of government to a level that allows a person to live with security and dignity.

(h) Increase **protections and security** for working people including provision of a Living Wage and appropriate social security programs, with a focus on precariously employed workers, migrant workers, farm workers and workers who lack the protection and benefits provided by a collective bargaining relationship with employers.

(i) **Grant permanent residency status**, or a pathway, or access to rights and benefits as workers and residents, to people with precarious immigration status, who have been rendered invisible in Covid-19 response efforts.

(j) Embrace a permanent **policy of clean energy** and “Keeping the Carbon in the Ground” , through the following measures:

i. Fund the **retraining of energy workers** and others in the clean energy economy.

ii. Provide **transitional income support** for energy workers and communities currently dependent on the oil and gas sector.

iii. Support **renewable energy** sources and enhanced storage and delivery systems to convert to all-electric power usage, prioritizing community-based and community-led energy solutions.

iv. **Withhold regulatory approval** and public investment for all new fossil-fuel projects, including oil and gas pipelines and wells, and immediately halt the Trans-Mountain and Coastal Gaslink projects, which are detrimental to the environment and to the economy.

v. **Divest from the fossil-fuel industry and end all public subsidies**, including current subsidies and any stimulus packages to oil and gas companies.

vi. Mandate the **decommissioning and clean-up of existing well sites**.

(k) Retain emissions reductions in the aviation sector and other high carbon-emissions sectors by immediately introducing **Carbon Budgeting**, increasing the Carbon Tax and introducing the **Permanent Rationing of GHG Emissions from Aviation**, allocated on a per-capita, annual basis, with applications for exemptions considered on the basis of need by a federal Office of GHG Emissions Rationing.

(l) Transition immediately to **sustainable management of second-growth forests** for carbon sequestration and biological diversity, including value-added production and legislated protection of old-growth forests and other sensitive habitat, with a just

Friday, 15 May 2020 14:38

Jamelle Bouie
By Jamelle Bouie
Opinion Columnist

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/08/opinion/sunday/anti-lockdown-protesters.html>

May 8, 2020



Demonstrators take part in an American Patriot Rally on the steps of the Michigan State Capitol in Lansing last month.

Demonstrators take part in an American Patriot Rally on the steps of the Michigan State Capitol in Lansing last month. Credit... Jeff Kowalsky/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

Most Americans support the lockdowns and want the government to bring the coronavirus under control before opening up the economy. But “most” is not “all,” and a small minority is eager to end all the restrictions now, even as the virus spreads and Covid-19 caseloads continue to grow.

A small faction of that minority has taken to the streets in vocal opposition to stay-at-home measures and the politicians responsible for them. They carry guns and wave Confederate flags and denounce virus mitigation strategies as “tyranny,” an imposition on their liberty to shop, consume and do as they please.

The vast majority of these protesters — like the vast majority of those who want to prematurely reopen the economy — are white. This is in stark contrast to the victims of Covid-19 (who are disproportionately black and brown), as well as those who have lost their jobs as a result of the pandemic (who are also disproportionately black and brown), as well as those who have been or will be forced to work — or work more — as a result of reopening (the service workers and laborers who are again disproportionately black and brown).

It's true that not every racial disparity speaks to some deeper dynamic of race and racism. But this one does. I don't think you can separate the vehemence of anti-lockdown protesters from their whiteness, nor do I think we can divorce their demands to "reopen" the economy from the knowledge that many of those most affected belong to other racial groups. It's not so much that they're showing racial animus (although some are), but that their conception of what it means to be "free" is, at its root, tied tightly to their racial identity.

Jamelle Bouie's Newsletter: Discover overlooked writing from around the internet, and get exclusive thoughts, photos and reading recommendations from Jamelle.

In a 1993 Harvard Law Review article, "Whiteness as Property," the legal scholar Cheryl Harris described the development of white racial identity in detail and explained how it took on privileges and benefits that marked it as an asset with social, political and economic value in the context of a slave society:

Because whites could not be enslaved or held as slaves, the racial line between white and black was extremely critical; it became a line of protection and demarcation from the potential threat of commodification, and it determined the allocation of the benefits and burdens of this form of property. White identity and whiteness were sources of privilege and protection; their absence meant being an object of property.

"Whiteness," Harris continued, "was the characteristic, the property of free human beings." To be white was to have control over oneself and one's labor. It was to be autonomous and subject to no one's will but one's own. If, for example, Thomas Jefferson could not support emancipation despite seeing the basic injustice of slavery, it was in part because of self-interest, in part because of fear ("We have the wolf by the ear, and we can neither hold him nor safely let him go") and in part because he couldn't imagine black people as members of the polity on account of their experience as slaves. It marked them as inferior and, in some sense, fundamentally unfree. "This unfortunate difference of color, and perhaps of faculty, is a powerful obstacle to the emancipation of these people," Jefferson notoriously wrote in his 1785 book, "Notes on the State of Virginia."

Freedom from domination and control is one aspect of the meaning of whiteness. The other aspect, in a kind of ideological inversion, is the right to control the presence and the lives of nonwhites. To be white in antebellum America, for instance, was to be able to enslave Africans and expropriate native land. It was, as Harris notes, the right to exclude as well as the right to discipline; to punish those who violated the terms of the racial order.



Flags waving at the American Patriot Rally, organized by Michigan United for Liberty. Credit... Jeff Kowalsky/Agence France-Press — Getty Images

ImageFlags waving at the American Patriot Rally, organized by Michigan United for Liberty.

Flags waving at the American Patriot Rally, organized by Michigan United for Liberty. Credit... Jeff Kowalsky/Agence France-Press — Getty Images

This dynamic is present throughout American history, whether in westward expansion — understood as the extension of white control over native land, including the violent displacement of native peoples — or in the rise of lynchings at the turn of the 20th century, when ordinary white men claimed the right to inflict lethal violence on blacks (and others) who transgressed racial boundaries. You can see it in the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the “sundown towns” that dotted the Midwest in the middle of the 20th century. You could even place the recent killing of Ahmaud Arbery — a young African-American man pursued by two white men while jogging through a middle-class neighborhood in Brunswick, Ga., and then shot to death by one of them — in this same context.

If whiteness has meant the right to control and to be free from control, then it is easy to see how racial identity might influence the reaction to the lockdowns among a certain subset of white Americans.

More than just burdensome, the restrictions become an intolerable violation of the social contract as these Americans understand it. They run against the meaning of their racial identity, of the freedom and autonomy it is supposed to

signify. And they resolve the violation by asserting the other aspect of white freedom, the right of control.

You can see this play out on the ground, in the protests, and you can see it play out on the national stage. President Trump has both encouraged anti-lockdown protesters — using the language of liberation to do so — and issued an executive order bringing meatpacking facilities under the purview of the Defense Production Act, which would allow him to force meatpacking workers — again, a disproportionately black and brown work force — back on the job despite the threat of infection, illness and death.

Likewise, when Rebecca Bradley, a Supreme Court justice in Wisconsin, compared the state's stay-at-home order on Tuesday to Japanese internment during World War II, she was making a statement about who deserves autonomy and who doesn't.

The great irony, of course, is that this conception of freedom, situated within racial hierarchy and meant to justify deprivation and inequality, has always been impoverished when compared with an expansive, inclusive vision of what it means to be free. And in the particular context of a deadly pandemic, the demand to be free of mutual obligation is, in essence, a demand to be free to die and threaten those around you with illness and death. Most Americans, including most white Americans, have rejected this freedom of the grave. But among the ones who haven't are the people leading our government, which means that this "freedom" remains a powerful — and dangerous — force to be reckoned with.

Last Updated on Friday, 15 May 2020 14:45

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[COVID-19 Has Blown Away the Myth About 'First' and 'Third' World Competence](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Thursday, 21 May 2020 08:31

COVID-19 Has Blown Away the Myth About 'First' and 'Third' World Competence



JOHANNESBURG, May 15 2020 (IPS) - One of the planet's – and Africa's – deepest prejudices is being demolished by the way countries handle COVID-19.

For as long as any of us remember, everyone “knew” that “First World” countries – in effect, Western Europe and North America – were much better at providing their citizens with a good life than the poor and incapable states of the “Third World”. “First World” has become shorthand for competence, sophistication and the highest political and economic standards.

So deep-rooted is this that even critics of the “First World” usually accept it. They might argue that it became that way by exploiting the rest of the world or that it is not morally or culturally superior. But they never question that it knows how to offer (some) people a better material life. Africans and others in the “Third World” often aspire to become like the “First World” – and to live in it, because that means living better.

For Anglophone Africans, it is doubly interesting that two of the greatest failures in handling COVID-19 are the former coloniser, Britain, and the English-speaking superpower, the United States of America

So we should have expected the state-of-the-art health systems of the “First World”, spurred on by their aware and empowered citizens, to handle COVID-19 with relative ease, leaving the rest of the planet to endure the horror of buckling health systems and mass graves.

We have seen precisely the opposite.

Fatal errors

“First World” is often code for countries run by Europeans or people of European descent; some of the worst health performers on the globe in recent weeks have been “First World”. For Anglophone Africans, it is doubly interesting that two of the greatest failures in handling COVID-19 are the former coloniser, Britain, and the English-speaking superpower, the United States of America.

Both countries' national governments have made just about every possible mistake in tackling COVID-19.

They [ignored the threat](#). When they were forced to act, they [sent mixed signals](#) to citizens which encouraged many to act in ways which [spread the infection](#). Neither did anything like the testing needed to control the virus. Both failed to equip their hospitals and health workers with the equipment they

needed, triggering many avoidable deaths.

The failure was political. The US is the only rich country with no national health system. An attempt by former president Barack Obama to [extend affordable care](#) was watered down by right-wing resistance, then [further gutted by the current president and his party](#). Britain's much-loved [National Health Service](#) has been [weakened by spending cuts](#). Both governments failed to fight the virus in time because they had other priorities.

And yet, in Britain, the government's [popularity ratings are sky high](#) and it is expected to win the next election comfortably. The US president is behind in the polls but the contest is close enough to [make his re-election a real possibility](#). Can there be anything more typically "Third World" than citizens supporting a government whose actions cost thousands of lives?

Western European countries such as [Spain](#), [Italy](#) and Africa's other wholesale coloniser, [France](#), also battled to contain the virus. Some European countries have coped reasonably well, as have some run by the descendants of Europeans such as [New Zealand](#) and [Australia](#). But the star performers are not in the historical "First World".

Effective responses

The most effective response was probably South Korea's, followed by other East Asian states and territories. This is partly because they are used to dealing with coronavirus outbreaks. But it is also because they learned from experience: South Korea's success is due to [very effective testing and tracing of infected people](#). Whatever the reason, it is East Asia, not "the West", which has done what the "First World" is expected to do.

Some would reply that East Asia is now "First World". So, it is still superior; it has simply changed its address. This is debatable. But, even if it is accepted, some places have contained the virus in distinctly "Third World" conditions.

Kerala was the first Indian state to encounter the virus but [has kept deaths down to three](#). It had largely curbed COVID-19 but is now dealing with nearly 200 cases, all people arriving from other parts of India. Judging by its record so far, it will contain this outbreak too.

Kerala, too, has learnt from handling previous epidemics. It also has a strong health system. But one of its key tools is [citizen participation](#): it has worked with neighbourhood watches and citizen volunteers to track the contacts of infected people. Students were recruited to build kiosks at which citizens were tested. Kerala also had the capacity to ensure that all children entitled to school meals received them after schools were closed: non-governmental organisations were mostly responsible, emphasising the partnership between the government and citizens.

Kerala's performance is not a fluke: it has, for years, produced better health outcomes and literacy rates than the rest of India.

Nor has Africa's response to the virus confirmed prejudices. When COVID-19 began spreading, it became almost routine for reports, [commentaries](#) – and Melinda Gates, who, with her husband Bill, heads the couple's development foundation – to predict that Africa would be engulfed in death as the virus ripped through its weak health systems. This is, after all, what is meant to happen in the "Third World" and particularly in Africa, which is always considered the least capable continent on the planet.

So far, it has not happened. It still might but, even if it does, some countries are coping better than the dire predictions claimed (and, perhaps, better than the "First World"). One stand-out is Senegal, which has devised a [cheap test for the virus](#) and has used 3-D printing to produce ventilators at a fraction of the going price. Africa, too, has experienced recent outbreaks, notably of Ebola, and seems to have learned valuable lessons from them.

Inspiring

The "First World" is still far richer than the rest of the planet and may well remain so. So its politicians, academics and journalists will probably still believe they are better than the rest.

But the COVID-19 experience may just trigger new thinking in the "Third World". The most basic function of a government is to protect the safety of its citizens. Ensuring that people remain healthy is at least as important a guarantee of safety as protecting them from violence.




Reasonable people would surely much rather be living in Kerala or Senegal (or East Asia) right now than in Europe and North America, raising obvious questions about who really does offer a better life.

That should inspire Africans and others in the “Third World” to ask themselves whether it makes sense to want to be America, Britain or France. COVID-19 has made a strong argument for wanting to be East Asia – or, given Africa’s circumstances, Kerala.

[Steven Friedman](#), Professor of Political Studies, [University of Johannesburg](#)

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448 readings

[Bruce Power ordered to reveal prices](#)   

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 22 May 2020 07:50

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Bruce Power ordered to reveal prices

The [Ontario Information and Privacy Commissioner has ruled](#) that Bruce Power and the Ontario Government must come clean on the cost of power from rebuilt reactors noting that “the public has a right to know what the electricity cost will be from the multi-billion Bruce NGS [Nuclear Generating Station] project as they are paying for it and will be locked into paying for it for almost 50 years.”

In her response to an appeal by Bruce Power of an earlier decision, Adjudicator Diane Smith acknowledged that the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) has the power to suppress this information, but ruled that the public right to know trumped this authority.

In ruling that the pricing information should be released, the Adjudicator

reasoned that “the annual price of the Bruce NGS electricity options... would allow the public to assess and potentially advocate for alternative energy sources, such as conservation, demand response, hydro power imports from Quebec, renewable generation, and energy storage. [Environmental advocates need the annual price of the nuclear option as soon as possible to advocate for alternatives](#) that may take up to 10 years to implement.”

Further, the Adjudicator found the IESO and Bruce Power rationale for suppressing information about the price of power from rebuilt Bruce reactors to be without substance. She noted that contrary to the IESO’s assertions, “I find that the amount of information already disclosed is not adequate to address the public interest considerations.” She also found Bruce Power’s assertion that disclosing the information would somehow raise electricity prices rather baffling, noting “neither the IESO nor Bruce Power provided particulars that support their concerns about this.”

It’s important to note that pricing information for all renewable energy projects in Ontario is fully public and there is no need for citizens or environmental organizations to undertake long and costly Freedom of Information appeals to see this information. Similarly, Ontario Power Generation must publicly disclose all its costing information through the Ontario Energy Board. Only Bruce Power has had the special privilege of keeping all its pricing information firmly under wraps – until now.


[Thanks to the Privacy Commissioner we are optimistic we will soon see just what kind of deal Bruce Power is really offering the people of Ontario. The nuclear industry loves to talk about how it supplies “low cost power” though the numbers tell a very different tale.](#)

This matter should never have required a multi-year effort by an environmental NGO. If the Ontario government was serious about reducing hydro costs, it would have long since ordered this information be made public to allow a real comparison of the cost of different energy options. We cannot have an informed debate about the best options for Ontario when one powerful entity and our electricity system manager cling to secrecy.

Please share this message:

-Angela Bischoff, Director

375 readings

[Seismic survey threatens endangered whales](#) 

[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 22 May 2020 17:36

<https://georgiastrait.org/press/seismic-survey-threatens-endangered-whales/>

May 8



Image by Rachael Merrett.

As the oceans become quieter amidst the global pandemic, an application for seismic surveys off the West Coast of Vancouver Island threatens the recovery of endangered Southern Resident killer whales. This week, in response, a coalition of conservation groups has written to the federal minister of Fisheries and Oceans to inform her that approval of the application would be illegal under the *Species at Risk Act*.

Recently, the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia University requested a permit under the federal *Species at Risk Act* to conduct geophysical surveys in the habitat of the endangered Southern Resident Killer Whales. The seismic survey will produce high-intensity sound from an array of towed air guns through Southern Resident habitat, including areas designated as critical habitat. With only 72 remaining, the Southern Resident Killer whales are endangered under the *Species at Risk Act*. In May 2018, the government announced these whales face imminent threats to their survival and recovery. "The *Species at Risk Act* is clear that the Minister cannot permit any activity that would further jeopardize the critically endangered Southern Resident killer whales," said Margot Venton, Nature Program Director and lawyer at Ecojustice, which represents the groups.

The conservation organizations, David Suzuki Foundation, Georgia Strait Alliance; Natural Resources Defense Council, Raincoast Conservation Foundation and the World Wildlife Fund Canada, have worked to protect the

Southern Residents for more than a decade. They have pushed adoption, implementation, and enforcement of measures to reduce threats and protect Southern Residents and their critical habitat.

“Government, Canadian industry, and other stakeholders have been taking significant steps to reduce disturbance and harassment of these critically endangered whales,” said Michael Jasny, Director of Marine Mammal Protection at the Natural Resources Defense Council. “This proposal for seismic testing undermines the efforts that Canada is making.”

“Southern resident killer whales are critically endangered, and multiple threats already prevent their recovery. With only 72 individuals remaining, we expect legal protections to be upheld against irresponsible proposals for seismic testing in their critical habitat,” said Hussein Alidina, WWF-Canada’s lead specialist, ocean conservation.

–30–

About Georgia Strait Alliance

Formed in 1990, Georgia Strait Alliance is the only conservation group working to protect and restore the marine environment and promote the sustainability of the whole of the Georgia Strait, its adjoining waters and communities, www.georgiastrait.org

Last Updated on Friday, 22 May 2020 17:41

624 readings

[Nearly 900 Gulf Coast hazardous chemical facilities are vulnerable to dangerous hurricanes](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 23 May 2020 16:57

The Arkema chemical plant near Houston caught fire after Hurricane Harvey in 2017, forcing an evacuation.

[In 2017, Hurricane Harvey soaked Houston with record-setting downpours. At the nearby Arkema chemical plant, flooding knocked out the power and disabled refrigeration systems that were cooling hazardous chemicals.](#)

[The chemicals decomposed and combusted, and the trailers where they were stored caught fire. More than 200 nearby residents were evacuated for an entire week.](#)

[Susan Anenberg is with George Washington University’s Milken Institute School of Public Health. She says as climate change causes extreme weather to grow more common, similar incidents become more likely.](#)

[“This is a really understudied problem that is growing – and potentially disastrous in](#)

the future,” she says.

In recent research, Anenberg identified almost 900 highly hazardous chemical facilities within 50 miles of the Gulf Coast – a region likely to see more dangerous hurricanes. She found that more than 4 million people live close enough to one of those facilities to potentially need evacuation during a disaster.

She says stronger regulations can help reduce the risk of dangerous incidents.

“With proper planning and infrastructure and management,” she says, “they are preventable.”

Last Updated on Monday, 25 May 2020 11:30

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[Absolutely Unacceptable: if US may Resume Nuclear Explosive Testing](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 25 May 2020 10:18

For immediate release: May 25, 2020

Absolutely Unacceptable: Resumed Nuclear Explosive Testing

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Abolition 2000 Global Network to Eliminate Nuclear Weapons on May 23 unanimously adopted a statement condemning recent reports of White House discussions to resume nuclear weapons testing. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic Abolition 2000 had to take the unprecedented step of holding its AGM online, allowing participants from some 40

countries to join.

The statement (full text below) warns that resumed US testing of nuclear weapons would inevitably lead to resumption of testing by other nations. Such testing would, in any case, be in contravention of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, signed by the United States in 1996, yet pending entry-into-force.

John Burroughs, Executive Director of the Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy, and one of the statement's drafters said, "Testing of nuclear weapons evokes nuclear apocalypse, as in the days of US-Soviet brinksmanship. It must not be resumed. At the same time, we must recognize that the capabilities for apocalypse remain in place, and are being maintained and improved in the absence of nuclear explosive testing. This too must be brought to an end."

Daniel Ellsberg, former US nuclear war planner, and famed whistleblower of the Pentagon Papers, said, "Renewed nuclear testing initiated by the US would enable India, Pakistan and North Korea to test and develop 'H-bomb' thermonuclear warheads, which the existing moratorium on testing has prevented them from deploying. They could then join the US and Russia in threatening the world with the capability to cause nuclear winter, global famine, and near-extinction of humanity. Obviously, no nation on earth should possess this power. Rather than inviting its spread, the US and Russia should neither maintain nor 'modernize' but *dismantle* their own Doomsday Machines."

Jackie Cabasso, Executive Director of Western States Legal Foundation, and a founding mother of Abolition 2000 said, "25 years ago, we launched the Abolition 2000 Global Network to Eliminate Nuclear Weapons with an 11-point statement which includes a call to abolish all forms of nuclear testing. For more than a quarter of a century the moratorium on full-scale explosive nuclear testing has been largely adhered to. US resumption of such tests at this time would rock the foundations of an increasingly fragile world order and would set back efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons by decades. It must not be allowed."

About Abolition 2000

The Abolition 2000 network was formed in April 1995, during the first weeks of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference, when activists from around the world recognized that the issue of nuclear abolition was not on the agenda. An international network of organizations and individuals working for a global treaty to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons, Abolition 2000 is open to all organizations endorsing the Abolition 2000 Founding Statement* .

About the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty

The CTBT opened for signing in 1996 obliges states:

1. Not to carry out any nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion, and to

- prohibit and prevent any such nuclear explosion at any place under its jurisdiction or control.
2. To refrain from causing, encouraging, or in any way participating in the carrying out of any nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion.

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Full statement follows ...

May 23, 2020

Absolutely Unacceptable: Resumed Nuclear Explosive Testing

Statement of the Annual Meeting of the Abolition 2000 Global Network to Eliminate Nuclear Weapons

Resumption of nuclear explosive testing is absolutely unacceptable. Even discussing nuclear testing again is dangerously destabilizing. Yet according to news reports** such discussions have recently been held in the Trump White House. US resumption of nuclear testing would lead to testing by other states - possibly China, Russia, India, Pakistan, and DPRK. It would accelerate the emerging nuclear arms race, and damage prospects for nuclear arms control negotiations. A nuclear explosive test is itself a kind of threat. Testing would generate fear and mistrust and would entrench reliance on nuclear arms. It would move the world away from rather than towards a world free of nuclear weapons. Nuclear explosive testing must not happen, and there must not even be signals of its possibility. Instead the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty should be brought into legal force.

This episode comes in the context of ongoing upgrading of nuclear forces by the world's nuclear-armed states. It is supported by extensive laboratory research and experimentation which in part serves as a substitute for functions once served by

nuclear explosive testing. So, even as we demand that such testing not be resumed, we must recognize the dangers inherent in the ongoing nuclear weapons enterprise. Those dangers are now mostly out of sight of the public and subject to little media scrutiny, but they are real. They too must be addressed, which in the end will require the global abolition of nuclear arms.

Drafted on behalf of the AGM by:

John Burroughs, Executive Director, Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy

Daniel Ellsberg, author of *The Doomsday Machine: Confessions of a Nuclear War Planner*




Andrew Lichterman, Senior Research Analyst, Western States Legal Foundation

[*http://www.abolition2000.org/en/about/founding-statement/](http://www.abolition2000.org/en/about/founding-statement/)

**https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/trump-administration-discussed-conducting-first-us-nuclear-test-in-decades/2020/05/22/a805c904-9c5b-11ea-b60c-3be060a4f8e1_story.html

Last Updated on Monday, 25 May 2020 10:24

385 readings

[Crisis Hits Oil Industry in latin america](#)   

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 25 May 2020 10:35

Crisis Hits Oil Industry in latin america

By [Emilio Godoy](#) Reprint |  Print | Send by email | [En español](#)

Mexico's state-run oil giant Pemex faces a difficult outlook due to the fall in international oil prices and the crisis resulting from the coronavirus pandemic, which threatens its production and finances, in a situation analysed during the 29th La Jolla Energy Conference, organised online by the Institute of the Americas.
CREDIT: Emilio Godoy/IPS

MEXICO CITY, May 22 2020 (IPS) - While it attempts to cushion the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, the Latin American and Caribbean region also faces concerns about the future of the energy transition and state-owned oil companies.

These questions were discussed at the 29th La Jolla Energy Conference, organised by the [Institute of the Americas](#). It was held online May 18-22, rather than bringing together more than 50 speakers at the institute's headquarters in the coastal district of San Diego, in the U.S. state of California, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Alfonso Blanco of Uruguay, executive secretary of the [Latin American Energy Organisation](#) (OLADE), said during a session on global trends and the regional energy industry that the changes seen during the pandemic will spread after the crisis and will be long-lasting.

"There will be structural transformations and we are convinced that most consumer behaviors will change after the pandemic. Demand will vary due to changes in the main areas of transportation and other energy areas. The effects on fossil fuel consumption will be strong and there will be a greater impact on renewable energies," he said.

OLADE, a 27-member regional intergovernmental organisation for energy coordination, estimates that electricity demand has fallen by 29 percent in Bolivia compared to 2019, as a result of the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), which causes COVID-19, and by 26 percent in Argentina, 22 percent in Brazil and 11 percent in Chile.

"There will be structural transformations and we are convinced that most consumer behaviors will change

after the pandemic. Demand will vary due to changes in the main areas of transportation and other energy areas. The effects on fossil fuel consumption will be strong and there will be a greater impact on renewable energies." -- Alfonso Blanco

Likewise, final energy demand plummeted 14 percent in Brazil compared to 2019, 11 percent in both the Andean and Southern Cone regions, nine percent in Mexico, seven percent in Central America and five percent in the Caribbean.

As countries went into lockdown to curb the spread of COVID-19, electricity consumption by businesses and factories declined, due to the suspension of activities.

Leonardo Sempertegui, legal advisor to the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), said the pandemic may be a wake-up call for countries lagging behind in the energy transition.

"This may be the new normal. The structure and governance of the energy architecture to cope with the next phase are changing dramatically. Energy poverty and the energy transition cannot be solved regardless of who controls a resource; these challenges cannot wait," he said in the same session.

In Latin America, nations like Argentina, Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras and Uruguay have made progress in the energy transition since 2015, while Brazil has slid backwards and countries like Mexico are stuck in the same place, according to the World Economic Forum's [Energy Transition Index](#), released May 13.

As the region heads into the fourth month of the pandemic, countries are assessing their electricity markets, which have been shaken by the crisis.

Nations like Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Peru have resorted to long-term electricity auctions, which have generated low prices for renewables, while Mexico suspended such schemes in 2019.

In Argentina, as Andrés Chambouleyron, a non-resident fellow at the Institute of the Americas, explained, industrial consumption fell by 50 percent and electricity distributors have not been able to obtain sufficient revenues to cover fixed costs or electricity purchases.

The government has thus provided financing to Cammesa – the electricity wholesale market administration company – to pay the generators, since it is bound by contracts to buy the energy.

"There will be a permanent change in electricity consumption in Argentina. We have cheaper gas than before; the models say that you have to use more gas because it is cheaper than other sources. We won't see much change in Argentina's energy mix, and that could extend to all of Latin America," said Chambouleyron, who warned of breach of and renegotiation of contracts for energy purchases.



Low oil prices threaten to slow down the energy transition in Latin America, although renewable energies already compete with the costs of fossil fuels, agreed experts at the 29th La Jolla Energy Conference, organised online by the Institute of the Americas. The photo shows solar panels on a house in Ajijic, in the western Mexican state of Jalisco. CREDIT: Emilio Godoy/IPS

While renewables are already competing in price with conventional sources, low oil and gas prices undermine their expansion, a predicament that alternative energy sources have been facing in recent years.

In addition, the rise in the cost of international credit and the fluctuations of the dollar against local currencies may make generation more expensive.

In another session on the outlook for state-owned oil companies, Marta Jara, former president of Uruguay's public oil company ANCAP, said the current crisis could accelerate the transition, but called it a "major challenge".

"The temptation is to be opportunistic and forget the roadmap of the energy transition. We must invest in sustainable energy systems, decarbonise transport. It is important to secure funding and create jobs. I hope the crisis opens the door to be more innovative," she said.

Viable or not?

The plunge in fossil fuel prices is damaging the finances of the region's oil producing countries, such as Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela, and state companies in the sector are facing problems with regard to planning and operations.

But it benefits net importers, like the countries of Central America or Chile, whose oil bills have shrunk, while for consumers in both oil producing and importing countries the cost of electricity could go down.

"The most competitive will be the countries with lower oil extraction costs. Some projects will not be economically viable. We will see greater economic problems than in 2019," predicted Lisa Viscidi, director of the Energy, Climate Change and Extractive Industries Programme at the non-governmental [Inter-American Dialogue](#), during a panel on the situation in several Caribbean nations.

The pandemic and a rise in Saudi production announced on Mar. 10 led to a collapse in oil prices and the consequent risk of bankruptcies in the industry. State-owned oil companies have fared better than others so far in the crisis.

In another session on the outlook for state-owned oil companies, John Padilla, managing director of the

private consulting firm IPD Latin America, stated that “it will take time to get out of this situation, with effects for the region, and the need for great efficiency.

“Most nations have been exporters, efficiency will be the key. What has not been done is to cultivate domestic and regional markets, state enterprises are not going to play the same role as they always have,” he said.

Public companies such as Brazil’s Petrobras and Colombia’s Ecopetrol entered the crisis in a better position than Mexico’s Pemex, Venezuela’s PDVSA and Argentina’s YPF, according to experts.

“These are difficult times, even for the best prepared. We can hope that if the country and its company are in trouble, if governments need money, they can get more out of the companies,” said Francisco Monaldi, interim director of the Baker Institute for Public Policy’s Latin America Initiative at the private Rice University in the U.S. state of Texas.

In his view, “Mexico is in better fiscal conditions, it should not be a problem. But Pemex can drag Mexico down. If the government doesn’t change direction, it could become a serious problem,” he said as an example.

Although Pemex will increase its investment in 2020, the oil company reported losses of 20 billion dollars in the first quarter of this year. Due to the crisis, Petrobras limited its investment to 3.5 billion dollars and its daily production to 200,000 barrels, and postponed the sale of eight refineries.

Related IPS Articles

- [The Crises of 2020 Will Delay the Transition to Clean Energy](#)

For Lucas Aristizábal, a senior director in Fitch Ratings’ Latin American corporates group, some state-owned oil companies are viable and others are not.

“In 2021, the financial contribution of oil will be lower for governments. If they want the companies to play a key role, they will put more pressure on their financial structure. The current situation illustrates the economics of these corporations,” he said during the forum.

Pemex and YPF were already losing money per barrel in 2019, while Petrobras has more balanced production costs.

On the oil horizon, and in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, Guyana has become the rising star, although there is still political uncertainty, as the result of the Mar. 2 presidential elections is still unclear.

“It’s hard to predict what will happen. There is a risk of U.S. sanctions that would not affect investment in the sector, but would pose a political risk to the country,” said Thomas Singh, in the Department of Economics at the public University of Guyana.

The country expects to extract 600,000 barrels per day by 2024 and take in revenues of five billion dollars, with reserves exceeding five billion barrels.

347 readings

[The Canadian Oil Service Sector supports the Emergence of New Canadian Geothermal Developers](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 26 May 2020 05:20

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Canadian Oil Service Sector supports the Emergence of New Canadian Geothermal Developers

Calgary, Alberta, May 26, 2020 – At the end of April, The Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors (CAODC), Clean Energy Canada and the Petroleum Services Association of Canada (PSAC) joined together to establish an alliance with the existing geothermal industry participants to

promote Canadian geothermal development and to create jobs for displaced oil and gas drilling contractors and oilfield service workers.

See the link for details on this Geothermal Alliance [here](#).

Under such an initiative, Eavor believes Alberta could attract up to \$4 billion in private and foreign investment capital, to create 400MWe of clean dispatchable power and eliminate 2,000,000 tons of CO2 emissions per year, all the while eventually employing 5,000+ displaced oil service workers. Such a plan could kickstart a geothermal ecosystem in Canada that could lead the world and represent a clean sunrise export industry for the nation.

To rapidly scale a Canadian geothermal industry, however, will require an incentive plan that can attract new developers and participants to the market. Such an incentive plan will need to include Power Purchase Agreements (PPA's) or their equivalent to provide guaranteed offtake at a reasonable price for the value delivered (no different than for any new power generating asset). The advantage of such incentives are that they are technology agnostic and let the market decide which technologies and developers are involved.

In anticipation of these changes, we are pleased to announce that a number of geothermal developers have already indicated a desire to enter the market. They have done this by signing licensing and technical support agreements with Eavor. Each license to be focused on a specific area of interest for that developer in Western Canada.

Some of these developers new to Western Canada are:

- Kanin Energy - Janice Tran: CEO (<https://kaninenergy.com/>)
- Subsurface Renewables - Nathan Drader: President
- SustainDriven - Joey O'Brien: President (<https://sustaindriven.com/>)
- Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation / Eavor Yukon (extending geothermal developments beyond the Yukon)
- Brazeau County, Alberta - Bart Guyon: Reeve (<https://www.brazeau.ab.ca/>)

This is just the start as once a stable geothermal business environment is in place, more (and larger) market participants are also expected to join this emerging industry. Some of these developers are already in discussions but are as of yet unwilling to show their hand without clarifications from the government first. The important thing is that a lot of developers means a lot of work for service companies and a rapid ramp-up of clean dispatchable power.

Quotes:

Kevin Krausert (CAODC Drilling Rig Executive Chair) – “Having a diverse and growing stable of active geothermal developers in Canada is absolutely essential if we are going to generate a meaningful amount of geothermal related work for our drilling and oil service company members.”

Last Updated on Tuesday, 26 May 2020 05:23

447 readings

[First Nation Enacts Historic ?Elhdaqox Dechen Ts' edilhtan \(“Sturgeon River Law” \)](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 29 May 2020 09:32

Media Release: Archives

2020

May 28, 2020 - [?Esdilagh First Nation \(Alexandria First Nation\) Enacts Historic ?Elhdaqox Dechen Ts'edilhtan \("Sturgeon River Law"\)](#)

May 14, 2020 - New Prosperity Mine is Finally Dead: [T̓silhqot'in Nation Celebrates the Supreme Court of Canada's Decision to Deny Taseko Mines Limited's Appeal.](#)

May 8, 2020 - [T̓silhqot'in Nation Approves of Assault Weapon Ban Order](#)

March 31, 2020 - [T̓silhqot'in Nation Declares State of Emergency in response to COVID-19](#)

March 27, 2020 - [T̓silhqot'in Nation Maintains Full Closure of Steelhead Fisheries, Calls on DFO to Take Immediate Action Against Extirpation](#)

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[How a Global Ocean Treaty Could Protect Biodiversity in the High Seas](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 08 June 2020 09:54

A TRAWLER IN JOHNSTONE STRAIT, BC, CANADA. HUMAN ACTIVITIES SUCH AS POLLUTION, OVERFISHING, MINING, GEO-ENGINEERING AND CLIMATE CHANGE HAVE MADE AN INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT TO PROTECT THE HIGH SEAS MORE CRITICAL THAN EVER. CREDIT: WINKY/CC BY 2.0

JUN 8 2020 (IPS) - OCEANS COVER 70 PER CENT OF THE EARTH'S SURFACE. BUT, BECAUSE MANY OF US SPEND MOST OF OUR LIVES ON LAND, THE 362 MILLION SQUARE KILOMETRES OF BLUE OUT THERE AREN'T ALWAYS TOP OF MIND.

WHILE VAST, OCEANS ARE NOT EMPTY. THEY ARE [TEEMING WITH LIFE](#) AND CONNECTED TO SOCIETY THROUGH GEOPOLITICS AND RECREATION.

BUT OCEANS — ALONG WITH COASTAL PEOPLE AND MARINE SPECIES — ARE VULNERABLE, AND [GOOD OCEAN GOVERNANCE IS CRITICAL](#) TO PROTECT THESE EXPANSES FROM POLLUTION, [OVERFISHING](#) AND CLIMATE CHANGE, TO NAME

JUST [SOME OF THE THREATS](#).

THE LAWS, INSTITUTIONS AND REGULATIONS IN PLACE FOR THE OCEANS ARE A MULTI-LAYERED PATCHWORK AND ALWAYS A WORK IN PROGRESS.

COMMON HERITAGE OF HUMANKIND

SOME CHARACTERIZE OCEANS AS THE “[COMMON HERITAGE OF HUMANKIND](#).” AS SUCH, THE UNITED NATIONS PLAYS A CRITICAL ROLE IN OCEAN GOVERNANCE, AND THE [UN CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF THE SEA \(UNCLOS\)](#) IS A KEY INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT. THE AGREEMENT GRANTS COASTAL AND ISLAND STATES AUTHORITY OVER SWATHS OF OCEAN EXTENDING 200 NAUTICAL MILES (360 KILOMETRES) FROM THE SHORE. THESE ARE CALLED EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONES (EEZ).

EEZS ARE DOMESTIC SPACES. COUNTRIES ENSHRINE LAW AND DELEGATE AUTHORITY TO STATE AGENCIES THAT LEAD MONITORING, MANAGEMENT AND ENFORCEMENT IN THESE ZONES.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ALSO ASSERT [JURISDICTIONAL AUTHORITY](#) AND COASTAL PEOPLES HOLD CRITICAL INSIGHT ABOUT COASTAL AND MARINE ECOSYSTEMS. GOVERNANCE IS IMPROVED WHEN STATE AGENCIES SHARE POWER AND COLLABORATE.

FOR EXAMPLE, DURING THE NEWFOUNDLAND COD COLLAPSE, INSHORE FISHERMEN HAD [LOCAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE](#) ABOUT CHANGING COD STOCK DYNAMICS THAT MIGHT HAVE HELPED AVOID THE DISASTER.

A TURTLE SWIMS IN A MARINE PROTECTED AREA. CREDIT: FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

AREAS BEYOND NATIONAL JURISDICTION

A VAST PORTION OF THE OCEAN LIES BEYOND EEZS: 64 PER CENT BY AREA AND 95 PER CENT BY VOLUME. THESE REGIONS ARE OFTEN REFERRED TO AS THE HIGH SEAS. THE HIGH SEAS ARE IMPORTANT FOR [INTERNATIONAL TRADE](#), [FISHING FLEETS](#), [UNDERSEA TELECOMMUNICATIONS CABLES](#) AND ARE OF [COMMERCIAL INTEREST TO MINING COMPANIES](#). THE HIGH SEAS ALSO HOST A WIDE ARRAY OF ECOSYSTEMS AND SPECIES. [MANY OF THESE ARE UNDERSTUDIED OR ALTOGETHER UNRECORDED](#).

UN AGREEMENTS IDENTIFY HIGH SEAS USING A TECHNICAL TERM “[AREAS BEYOND NATIONAL JURISDICTION](#)” THAT REFERS TO THE

WATER COLUMN. THE SEA FLOOR IS IDENTIFIED SEPARATELY AND CALLED “[THE AREA](#).” UNCLOS AND OTHER PIECES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW REGULATE ACTIVITY IN THESE SPACES AND ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING THAT NO SINGLE COUNTRY OR COMPANY DOMINATES OR BENEFITS UNFAIRLY.

OTHER MULTILATERAL, SECTOR-BASED ARRANGEMENTS MANAGE PARTICULARLY COMPLEX RESOURCES. FOR EXAMPLE, [REGIONAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS](#) BRING NATION STATES TOGETHER TO COLLABORATE ON MONITORING AND MANAGING FISH STOCKS, LIKE TUNA, THAT HAVE LARGE RANGES AND CROSS MULTIPLE BORDERS AND BOUNDARIES.

THE BIODIVERSITY GOVERNANCE GAP

CURRENTLY, INTERNATIONAL LAW DOES NOT MEANINGFULLY ADDRESS BIODIVERSITY MONITORING AND CONSERVATION IN THE HIGH SEAS. THIS “BIODIVERSITY GOVERNANCE GAP” HAS [BEEN OF CONCERN FOR THE PAST TWO DECADES](#).

WITHOUT A BINDING MECHANISM UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW, COUNTRIES ARE NOT OBLIGATED TO CO-OPERATE ON DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING CONSERVATION MEASURES IN THE HIGH SEAS. IN ADDITION, MONITORING THE IMPACTS OF VARIOUS ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES, SUCH AS FISHING AND MINING, ON BIODIVERSITY IS PIECEMEAL AND INADEQUATE. MARINE SPECIES OR EVEN ENTIRE ECOSYSTEMS COULD BE LOST BEFORE WE HAVE HAD A CHANCE TO [IDENTIFY AND UNDERSTAND](#) THEM.

ON DEC. 24, 2017, THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY VOTED TO CONVENE A MULTI-YEAR PROCESS TO DEVELOP A TREATY ON “[THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF MARINE BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY OF AREAS BEYOND NATIONAL JURISDICTION](#).”

THREE OF THE SCHEDULED NEGOTIATION SESSIONS HAVE TAKEN PLACE, WHILE THE FOURTH AND FINAL ONE, SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 2020, WAS POSTPONED DUE TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC. SOME PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE. NOTABLY, THE [DRAFT TREATY](#) ADDRESSES FOUR KEY AREAS: MARINE GENETIC RESOURCES; AREA-BASED MANAGEMENT TOOLS, INCLUDING MARINE PROTECTED AREAS; ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS AND CAPACITY BUILDING AND THE TRANSFER OF MARINE TECHNOLOGY.

[YET, MANY DISAGREEMENTS REMAIN](#).

FOR EXAMPLE, COUNTRIES DIVERGE ON THE EXTENT TO WHICH GOVERNANCE SHOULD PRIORITIZE THE PRINCIPLE OF OCEANS AS THE

“COMMON HERITAGE OF HUMANKIND.” VERY PRAGMATIC QUESTIONS UNDERLIE THIS TENSION: SHOULD MARINE GENETIC SEQUENCES BE COMMERCIALIZED? IF SO, HOW WOULD THIS WORK AND WILL IT BE POSSIBLE TO AGREE ON A WAY TO SHARE BENEFITS FAIRLY? [THESE ARE CRITICAL](#) AND HOW THEY ARE ADDRESSED WILL DETERMINE IF PERSISTENT INEQUITIES BETWEEN THE GLOBAL NORTH AND GLOBAL SOUTH ARE LESSENED OR EXACERBATED.

ANOTHER CHALLENGE RELATES TO MARINE PROTECTED AREAS (MPAS), ESPECIALLY HOW THEY ARE DEFINED AND IMPLEMENTED. WHAT LEVELS OF PROTECTION ARE NEEDED FOR AN AREA TO COUNT AS AN MPA? HOW MUCH SHOULD THE TREATY PREDETERMINE PROCESSES USED TO ESTABLISH NEW MPAS AND HOW WILL MPA RULES BE ENFORCED?

CREDIT: CHRISTOPHER PALA/IPS

COVID-19: NEGOTIATIONS CUT ADRIFT?

A

HAS POSTPONING THE FINAL ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS CUT HIGH SEAS BIODIVERSITY NEGOTIATIONS ADRIFT? A [EUROPEAN RESEARCH TEAM IS SURVEYING](#) PARTICIPANTS AND EXPERTS TO LEARN WHAT IMPACT THE DISRUPTION MAY HAVE. HOWEVER, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE TREATY WILL FALL COMPLETELY BY THE WAYSIDE. DELEGATES AND NEGOTIATORS MAY WELL CONTINUE TO INFORMALLY DISCUSS OPTIONS WITH ONE ANOTHER AND REFINE POSITIONS WITH AN EYE TOWARDS REACHING CONSENSUS WHEN RESCHEDULING IS POSSIBLE.

A RATIFIED TREATY COVERING BIODIVERSITY IN THE HIGH SEAS WOULD BE AN EXCITING LAYER TO ADD TO THE OCEAN GOVERNANCE PATCHWORK.

BUT, DELEGATES AND NEGOTIATORS ALWAYS HAVE TO MAKE CONCESSIONS DURING TALKS, AND DISAGREEMENTS OFTEN PERSIST AFTER THE TREATY HAS BEEN SIGNED. IMPLEMENTATION CAN BE AS CHALLENGING AND CONTENTIOUS AS NEGOTIATION ITSELF. VARIOUS HUMAN DIMENSIONS AND ECONOMIC CHALLENGES WILL ALSO CONTINUE TO NEED ATTENTION, INCLUDING [HUMAN TRAFFICKING](#), PERVERSE [FISHING SUBSIDIES](#) AND OUR COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY TO [SMALL ISLAND STATES THAT MAY BE SUBMERGED](#) AS SEA LEVELS RISE.

THESE CHALLENGES POINT TO OTHER INTERNATIONAL FORUMS — THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION, INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION AND THE UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE — AND SERVE TO REMIND US OF THE MYRIAD WAYS THAT

WE ARE ALL CONNECTED TO, AND BY, OCEANS.

[JENNIFER SILVER](#), ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY, ENVIRONMENT AND GEOMATICS, [UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH](#); [LESLIE ACTON](#), ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, [THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI](#); [LISA CAMPBELL](#), PROFESSOR OF MARINE AFFAIRS AND POLICY, [DUKE UNIVERSITY](#), AND [NOELLA GRAY](#), ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF GEOGRAPHY, [UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH](#)

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Last Updated on Sunday, 13 September 2020 12:40

559 readings

[U.N. Member States Accused of Cherry-Picking Human Rights](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 28 June 2020 11:49

Protestors gather outside the White House to demonstrate against torture on the 10th anniversary of the opening of the U.S. prison facility at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. Charles Davis/IPS

UNITED NATIONS, Mar 2 2015 (IPS) - The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein has criticised member states for 'cherry-picking' human rights – advocating some and openly violating others – perhaps to suit their own national or political interests.

Despite ratifying the U.N. charter reaffirming their faith in fundamental human rights, there are some member states who, "with alarming regularity", are disregarding and violating human rights, "sometimes to a shocking degree," he said.

Addressing the opening session of the Geneva-based Human Rights Council (HRC) Monday, Zeid faulted member states for claiming "exceptional circumstances" for their convoluted decisions.

"They pick and choose between rights," he [pointed out](#), without identifying any member state by name.

"One Government will thoroughly support women's human rights and those of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community, but will balk at any suggestion that those rights be extended to migrants of irregular status.

"Another State may observe scrupulously the right to education, but will brutally stamp out opposing political views," he noted. "A third State will comprehensively violate the political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights of its people, while vigorously defending the ideals of human rights before its peers."

Asked for her response, Peggy Hicks, global advocacy director at Human Rights Watch (HRW)

told IPS, “Prince Zeid has hit the nail on the head.”

If every government that professed a commitment to human rights followed through consistently, she added, “we’d have a much different – and better – world.”

In an ironic twist apparently proving Zeid’s contention, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry lashed out at the “appalling human rights record” of several nations, blasting Syria and North Korea while singling out human rights violations in Crimea and by separatists in Ukraine.

But he did not condemn the devastation caused by Israel’s 50-day aerial bombardments of Palestinians in Gaza last year nor the rocket attacks on Israel by Hamas.

The death toll in the Gaza bombings was 1,976 Palestinians, including 1,417 civilians and 459 children, according to figures released by the United Nations, compared with the killing of 66 Israelis, including two soldiers.

The Palestinians have accused Israel of war crimes and are pushing for action by the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague: a move strongly opposed by the United States.

Kerry told the HRC the United States believes that it can continue to make progress and help the U.N. body fulfill its mandate to make the world a better and safer place.

“But for that to happen, we have to get serious about addressing roadblocks to our own progress. And the most obvious roadblock, I have to say to you, is self-inflicted,” he said.

“I’m talking, of course, about HRC’s deeply concerning record on Israel,” Kerry added.

“No one in this room can deny that there is an unbalanced focus on one democratic country,” he said, as he openly advocated the cause of Israel, one of the closest political and military allies of the United States.

Related IPS Articles

- [U.S. Twists Arms to Help Defeat Resolution on Palestine](#)
- [Israel’s Hypocrisy on a Nuclear Middle East](#)
- [Israel Bites Hand that Feeds, U.S. Feeds Hand that Bites](#)

And no other nation, he said, has an entire agenda item set aside to deal with it. Year after year, there are five or six separate resolutions on Israel, he told delegates.

This year, he said, there was a resolution sponsored by Syrian President Bashar al Assad concerning the Golan (which has been occupied by Israel since the 1967 war).

“How, I ask, is that a sensible priority at the very moment when refugees from Syria are flooding into the Golan to escape Assad’s murderous rule and receive treatment from Israeli physicians in Israeli hospitals?”

Kerry referred to the Council’s “obsession” with Israel, which, he argued, “actually risks undermining the credibility of the entire organisation.”

Zeid told the HRC the only real measure of a Government’s worth is not its place in the “solemn

ballet of grand diplomacy” but the “extent to which it is sensitive to the needs – and protects the rights – of its nationals and other people who fall under its jurisdiction, or over whom it has physical control.”

Some policy-makers persuade themselves that their circumstances are exceptional, creating a wholly new reality unforeseen by the law, Zeid said, adding that such logic is abundant around the world today.

“I arrest arbitrarily and torture because a new type of war justifies it. I spy on my citizens because the fight against terrorism requires it. I don’t want new immigrants, or I discriminate against minorities, because our communal identity is being threatened now as never before. I kill without any form of due process, because if I do not, others will kill me,” he noted.

“And so it goes, on and on, as we spiral into aggregating crises,” Zeid declared.

Last Updated on Tuesday, 30 June 2020 19:19

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[Green Party leadership candidate, Dimitri Lascaris will be in Victoria on August 13](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 09 August 2020 13:15

IS IN VICTORIA ON AUGUST 13 FROM 7-8:30

FOR A MEET AND GREET

IN KINSMAN PARK IN ESQUILMALT GORGE PARK

THE TIME IS NOW

“DEFY THE POWERFUL,

CONFRONT INJUSTICE AND

UNITE PROGRESSIVES”

(DIMITRI LASCARIS)

DISTANCING AND MASKS

WITH HIS DAUGHTER LENA



WITH HIS WIFE FARIDA



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Dimitri Lascaris, an eco-socialist, campaigns to lead the Green Party

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Last Updated on Sunday, 13 September 2020 12:23

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[Thousands of Quakes, Tied to Fracking, Keep Shaking the Site C Dam Region](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 14 August 2020 17:05

[Andrew](#)

[Nikiforuk https://thetyee.ca/News/2020/08/13/Quakes-Fracking-Site-C-Dam-Region/](https://thetyee.ca/News/2020/08/13/Quakes-Fracking-Site-C-Dam-Region/)

Several recent reports on the

tremors add to concerns about the mega-project's stability.

Building the Site C dam in northeastern British Columbia is [proving](#) more difficult than officials predicted due to unstable ground on the northern bank. Adding to concerns: myriad earthquakes.

For nearly a decade, The Tyee has [reported](#) on a rising number of earthquakes caused by the hydraulic fracturing of shale formations in the region. Now, new studies put the number of such tremors in recent years in the many thousands, raising more worries about the future of the mega-project.

Researchers warn the shaking could become strong enough to crumble critical infrastructure such as roads, high-rise buildings – and dams.

B.C.'s regulatory practices try to limit fracking after small earthquakes have been triggered. But that's "not sufficient to protect critical or vulnerable infrastructure that have unacceptable failure consequences," [noted](#) seismic hazard expert Gail Atkinson in the May 7 issue of Nature Reviews.

No one can yet predict frack-triggered quakes before they happen, and "hazard forecasting" remains a "critical area of research."

Another study, [released](#) this week by researcher Ben Parfitt at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, took data from federal earthquake catalogues to show how many tremors the fracking industry is producing near the Site C

dam.

The numbers are staggering. Between 2017 and 2018 alone, the industry triggered 6,551 earthquakes greater than 0.8 magnitude in the region near the troubled mega-project with a price estimate of \$12 billion and rising.

Drilling by Canadian Natural Resources Ltd., for example, triggered a magnitude 4.6 earthquake in November 2018 that forced the evacuation of the Site C Dam site. It was followed by magnitude 3.5 and 4 events after the fracking ceased.

Those quakes, which [shook](#) buildings in Fort St. John, forced engineers to reassess dam safety in a region whose seismic risks have been dramatically altered by widespread fracking.

Parfitt took the recent data and asked David Leverage, an experienced mapper, to create a map showing the proximity of fracking to the Site C dam.

"The map shows that much of the area to the south of the Site C dam is riddled with faults in the shale rock where fossil fuel companies have pressure-pumped hundreds of millions of litres of water into the earth," concludes Parfitt.

Two years of shaking. Map shows clusters of earthquakes linked to fracking near the Site C project in 2017 and 2018. Map prepared by David Leverage with data collected

by Ben Parfitt.

Anthony Ingraffea is a Cornell University expert on hydraulic fracturing – the injecting of liquids deep underground to fracture rock and release oil and gas for drilling. He told The Tyee that BC Hydro was “playing with fire” by building in an area made seismically active by fracking.

“Lubrication and stress changes – both results of fracking and waste injection – can activate long dormant fault systems. If one were to have accurate estimates of fault areas and these stress changes, one could estimate the largest possible magnitude, and that is the key issue, especially with respect to dam safety,” said Ingraffea.

He hopes geologists “are at work now trying to do that estimate.”

The Site C dam is intended to provide water and power for fracking operations in the Montney shale gas region, as well as subsidize electricity for the province’s liquefied natural gas industry.

For years BC Hydro and the province’s Oil and Gas Commission have been reluctant to talk about the risks that earthquakes triggered by fracking pose to dam infrastructure throughout northeastern B.C.

But in January a freedom of information request by Parfitt found a raft of correspondence that proved that officials have been concerned about the hazards posed by fracking and wastewater disposal in the region for more than a decade.

BC Hydro officials warned numerous people

in the provincial government including senior bureaucrats and unidentified ministers that “fracking near its dams could have grave consequences, including the worst possible outcome – outright dam failure,” revealed Parfitt earlier this year.

He shared the documents with The Tyee, which [published](#) an extensive chronology on the science and reluctant government response to rising seismicity rates in the Montney region.

Throughout the Montney shale formation (top) fracking is linked to thousands of earthquakes, including near the Site C dam project. A diagram (below) from Gail Atkinson’s study published by Nature Reviews shows how fracking can create ‘direct and indirect pathways... to critically stressed fault lines’ triggering tremors. Diagram adapted from Cambridge University Press.

Another recent study by McGill University researchers using a different set of data collected in the same region [recorded](#) nearly 5,000 earthquakes in an area roughly 60 by 70 kilometres, southeast of Site C dam, between July

2017 and April 2019.

The industry-induced earthquakes ranged in magnitudes from 0.5 to 4.5 for the entire study period in the Dawson-Septimus area.

The researchers wrote that Montney Formation "has hosted the largest [hydraulic fracturing] induced earthquakes in Canada to date."

They suggested that large-scale fracking had increased the pore pressure in shale rocks that underlie the region and its three dams.

Increased pressure caused by fracking connected to existing faults and destabilized a large shale area, resulting in 38 distinct swarms of earthquakes, said the researchers.

Meanwhile, Atkinson's [study](#) in Nature Reviews and [another paper](#) she co-wrote with colleague Hadi Ghofrani convey what scientists have now learned about fracking in the region. The findings include:

- Industrial-caused earthquakes have increased in sync with widespread utilization of hydraulic fracturing in horizontal wells in Western Canada since 2009.
- The rate of earthquakes corresponds directly with the increase in hydraulic fracturing.
- The incidence of fracking-triggered earthquakes varies widely across Western Canada but is most pronounced in the Montney shale gas formation in northeastern B.C. as reported by The Tyee for nearly a

decade.

- Industry-made quakes in shale formations are chaotic because researchers can't predict where the faults are or how they will behave.
- Hydraulic fracturing can trigger seismic activity hundreds of metres above the zone being fractured or the target formation one to two kilometres away. Earthquakes can also occur days or years after a shale zone has been fractured.
- No geologic formation is immune to fracking-triggered seismicity, but some formations, such as the Montney, seem more prone than others.
- Large injection volumes may affect a larger area and thus enhance the likelihood that stress perturbations reach critically stressed faults.
- The number of fracked wells in Western Canada that cause earthquakes over a magnitude of 3.0 lies between one out of 100 and one out of 200. The association rate appears to be rising slowly over time. "Although susceptibility is widely variable," write the researchers, "we have no reason to believe that any formations are immune to the potential for induced seismicity."
- The hazard from earth tremors caused by fracking could have serious consequences for seismic safety of nearby infrastructure just 10 kilometres away.
- As has [occurred](#) in China, hydraulic fracturing can trigger earthquakes large enough to bring down buildings and cause landslides – the necessary magnitudes generally

exceeding 4.0.

- Whether a certain fracking operation will cause earthquakes before starting can't be confidently predicted. Current "risk-mitigation strategies," such as halting fracking after earthquakes, "have not yet proved reliable."

The potential threat posed by fracking-triggered earthquakes does not just apply to the Site C project and other dams in northern B.C. In Alberta, TransAlta Corp. is [contesting](#) applications to frack near the Brazeau hydroelectric facility which includes earthen power canal dykes, a main dam, a spillway and a powerhouse.

Last Updated on Friday, 14 August 2020 17:08

1554 readings

[Decline in US bird biodiversity related to neonicotinoids, study shows](#)



[Letters to Editor](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 17 August 2020 13:21

Date:

August 14, 2020

Source:

University of Illinois College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences

Summary:

Bird biodiversity is rapidly declining in the US. The overall bird population decreased by 29% since 1970, while grassland birds declined by an alarming 53%.

A new study points to increased use of neonicotinoid insecticides as a major factor in the decline.

Share:

FULL STORY

Bird biodiversity is rapidly declining in the U.S. The overall bird population decreased by 29% since 1970, while grassland birds declined by an alarming 53%.

Valuable for so much more than flight and song, birds hold a key place in ecosystems worldwide. When bird numbers and varieties dwindle, pest populations increase and much-needed pollination decreases. Those examples alone negatively impact food production and human health.

Likely reasons for the far-reaching and devastating declines include intensified agricultural production, use of pesticides, conversion of grassland to agricultural land, and climate change. A new study from University of Illinois points to increased use of neonicotinoid insecticides as a major factor in the decline, says Madhu Khanna, distinguished professor in agricultural and consumer economics at U of I and co-author on the paper, published in *Nature Sustainability*.

Khanna says numerous studies have shown neonicotinoids -- nicotine-based pesticides -- negatively affect wild bees, honey bees, and butterflies, but large-scale studies on the pesticide's impact on birds have been limited. She speaks more about the topic in a podcast from the Center for the Economics of Sustainability at Illinois.

"This represents the first study at a national scale, over a seven-year time period, using data from hundreds of bird species in four different categories -- grassland birds, non-grassland birds, insectivores, and non-insectivores," she says.

"We found robust evidence of the negative impact of neonicotinoids, in particular on

grassland birds, and to some extent on insectivore birds after controlling for the effects of changes in land use."

Khanna and co-authors Yijia Li, a graduate student at U of I, and Ruiqing Miao, assistant professor at Auburn University, analyzed bird populations from 2008 to 2014 in relation to changes in pesticide use and agricultural crop acreage.

The authors found that an increase of 100 kilograms in neonicotinoid usage per county—a 12% increase on average—contributed to a 2.2% decline in populations of grassland birds and 1.6% in insectivorous birds. By comparison, the use of 100 kilograms of non-neonicotinoid pesticides was associated with a 0.05% decrease in grassland birds and a 0.03% decline in non-grassland birds, insectivorous birds, and non-insectivorous birds.

Since impacts accumulate, the authors estimate that, for example, 100 kilograms neonicotinoid use per county in 2008 reduced cumulative grassland-bird populations by 9.7% by 2014. These findings suggest that neonicotinoid use has a relatively large effect on population declines of important birds and that these impacts grow over time.

According to the study, the adverse impacts on bird populations were concentrated in the Midwest, Southern California, and Northern Great Plains.

The researchers say the effect of neonicotinoids could result directly from birds consuming treated crop seeds, and indirectly by affecting the insect populations they feed on. Consumption of just a few seeds is enough to cause long-term damage to the birds' reproduction and development.

The study included data on bird population and species diversity from the North American breeding bird survey, a comprehensive database with data from about 3,000 bird routes across the United States. The researchers correlated the bird data with pesticide use, as well as satellite data on agricultural crop acreage and urban land use.

They examined whether intensified agricultural production and conversion of grassland to agricultural land also contributed to the bird decline. Results showed a small negative effect on grassland birds related to cropland expansion, but no significant effect on other types of birds.

While the use of other pesticides has been flat or declining, neonicotinoid usage has grown exponentially over the past two decades. Neonicotinoids are considerably more toxic to insects and persist longer in the environment, the researchers note.

"This research provides compelling support for the re-evaluation of policies permitting the use of neonicotinoids by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency by incorporating considerations of the implications of these pesticides for bird habitats," the authors conclude.

The project was supported by Hatch funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA).

make a difference: sponsored opportunity

Story Source:

Materials provided by [University of Illinois College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences](#). Original written by Marianne Stein. *Note: Content may be edited for style and length.*

164 readings

[The Site C dam has become an albatross and a serious objective review is needed urgently](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 22 August 2020 11:36

Mauro Chiesa, Harry Swain and Mike Harcourt
Published 8 hours ago

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-the-site-c-dam-has-become-an-albatross-and-a-serious-objective-review/>

Mauro Chiesa has worked on project finance around the world for many banks, including the World Bank. Harry Swain chaired the Joint Review Panel on Site C and is a former deputy minister of Industry Canada. Mike Harcourt is a former premier of B.C. and former mayor of Vancouver.

Here's an ineluctable law of nature: Project costs escalate during construction. But still,

there are limits around what people should accept. For B.C.'s Site C dam, the costs have gone from \$3.5-billion, which was the estimate when the project was first touted, to the \$6.9-billion quoted when the project underwent public review, to the official \$10.7-billion price tag that hung until very recently. Since then, BC Hydro has discovered nasty geotechnical conditions under the powerhouse and spillways, and says their cost and schedule estimates are so broken it will take them until the fall just to produce new ones.

The last time costs got away from BC Hydro, the NDP government layered on a Project Assurance Board to keep track. Clearly, its members have not done their jobs, not that their names - nor any reports - have ever been released to the public. On July 31, Bruce Ralston, the province's Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources and the man in charge of Site C, appointed Peter Milburn, a former deputy minister of finance whose original training was in engineering, to oversee the overseers and to report back in the fall. Under media questioning, however, Mr. Ralston avoided committing to making public any of Mr. Milburn's reports.

So, what's the problem? BC Hydro says it discovered some anomalies in January, confirmed them in March after some more drilling - and has been studiously quiet about just what those problems are. It was, of course, a terrible surprise and had nothing to do with the competence of a corporation that hasn't built a major dam in 40 years.

But was it really a surprise? Back in 2018, a hugely experienced dam engineer named Harvey Elwin said - in a sworn court statement for the West Moberly First Nation - that he'd never seen such appalling foundation conditions nor such secrecy on the part of project proponents. You can bet your boots that every word of his statement was parsed in the corridors of BC Hydro. They knew there were problems years ago. Either they never told the government, or the government did not want to ask, or the Project Assurance Board decided to hope the problem

would go away.

BC Hydro blamed all this on COVID-19. But the problem has been staring the utility in the face for years. Its current (and late) reports to the BC Utilities Commission cover 2019 and the first quarter of 2020. Ignoring the novelty of blaming a piece of Pleistocene-era geology for a 21st-century problem, only the final two weeks of the 65 weeks covered by the report overlapped with the COVID-19 lockdown. In 1957, a 15-year-old bridge on the Alaska Highway collapsed a few miles downstream when a landslide in construction-softened clay dislodged the northern cable abutment, so this is nothing new for government.

Going forward, BC Hydro says it will concentrate on getting the diversion tunnels finished so the dam site can be dewatered while it figures out what the new costs will be. River diversion will take place on schedule, but project completion will be delayed by a year at a cost neither calculated nor confessed. They will apparently spend the summer costing out various alternatives for fixing a dam that's being built on the geological equivalent of billiard balls.

BC Hydro has consumed all of the project's contingency budget five years before project completion. It will not complete the project for the promised \$6.9-, sorry \$7.9-, sorry \$8.3-, sorry \$10.7-billion. At least they have pushed off the date when Site C becomes part of the rate base, to be paid off by all of us taxpayers, until after the next two elections.

But a fundamental problem even nastier than unco-operative geology still looms: the fact that even by 2025, there will be no demand for the power Site C produces. Its cost will [likely](#) be north of \$120 per megawatt hour (MWh) - even more than the \$118/MWh residential consumers paid last year, and more than the very high \$87/MWh paid last year for power from Independent Power Producers. Couple that with the concessionary \$54/MWh rates promised to the liquefied natural gas industry, and residential consumers are in for a terrific shock. And as

the price rises, less will be consumed. This is the elasticity of demand: a snake that eats its own tail.

Eventually, we'll need the power. But demand has been flat for 12 years, and we have an enormous surplus: around 70 TWh of supply versus 51 TWh of demand, and that doesn't count the large quantity available as our rolling 10-year right under the Columbia River Treaty at, typically, less than \$30/MWh. Even the most optimistic projections of electric vehicle demand or new industrial load will not fill that gap for at least 20 years. Timing is everything when it comes to investments.

In 2017, the NDP government decided, against much evidence, that the B.C. Liberals had succeeded in pushing the project past the point of no return. They now own this project, period. It's time for a serious, objective, swift, experienced and professional review - not the narrowly circumscribed predetermined review that an embarrassed BC Utilities Commission was obliged to undertake in 2017. It's still not too late.

194 readings

[The dark side of Canadian hydropower exposed in U.S. International Trade Commission investigation](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 26 August 2020 13:01

[August 2020: Developing News:](#)

[This post is a road map to a critical ongoing investigation into the greenwashing of Canadian hydroelectricity. Topics addressed are in separate tabs accessible from the home page.](#)

[Brief and testimony from Indigenous communities and their allies are highlighted here and all materials are available directly from the ITC website by looking up Case No. 332-574 at](#)

[United States International Trade Commission](#) began an investigation into renewable electricity imports including Canadian hydroelectricity. The name of the investigation is “Renewable Electricity: Potential Effects of Increased Commitments in Massachusetts.” The investigation is ongoing and NAMRA and others provided key testimony in July and August 2020 about the dark side of Canadian hydroelectricity production.

four topics, including Massachusetts’ plan to use Canadian hydroelectricity to meet “ambitious goals for seeking alternative renewable means of providing energy while also reducing greenhouse gas emissions.” The U.S. House Committee on Ways and Means requested the investigation in January 2020 letter. Representatives from both sides of the border are participating.

The greenwashing of this hydroelectricity was exposed in the ITC proceedings. NAMRA has asked for an investigation of fraudulent claims by hydropower promoters about the climate and greenhouse gas benefits of this dirty energy.

Canadian Senator McCallum asked the ITC “how can we possibly call the energy produced by hydro megadams green, clean, or most importantly, ethical?”

This is a critical issue for the planet and front line communities!

Canada’s hydropower monopolies, subsidized and backed by US and Canadian governments and politicians are aggressively marketing this hydroelectricity as clean energy, spending hundreds of millions of dollars on lobbying and marketing. Canada is building new dams – 60% more. Unscrupulous Wall Street investors are financing transmission corridors to import this electricity to the U.S.

Sierra Club and NAMRA Map of Destructive Canadian Hydro Transmission Corridors

Canadian hydropower has turned vast areas of land and water into toxic wastelands. More dams are a disaster for the planet and humanity.

The highlight of the investigation to date has been the graphic submittals from Canadian Senator Mary Jane McCallum, an Indigenous woman and her constituents from Tataskweyak Cree Nation laying bare the environmental racism of Canadian hydropower. This testimony shows how once free-flowing rivers sustained communities for millennia and are now “ dangerous sources of drinking water, natural foods, and toxic pollution.” This is a result of 500 years of colonialism and racism as described in Power Failure. The Impacts of Hydropower in Manitoba and the Pulitzer Center series. Wrong Shade of Green.

From Tataskweyak Cree Nation: fish with lesions caused by toxic contaminants as a

result of from Manitoba Hydro operations that disrupt river systems and degrade water quality. Indigenous communities in remote subarctic regions where Canadian hydropower facilities are located rely on wild foods for survival. Because fish and wild foods are poisoned with methylmercury from the dams and are unhealthy, there is food insecurity.

Senator McCallum describes her personal experience is “as an Indigenous woman who was raised on the land, taken from my land-based living to be sent to residential school, but who has since continued to return to my communities to understand the ongoing power imbalance and cycle of oppression which Hydro is implementing through their brazen interaction with the community.”

Canadian hydropower’s environmental racism occurs in “countless First Nations across Canada” according to Senator McCallum. She wrote to the ITC “to convey the past and lived experiences of the First Nations on their lands, territories, and environment and to focus on the extension of racism” carried out by the provincial and federal governments alongside the hydropower industry.

Who is promoting this dirty energy

Hydropower development is carried out by Canadian monopolies – such as Nalcor Energy and Hydro-Quebec in the eastern provinces, in central Canada by Manitoba Hydro, and B.C. Hydro in British Columbia, the most westernmost province. There are three new megadams and more planned (see part 4 below).

Key dates in the ITC investigation: July 15 and 27. Pre-hearing briefs July 29 – Hearing held before the ITC Commissioners Kearns (Chairman), Stayin, Johanson, Schmidlein, and Karpel and staff. The transcript of the hearing is August 7. Post-hearing briefs. Sierra Club briefs are here. August 14. Final submissions: Briefs and testimony of Canadian Senator Mary Jane McCallum Tataskewak Cree Nation

Last Updated on Sunday, 13 September 2020 11:54

908 readings

[UN at 75 TIME FOR COMPLIANCE](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 29 August 2020 12:52

This is reposted from 2015 UN at 70 by Joan Russow Global Compliance

Research Project



because States still fail to sign, ratified and enact the necessary legislation to ensure compliance with international instruments

At key anniversaries of the U.N., there have been calls for compliance with international instruments.

In 1995, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali indicated support at the 50th anniversary of the U.N., in San Francisco, and, at the 55th Anniversary, Secretary-General Kofi Annan urged states to sign and ratify international instruments.

Human welfare, ecology and negotiation must be a priority over global supply chains and "profit-driven" development through coercion.

In 2015, with the confluence of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 70th anniversary of the United Nations, COP 21, and the launch of International Decade for People of African Descent, there is an opportunity to again call upon states to sign and ratify international instruments, to determine what would constitute compliance with these and to undertake to comply with them through enacting the necessary legislation.

This could also be the time to advance and reinforce the concept of peremptory norms as stated in Article 53 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of treaties:

“A treaty is void if, at the time of its conclusion, it conflicts with a peremptory norm of general international law. For the purpose of the present convention, a peremptory norm of general international law is a norm accepted and recognized by the

international community of states as a whole.”

Peremptory norms have been described as those derived from treaties, conventions and covenants which have been ratified by all states or by most states representing the full range of legal systems and the major geographical regions. Also, peremptory norms could be derived from U.N. General Assembly Declarations and Conference Action Plans.

Ratifying key legally binding agreements

International Covenants such as on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and its protocols, on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR); Conventions such as Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), on Torture (UNTC), on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its protocols, on Endangered Species (CITES), on Climate Change (UNFCCC), on World Heritage Convention / WHC), on Desertification (UNCCD), on Ozone (MP), on Rights of the Child (CRC), on Women (CEDAW) and its protocols, on Racial Discrimination (ICERD), on Genocide (CPPCG) on Rights of Migrant Workers, on Labour (ILO), on Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols Thereto (CTOC) on Persons with Disabilities(CRPD); Declarations such as Rights of indigenous Peoples UNDRIP; peace Treaties, such as NPT, Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), Anti_Personnel-Mine-(APM), Cluster Munitions (CCM), Arms Trade (ATT). Respect for the jurisdiction and decisions of the ICJ, and the ICC Rome Statute are paramount. 1992

1992 UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

2017 THE UN TREATY ON THE PROHIBITION ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Related IPS Articles

- [The U.N. at 70: A View from Outer Space](#)
- [The U.N. at 70: U.N. Reform Must Benefit All Countries](#)

If states comply with these many instruments, the global community will have more respect for the rule of international law, and more faith in the United Nations, including for the compliance with and implementation of the SDGs.

Eradication of poverty and the provision for food security coalesced U.N. members behind the SDGs. Ratifying these instruments would be a step toward achieving all of the Sustainable Development Goals, as these instruments will further true security.

At Rio 2012, states were reluctant to address the need to determine what would constitute adhering to key Rio Declaration principles, including the precautionary

principle and principle of differentiated responsibility, which needs financial investment in developing economies.

“Innovative financing” for implementation of the SDGs

From the 1969 to 1992, U.N. States affirmed the need to move towards disarmament and the reallocation of military expenses for the benefit of humanity and the ecosystem.

In 1969, member states of the U.N. called for the achievement of general and complete disarmament and the channeling of the progressively released resources to be used for economic and social progress for the welfare of people everywhere and in particular for the benefit of developing countries (article 27 (a) XXIV of 11 December 1969 Declaration on Social Welfare, Progress and Development); and in 1992,

They made a commitment to reallocate resources at present committed to military purposes (Article 16 e, Chapter 33, “Innovative financing”, of Agenda 21, UNCED).

Furthering true security, common security

The SDGs need to redefine what constitutes “true security.”

True security is common security, not militarised security, collective security or “human security that has been used as a pretext for war: so-called “human security” (Iraq 1991, “Humanitarian intervention” (Kosovo, 1999), “Responsibility to Protect” (Haiti, 2004, Libya, 2011), “Article 51-self-defence” (Afghanistan (2003) and Syria (2015)).

In 1982, Olaf Palme, in the Commission Report on Disarmament and Security, introduced the concept of common security which could be extended to embody the following objectives:

To achieve a state of peace, and disarmament, through reduction of military expenses;

To create a global structure that respects the rule of law;

To enable socially equitable and environmentally sound employment, and ensure the right to development and social justice;

To promote and fully guarantee respect for human rights including labour rights, women’s rights civil and political rights, indigenous rights, social and cultural rights – right to food, right to housing, to safe drinking water and sewage treatment, to education and to universally accessible not for profit health care system;

To ensure the preservation, and protection of the environment, the respect for the inherent worth of nature beyond human purpose, the reduction of the ecological footprint and the moving to away from the current model of unsustainable overconsumption.

Arriving at universal support of existing instruments will let the U.N. uphold the three pillars of the SDGs: economic development, social development and environmental protection.

Human welfare, ecology and negotiation must be a priority over global supply chains and “profit-driven” development through coercion.

Last Updated on Sunday, 13 September 2020 11:14

132 readings

[BCEN Calls for Stop to Site C](#)   

[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 08 September 2020 21:23

BCEN

BC Environmental Network

Sept 8, 2020

by **the BC Environmental Network**

Dam cost/benefit and foundation on shaky ground. BC Environmental Network calls for immediate stop work Peace River diversion plan.

For 45 years, the Site C Dam has been promoted by various BC Governments as being needed for a wide range of purposes. Not one of those predictions of necessity has come true. During that same time, the economics of building large hydro dams have literally tanked while the socio/environmental impacts have become increasingly unacceptable. This is true for all three large hydro dams currently under construction in Canada.

In the case of Site C, the 26,000 page 2014 Environmental Impact Statement clearly described the anticipated harmful impacts. However, even with a record setting number of “significant harms that cannot be mitigated” as identified by the Joint Review Panel, the Harper Conservatives and Christy Clark Liberals pushed this project through, with follow-up help from the Trudeau Liberals. It did not stop there. Despite the need for billions more dollars at the time and the findings of the 2017 BCUC Review saying that alternatives to Site C would be the same or lower cost, the new Horgan NDP Government made the fateful decision to proceed. As bad news continues to emerge from Site C, this cluster of past political decisions is coming home to roost.

Now BC Hydro and the BC Government have reluctantly reported yet more worsening of the financial and geotechnical problems with Site C. Specifically, they

speak of serious foundation problems under what is basically the entire dam structure. Remember that true bedrock was never found under Site C, but rather it is being built on shale, which is just old mud. While not specifically stated in the BCH reports, we understand from sources that seventy vertical feet of 'roller compacted' concrete under the powerhouse is sinking in the mud. Whatever the truth is, even the Government has acknowledged that it is very serious, the fix is yet to be determined and uncertain, and the entire project budget and schedule is now unknown and the bulk of the project's contingency funds spent.

So why is work continuing? If this were the foundation of a house; work would stop immediately. The Site C project has now progressed beyond politics, and political decision-making is not required right now.

At the very least, work needs to stop to determine if Site C is in fact buildable, whether it will be safe, and what it will now cost. To be clear, that means no river diversion in 2020.

It is important to note that the current Site C is not the same project that was reviewed and politically pushed forward in the past. Answering these three simple questions - on construction feasibility, safety and cost - may be the death knell for the project, but better to know now where the project is headed than later.

The dam design already has had major costly modifications intended to address known geotechnical challenges. Evidently, these did not work. How can the public be assured that further costly modifications will work? No government has a mandate to build this "new" Site C without an independent geotechnical and engineering review.

Let's stop work now and get a measure of what to expect.

The Site C Dam may very well be unbuildable, and if we continue to throw good money after bad because of sunk costs, an already bad situation will likely get much worse. It really is that dire...and simple.

Last Updated on Sunday, 13 September 2020 11:04

116 readings

[Cumberland Community](#)

[Forest Event](#)

[Earth News](#)



Posted by admin

Sunday, 13 September 2020 09:53

Often we post articles about deforestation. Most of the issues are large scale. What we sometimes miss is that most issues involve tree farm licences and some small communities generally are adversely affected by the loss of nature and a beautiful community. So here is one I thought to mention. Cumberland is a nice community on Vancouver Island. The community has been trying to protect a buffer of forest around their town from deforestation. [Cumberland Community Forest Society](#)

They are hosting an event that will showcase some of the values of this forest by holding the First Annual Fungus Fest.

Guest speakers, online presentations and virtual pubs, guided walks (day and night), art projects, ethnobotany and more!

Your \$25 ticket unlocks a program of online and real world events and curious links for your fungi pleasure.

<https://cumberlandforest.tickit.ca/events/9993-1st-annual-cumberland-fungus-fest>

Last Updated on Tuesday, 15 September 2020 08:16

107 readings

[the Leap Manifesto is 5 years old today](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 15 September 2020 08:11

In 2015, we saw there was a need to connect social movements to create a vision of the world we're fighting for -- and to unapologetically speak to the scale of the crises we're facing. The Leap Manifesto upended Canadian politics, helped pave the way for the Green New Deal, and inspired us to start The Leap as an organization.

Last Updated on Tuesday, 15 September 2020 08:15

247 readings

[Protecting Nature is Entirely Within Humanity's Reach: The Work Must Start Now](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 15 September 2020 12:04

By [Inger Andersen](#)

Inger Andersen is UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, UN Environment Programme (UNEP)

Credit: The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the intergovernmental body which assesses the state of biodiversity and of the ecosystem services it provides to society, in response to requests from decision makers.

NAIROBI, Kenya, Sep 15 2020 (IPS) - We have known for a long time that biodiversity, and the services it provides, have been in decline. It is on this background that ten years ago, the international community adopted the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

The goal of the plan, and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets, was to halt biodiversity loss and ensure that ecosystems continued to provide essential services.

Governments and the wider society have acted to address the biodiversity crisis. Some nations have made some progress. However, as this Report Card on global progress demonstrates, we have not met the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. And we are not on track for the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity.

Many of you might have heard me speak to the devastating consequences of humanity's imprint on nature, in particular, the COVID-19 pandemic, a zoonotic disease transmitted between animals and humans, which is by no means the first and will not be the last.

From COVID-19 to massive wildfires, floods, melting glaciers and unprecedented heat, our failure to meet the Aichi Targets – to protect our home – has very real consequences. We can no longer afford to cast nature to the side. Now is the time for a massive step up, conserving, restoring and using biodiversity fairly and sustainably.

Related IPS Articles

- [Unite Behind Environmental Science: Transforming Values and Behaviour is as Important as Restoring Global Ecosystems](#)
- [COVID-19 Stimulus Measures Must Save Lives, Protect Livelihoods, and Safeguard Nature to Reduce the Risk of Future Pandemics](#)
- [A Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework Aims at Reinforcing Efforts to Save World's Ecosystem](#)

If we do not, biodiversity will continue to buckle under the weight of land- and sea-use change, overexploitation, climate change, pollution and invasive alien species. This will further damage human health, economies and societies, with particularly dire impacts on indigenous communities.

This Global Biodiversity Outlook spells out transitions that can create a society living in harmony with nature: transitions in how we use land and forests; organize our agriculture and food supply systems; manage fisheries; use water; manage urban environments and tackle climate change. There are many examples that show how the right policies can bring positive outcomes.

For example, where fisheries have been regulated and reported, abundance of stocks has improved. Where coordinated action has been taken to slow deforestation, habitat loss has been controlled. Ecosystem restoration, when implemented effectively and with the support of local populations, has reversed decades of degradation.

To knit the global response together, UN Member States will soon adopt the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. In the Framework, we need ambitious, clear and common targets for a nature-positive world.

Targets that can be broken down and implemented at the national level. We need targets that can be added up, so we know whether we are on track to meet the new goals that we will set. We need

financing, capacity development, transparency and accountability.

We need buy-in from the sectors and groups – infrastructure, agriculture, government, business and finance – that drive biodiversity loss. This may seem like a tall order, but I believe protecting nature is entirely within humanity’s reach. There is today a far deeper understanding of what nature loss means for health and well-being.

Businesses can no longer afford to ignore the risk of biodiversity loss to profitability. And we are seeing countries, companies and financiers begin to lean in on the nature agenda. As we seek to stretch on the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), we have a real shot at embedding ecosystem-based adaptation and nature-based solutions into climate action.

We don’t need to wait for the Biodiversity Framework to be finalized before we begin this work. As the UN Secretary-General has noted, this is a “make or break moment for the planet”.

As we seek to reboot the global economy following COVID-19, how we prioritize and direct our resources will either secure human, economic and environmental health for generations to come, or take us down the grey path that has brought with it the suffering we are seeing today.

We have little choice in the path we must take.

Protecting Nature is Entirely Within Humanity’s Reach: The Work Must Start Now

By [Inger Andersen](#)  Reprint |  Print |

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Last Updated on Tuesday, 15 September 2020 12:17

3494 readings

[SEPTEMBER 21 INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE; FOR THE SAKE OF PEACE AND DISARMAMENT](#)



[Peace News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 14 April 2017 07:54

By Joan Russow PhD

Global Compliance Research Project

(OUTLINE FROM A LARGER DOCUMENT)

(RE POSTED 2020-09-17) LEST WE FORGET INCREASED MILITARISM AND DEFIANCE OF THE RULE OF INTERNATIONAL LAW)



DISARMAMENT POSTER - NORTHERN FRIENDS' PEACE BOARD 1935

UPDATE IN 2020

In December 2016, Canada along with US allies gave the reason for not adopting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapon, that US nuclear weapons are necessary for the security of Canada and that Canada would never agree that nuclear weapons would never be used

And in July 2017 Canada refused to sign and ratify a Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons which 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.

And instead Canada had agreed, at a NATO Conference, to the following;

- 1) Nuclear weapons must be maintained indefinitely.
- 2) we will improve their use and accuracy (modernize them).
- 3 we can use them first.
- 4) we can target non-nuclear weapons states.
- 5) We can threaten to use them.
- 6) We can keep them in Europe, as we are now doing.
- 7) We can launch some on 15 minutes warning.
- 8) We say "they are essential for peace."

And We will never agree that they should never be used.

A.

PEACE PROMOTION

***COMMON SECURITY**

1. We must reappropriate the word “security” and not allow it to be distorted by the military. (Dr. Ursula Franklin, internationally renowned scientist and pacifist (1984 at the lead up conference to Nairobi Conference on Women, 1985)

2. “True security exists when all are secure, through “common security” (Olof Palme, 1982) whose objectives could be extended to include but not limited to the following:

(a) to achieve a state of peace, and disarmament; through reallocation of military expenses and delegitimization of war;

(b) to promote and fully guarantee respect for human rights including labour rights, civil and political rights, indigenous rights, social and cultural rights – right to food, to housing, to safe drinking water and sanitation , right to education and right to universally accessible not for profit health care system; right to water and sanitation

(c) to ensure the preservation, conservation and protection of the environment, the respect for the inherent worth of nature beyond human purpose, to reduce the ecological footprint and to move away from the current model of unsustainable and excessive overconsumption

(d) To enable socially equitable and environmentally sound employment, energy and transportation,

(e) to fully implement the UN Declaration the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

DRAFT OUTLINE

1. RIGHT TO LIFE, LIBERTY AND SECURITY OF PERSON.

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person. Article 3

***2 INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE [AND DISARMAMENT]**

Recalling its [resolution 36/67](#) of 30 November 1981,

1. Decides that, with effect from the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, the

International Day of Peace shall be observed on 21 September each year, with this date to be brought to the attention of all people for the celebration and observance of peace;

2. Declares that the International Day of Peace shall henceforth be observed as a day of global ceasefire and non-violence, an invitation to all nations and people to honour a cessation of hostilities for the duration of the Day;

ACTION; TO CELEBRATE ON SEPTEMBER 21, THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE [AND DISARMAMENT]

***3.DECLARATION ON THE RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO PEACE APPROVED BY GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 1984**

Solemnly proclaims that the peoples of our planet have a sacred right to peace;

2. Solemnly declares that the preservation of the right of peoples to peace and the promotion of its implementation constitute a fundamental obligation of each State;

3. Emphasizes that ensuring the exercise of the right of peoples to peace demands that the policies of States be directed towards the elimination of the threat of war, particularly nuclear war, the renunciation of the use of force in international relations and the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations;

***4.DECLARATION ON THE USE OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS IN THE INTERESTS OF PEACE, 1975)**

1. All States shall promote international co-operation to ensure that the results of scientific and technological developments are used in the interests of strengthening international peace and security, freedom and independence, and also for the purpose of the economic and social development of peoples and the realization of human rights and freedoms in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

ACTION; CALL UPON UNESCO TO PROMOTE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS DECLARATION

***5.FAIR AND JUST TRANSITION**

ACTION: Promote a fair and Just Transition which must protect Jobs and the environment by ensuring that all workers' livelihoods will be protected and secured during and after the process of reduced military spending through new job creation, placement and re-skilling for socially and environmentally beneficial work.

***6.PEACE EDUCATION CULTURE OF PEACE**

The culture of peace and non-violence is a commitment to peace-building, mediation, conflict prevention and resolution, peace education, education for non-violence, tolerance, acceptance,

mutual respect, intercultural and interfaith dialogue and reconciliation. UNESCO

B.

ACTIONS THAT IMPEDE (HINDER INHIBIT) PEACE MUST END

***1. GLORIFYING WAR AND CONFLICT**

ACTION; END THE GLORIFICATION OF WAR; THE FIRST WORLD WAR WAS INTENDED TO BE ``THE WAR TO END ALL WARS``

***2. MISCONSTRUING THE ESSENCE OF THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

2.1. OBJECTIVE OF THE UNITED NATION;

to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind {HUMANITY} and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained

2.2 CHAPTER VI

Article 33

1. The parties to any dispute, the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, shall, first of all, seek a solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice.
2. The Security Council shall, when it deems necessary, call upon the parties to settle their dispute by such means.

2.3. CHAPTER VII; BESTOWING LEGALITY ON WAR

Article 41

The Security Council may decide what measures not involving the use of armed force are to be employed to give effect to its decisions, and it may call upon the Members of the United Nations to apply such measures. These may include complete or partial interruption of economic relations and of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio, and other means of communication, and the severance of diplomatic relations.

Article 42

Should the Security Council consider that measures provided for in Article 41 would be inadequate or have proved to be inadequate, it may take such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security. Such action may include demonstrations, blockade, and other operations by air, sea, or land forces of Members of the United Nations.

ACTION: URGE STATES TO NOT BYPASS CHAPTER VI-PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES

2.4 VOTES AT THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

1. **Decisions of the Security Council on all other matters shall be made by an affirmative vote of nine members including the concurring votes of the permanent members; provided that, in decisions under Chapter VI, and under paragraph 3 of Article 52, a party to a dispute shall abstain from voting.**
- 2.

2.5 TOLERATING THE VETO POWER OF THE 5 PERMANENT MEMBERS

The Veto power violates a fundamental principle of the United Nations – the sovereign equality of states.

ACTION: CALL FOR THE DISBANDING OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL AND BUILDING ON THE UNITING FOR PEACE RESOLUTION, TO GIVE POWER TO THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY WHICH DOES ENCOMPASS THE PRINCIPLE OF SOVEREIGN EQUALITY OF STATES.

3. DEFYING OCCUPATION LAW

The duties of the occupying power are spelled out primarily in the 1907 Hague Regulations (arts 42-56) and the Fourth Geneva Convention (GC IV, art. 27-34 and 47-78), as well as in certain provisions of Additional Protocol I and customary international humanitarian law.

Agreements concluded between the occupying power and the local authorities cannot deprive the population of occupied territory of the protection afforded by international

humanitarian law (GC IV, art. 47) and protected persons themselves can in no circumstances renounce their rights (GC IV, art. 8).

ACTION; END THE OCCUPATION OF PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

***4. CONCOCTING PRETEXTS FOR WAR, EUPHEMISMS, SPIRITUAL JUSTIFICATION**

Using pretexts for military intervention such as the following: "human security" (Iraq 1991), "Humanitarian intervention" (Kosovo, 1999), "self-defence" (Afghanistan 2001), "Pre-emptive/ preventive" attack (Iraq, 2003) "Responsibility to Protect (Haiti, 2004, Libya, 2011) or "will to intervene" (Mali, 2013)

ACTION; EXPOSE AND CONFRONT THE PRETEXTS OF WAR

***5. EXPOUNDING THEORIES OF A JUST WAR**

a) Legitimate Authority:

(b) Just Cause

(c) Just Intent:

(d) Last Resort: All other means to resolve the dispute must have been tried and shown to fail, before one may justifiably unleash the dogs of war

(e) Reasonable Chance of Success: All 5 of the principles of **ius ad bellum** must be met before JWT believes it morally justifiable to go to war.

(f) Ius in Bello Principles or Just Means:

1. The Principle of Discrimination:
2. The Principle of Proportionality. **The war's harm must not exceed the good accomplished.**

ACTION: COUNTER THE PRINCIPLES OF THE JUST WAR THEORY AND CALL FOR THE DELEGITIMIZATION OF WAR.

GIVEN THE SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH, HUMAN RIGHTS, ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF WAR, UNDER NO CONDITION OR CIRCUMSTANCE IS WAR LEGAL OR JUST. END THE PRACTICE OF DISRESPECTING OF THE JURISDICTION AND DECISIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE.

***6.PRIORIZING PEACE BUILDING AFTER CONFLICT OVER PREVENTION**

Reaffirming the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and stressing the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.... (UNSC 1325, 2000)

ACTION: CALL FOR THE PARTICIATION OF WOMEN IN THE PREVENTION OF WAR NOT JUST IN PEACE BUILDING

***7. IGNORING INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS TO REDUCE THE GLOBAL MILITARY BUDGET**

In 1976 at Habitat 1, member states of the United Nations affirmed the following in relation to the military budget: "The waste and misuse of resources in war and armaments should be prevented. All countries should make a firm commitment to promote general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, in particular in the field of nuclear disarmament. Part of the resources thus released should be utilized so as to achieve a better quality of life for humanity and particularly the peoples of developing countries" (II, 12 Habitat 1).

ACTION; URGE THE FULFILLMENT OF THIS COMMITMENT THROUGH PURSUING THE FOLLOWING; BEGIN A PHASED REDUCTION OF GLOBAL MILITARY SPENDING, BEGINNING WITH A 50 % REDUCTION IMMEDIATELY;

***8. ESTABLISHING FOREIGN MILITARY BASES IN SOVEREIGN STATES AROUND THE WORLD.**

China 1, Germany 2.France 11, India 6.Italy 2, japan 1,Russia 10.Turkey 7,UK 22, US 34, (MORE LIKELY1000?)

ACTION: CALL FOR THE CONVERSION OF FOREIGN MILITARY BASES TO PEACEFUL PURPOSES

***9. ENGAGING IN PROPAGANDA FOR WAR**

1. Any propaganda for war shall be prohibited by law. (Article 20, International covenant on civil and political rights

ACTION: URGE STATES TO INCLUDE IN "PROPAGANDA FOR WAR" PROHIBITION OF ENGAGING WAR GAMES, OF MOVING MILITARY VESSELS CLOSE TO ENEMY STATES,OR OF ADVANCING WITH A MILITARY ORGANIZATION CLOSE TO BORDER OF AN ENEMY STATE

***10. PERPETUATING MILITARIZATION THROUGH EXEMPTIONS**

In 1997, the US insisted in having the contribution of militarism to greenhouse gases exempt from the UNFCCC

ACTION; CALL FOR THE REMOVAL OF THE EXEMPTION OF CONTRIBUTION OF MILITARISM TO GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

***11. TOLERATING COMPLICITY THROUGH PENSIONS AND INDIVIDUAL INVESTMENT**

Many pensions do not have negative or positive screens

ACTION: LOBBY FOR PENSION FUNDS TO HAVE A NEGATIVE SCREEN WHICH EXCLUDES MILITARISM AND A POSITIVE SCREEN WHICH PROMOTES PEACE

***12. BEING COMPLICITY IN MILITARISM AND AGRESSION**

1. NATO

(a) reneging on commitments:NATO expansion

(b)destabilizing other nations

(c)engaging in propaganda for war

(d) initiating or being complicit in acts of aggression(e) (bypassing chapter vi of the charter of the united nations- peaceful resolution of disputes,

(f) defying international law, by not complying with conventions

(g) using prohibited conventional weapons and new weapons,

(h) being a nuclear weapons Alliance whose positions violate the NPT and undermine the 13 steps:

NATO says that:

- (1) Nuclear weapons must be maintained indefinitely.
- 2) We will improve their use and accuracy (modernize them).
- 3) We can use them first.
- 4) We can target non-nuclear weapon states.

- 5) We can threaten to use them.
- 6) We can keep them in Europe as
- 7) We can launch some on 15 minutes warning
- 8) We say “they are essential for peace

On the NATO web site: NATO commits itself to the goal of creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons – but reconfirms that, as long as there are nuclear weapons in the world, NATO will remain a nuclear Alliance.

The conditions for a world without nuclear weapons would be for all states to sign and ratify and implement the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and to call upon all NATO States and nuclear weapon states to participate in the UN negotiations for a legally binding Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Currently, the US has urged all NATO States to not participate in the negotiations.

- (i) failing to reallocate exorbitant military spending**
- (j) condoning the exemption of military contributions to greenhouse gas emissions**
- (k) propagating untenable myths and rhetoric and coercing conformity**
partners for peace 22 countries
- (l) perceiving its members to be beyond the judgment of the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice**
- (m) engaging in weapons testing**

ACTION; CALL FOR THE DISBANDING OF NATO ON THE ABOVE GROUNDS AND URGE FOR ALL NATO STATES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS AND SUPPORT THE TREATY

2. UNRELENTING CONSEQUENCES OF WAR

GENOCIDE CONVENTION

(a) GENOCIDE

Convention the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide adopted by the general assembly of the United Nations on 9 December 1948

HAVING CONSIDERED the declaration made by the General Assembly of the United Nations in its resolution 96 (I) dated 11 December 1946 that genocide is a crime under international law, contrary to the spirit and aims of the United Nations and condemned by the civilized world ;

Article I The Contracting Parties confirm that genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and to punish.

ACTION; URGE ALL STATES TO RATIFY THE LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT AND ENACT THE NECESSARY LEGISLATION TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE

(b) INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT ROME STATUTE

Part II Jurisdiction, admissibility and applicable law Article 5 Crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court

1. The jurisdiction of the Court shall be limited to the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole. The Court has jurisdiction in accordance with this Statute with respect to the following crimes: (a) The crime of genocide; (b) Crimes against humanity; (c) War crimes; (d) The crime of aggression.

ACTION: URGE ALL STATES TO SIGN AN RATIFY THE ICC AND ENACT THE NECESSARY LEGISLATION TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE. LOBBY FOR THE ICC TO ALSO BE PREPARED TO SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER

(c) CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE

ACTION; URGE ALL STATES TO RATIFY THE LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT AND ENACT THE NECESSARY LEGISLATION TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE

Article 1

1. For the purposes of this Convention, the term "torture" means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions.

***C**

**FURTHERING DISARMAMENT THROUGH OPPOSING THE
FOLLOWING**

1. PRODUCTION OF WEAPONS

***(1) WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION**

***(a).NUCLEAR**

(i)Non Proliferation Treaty (1968)

Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (“NPT”) states in full: “Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a Treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.”

**ACTION; URGE ALL STATES TO PARTICIATE IN THE NEGOTIATION OF THE
TREATY ON THE PROHIBITION NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND RATIFY THE
LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT.**

**THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE TO NEGOTIATE A LEGALLY BINDING
INSTRUMENT TO PROHIBIT NUCLEAR WEAPONS, LEADING TOWARDS THEIR
TOTAL**

ELIMINATION, NEW YORK MARCH - JULY 2017 see <http://www.icanw.org/> for updates

**CALL FOR THE PROHIBITION OF THE PRODUCTION AND CIRCULATION OF
NUCLEAR POWERED AND NUCLEAR ARMS CAPABLE VESSELS.**

[USS CARL VINSON](#)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Carl_Vinson

USS Carl Vinson (CVN-70) is the third United States Navy Nimitz-class supercarrier and is named after Carl Vinson, a Congressman from Georgia, in recognition of his contributions to the US Navy. The **ship** was launched in 1980, undertook its maiden voyage in 1983, and ... **ship's** motto, and also represents the **power** that resides in the **ship's** aircraft. The ship is now close to North Korea.

The Nimitz-class supercarriers are a class of ten **nuclear-powered** aircraft carriers in service with the United States Navy. The lead **ship** of the class is named for World War II United States Pacific The presence of **nuclear weapons** on board U.S. aircraft carriers since the end of the Cold War has neither been confirmed nor denied

(ii) **ANTI-BALLISTIC MISSILE (ABH) TREATY OF 1972.**

It limits anti-missile sites to only two in the US and now Russia. It was an agreement not to attempt to create invulnerability, by one of the superpowers thereby violating the basic deterrent principle of MAD

ACTION; TO ABIDE BY THE TREATY

***(b) BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS**

BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION (1972)

Article I Each State Party to this Convention undertakes never in any circumstances to develop, produce, stockpile or otherwise acquire or retain: (1) Microbial or other biological agents, or toxins whatever their origin or method of production, of types and in quantities that have no justification for prophylactic, protective or other peaceful purposes; (2) Weapons, equipment or means of delivery designed to use such agents or toxins for hostile purposes or in armed conflict.

ACTION; URGE ALL STATES TO RATIFY THE LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT AND ENACT THE NECESSARY LEGISLATION TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE

***(c) CHEMICAL WEAPONS (1993)**

CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTION, STOCKPILING AND USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION (1968)

CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTION,
STOCKPILING AND USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION

SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES 1. 2. When a dispute arises between two or more States Parties, or between one or more States Parties and the Organization, relating to the interpretation or application of this Convention, the parties concerned shall consult together with a view to the expeditious settlement of the dispute by negotiation or by other peaceful means of the parties' choice, including recourse to appropriate organs of this Convention and, by mutual consent, referral to the International Court of Justice in conformity with the Statute of the Court.

**ACTION; URGE ALL STATES TO RATIFY THE LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT
AND ENACT THE NECESSARY LEGISLATION TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE**

***2 NEW WEAPONS**

FIRST PROTOCOL OF THE GENEVA CONVENTION

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

Article 35. BASIC RULES. 1. In any armed conflict, the right of the Parties to the conflict to choose methods or means of warfare is not unlimited. 2. It is prohibited to employ weapons, projectiles and material and methods of warfare of a nature to cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering It is prohibited to employ methods or means of warfare which are intended, or may be expected, to cause widespread, long-term and severe damage to the natural environment.

(i) LETHAL AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS SYSTEMS (KILLER ROBOTS)

LETHAL AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS SYSTEM

(II) DRONES

UNODA-web@un.org .

<https://unoda-web.s3-accelerate.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/assets/publications/more/drones-study/drones-study.pdf>

**ACTON: URGE THE DISCONTINUING OF THE PROMOTION OF DEVELOPMENT
OF DRONES, CONFIGURABLE FOR MILITARY PURPOSES AT UNIVERSITIES END
DRONE WARFARE**

***3 DEPLETED URANIUM**

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION DEPLETED URANIUM CLEAN-UP (2014)

<http://www.bandedpleteduranium.org/en/timeline>

ACTION; LOBBY IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESOLUTION TO BAN THE USE OF DEPLETED URANIUM: URGE CANADA TO SUPPORT THE RESOLUTION

ACTION; DEPLETED URANIUM SHOULD BE PROHIBITED UNDER THE PROTOCOL OF THE 1925 GENEVA CONVENTION

[International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons \(ICBUW\) -](#)

www.bandedpleteduranium.org/en/legal-status

As weaponry and warfare have become more sophisticated, so their long-term effects have become more insidious and deadly. (Rosalee Bertell, Planet Earth: The Latest Weapon of War)

***4 CONVENTION ON CERTAIN CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS 1980)**

The [Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects as amended on 21 December 2001](#) (CCW) is usually referred to as the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. It is also known as the Inhumane Weapons Convention.

4.1. CLUSTER BOMBS

THE CONVENTION ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS (CCM 2008)

ACTION; URGE ALL STATES TO RATIFY THE LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT AND ENACT THE NECESSARY LEGISLATION TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE

The Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) is an international treaty that addresses the humanitarian consequences and unacceptable harm to civilians caused by cluster munitions, through a categorical prohibition and a framework for action.

The Convention prohibits all use, production, transfer and stockpiling of cluster munitions.

4.2 LETHAL AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS SYSTEMS

The Group of Governmental Experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems will meet for one week in either April or August (depending on UN finances) and again on 13-17 November 2017. This is the bare minimum required to demonstrate credible progress in the process to discuss questions relating to these future weapons that would select and attack targets without

meaningful human control.

4.3 GBU-43, known as "the mother of all bombs"

ACTION; CALL FOR ALL STATES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MEETING IN 2017 ON LETHAL AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS SYSTEMS LEADING TOWARDS THE BANNING OF THESE WEAPONS

<http://www.stopkillerrobots.org/2016/12/formal-talks>

4.3 DRONES

Do they fall under this convention?

***5 CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE USE,**

STOCKPILING, PRODUCTION AND TRANSFER OF

ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION (1997)

General obligations

1. Each State Party undertakes never under any circumstances:
 - a) To use anti-personnel mines;
 - b) To develop, produce, otherwise acquire, stockpile, retain or transfer to anyone, directly or indirectly, anti-personnel mines
 - c) To assist, encourage or induce, in any way, anyone to engage in any activity prohibited to a State Party under this Convention.
2. Each State Party undertakes to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in accordance with the provisions of this Convention.

***6. ARMS TRADE TREATY (2013)**

Article 6 Prohibitions 1. A State Party shall not authorize any transfer of conventional arms covered under Article 2 (1) or of items covered under Article 3 or Article 4, if the transfer would violate its obligations under measures adopted by the United Nations Security Council acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular arms embargoes. 2. A State Party shall not authorize any transfer of conventional arms covered under Article 2 (1) or of items covered under Article 3 or Article 4, if the transfer would violate its relevant international obligations under international agreements to which it is a Party, in particular those relating to the transfer of, or illicit trafficking in, conventional arms. 3. A State Party shall not authorize any transfer of conventional arms covered under Article 2 (1) or of items covered under Article 3 or Article 4, if it has knowledge at the time of authorization that the arms or items would be used in the commission of genocide,

crimes against humanity, grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, attacks directed against civilian objects or civilians protected as such, or other war crimes as defined by international agreements to which it is a Party.

URGE STRENGTHENING AND THEN RATIFYING OF THE TREATY

***7. INTERNATIONAL ARMS TRADE SHOWS**

ACTION: CALL FOR THE END OF DEFENCE AND SECURITY TRADE SHOW

***8. ARMS AS PART OF AID OR THROUGH NGOS OR INSTITUTIONS**

ACTION: URGE THE END TO THE USE OF AID ETC. TO PROMOTE MILITARISM

***9. WEAPONS IN SPACE**

OUTER SPACE TREATY OF (1967)

Outer Space Treaty of 1967 in force 1967

The exploration and use of outer space, including the moon and other celestial bodies, shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development, and shall be the province of all mankind [humankind]....(Art. 1 Outer Space Treaty of 1967 in force 1967)

ACTION: CALL FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TREATY

Last Updated on Monday, 21 September 2020 07:00

] 321 readings

[INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE FOR THE SAKE OF PEACE AND
DISARMAMENT](#)



[Peace News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Monday, 21 September 2020 07:01

By Joan Russow PhD

Global Compliance Research Project

(OUTLINE FROM A LARGER DOCUMENT)

(RE POSTED 2020-09-17) LEST WE FORGET INCREASED MILITARISM
AND DEFIANCE OF THE RULE OF INTERNATIONAL LAW)

DISARMAMENT POSTER - NORTHERN FRIENDS' PEACE BOARD 1935

UPDATE IN 2020

In December 2016, Canada along with US allies gave the reason for not adopting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapon, that US nuclear weapons are necessary for the security of Canada and that Canada would never agree that nuclear weapons would never be used

And in July 2017 Canada refused to sign and ratify a Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons which 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.

And instead Canada had agreed, at a NATO Conference, to the following;

- 1) Nuclear weapons must be maintained indefinitely.
- 2) we will improve their use and accuracy (modernize them).
- 3 we can use them first.
- 4) we can target non-nuclear weapons states.
- 5) We can threaten to use them.
- 6) We can keep them in Europe, as we are now doing.
- 7) We can launch some on 15 minutes warning.
- 8) We say “they are essential for peace.”

And We will never agree that they should never be used.

A.

PEACE PROMOTION

***COMMON SECURITY**

1. We must reappropriate the word “security” and not allow it to be distorted by the military. (Dr. Ursula Franklin, internationally renowned scientist and pacifist (1984 at the lead up conference to Nairobi Conference on Women, 1985)
2. “True security exists when all are secure, through “common security” (Olof Palme, 1982) whose objectives could be extended to include but not limited to the following:
 - (a) to achieve a state of peace, and disarmament; through reallocation of military expenses and delegitimization of war;
 - (b) to promote and fully guarantee respect for human rights including labour rights, civil and political rights, indigenous rights, social and cultural rights – right to food, to housing, to safe drinking water and sanitation , right to education and right to universally accessible not for profit health care system; right to water and sanitation
 - (c) to ensure the preservation, conservation and protection of the environment, the respect for the inherent worth of nature beyond human purpose, to reduce the ecological footprint and to move away from the current model of unsustainable and excessive overconsumption
 - (d) To enable socially equitable and environmentally sound employment, energy

and transportation,

(e) to fully implement the UN Declaration the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

DRAFT OUTLINE

1. RIGHT TO LIFE, LIBERTY AND SECURITY OF PERSON.

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person. Article 3

***2 INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE [AND DISARMAMENT]**

Recalling its [resolution 36/67](#) of 30 November 1981,

1. Decides that, with effect from the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, the International Day of Peace shall be observed on 21 September each year, with this date to be brought to the attention of all people for the celebration and observance of peace;
2. Declares that the International Day of Peace shall henceforth be observed as a day of global ceasefire and non-violence, an invitation to all nations and people to honour a cessation of hostilities for the duration of the Day;

ACTION; TO CELEBRATE ON SEPTEMBER 21, THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE [AND DISARMAMENT]

***3. DECLARATION ON THE RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO PEACE APPROVED BY GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 1984**

Solemnly proclaims that the peoples of our planet have a sacred right to peace;

2. Solemnly declares that the preservation of the right of peoples to peace and the promotion of its implementation constitute a fundamental obligation of each State;
3. Emphasizes that ensuring the exercise of the right of peoples to peace demands that the policies of States be directed towards the elimination of the threat of war, particularly nuclear war, the renunciation of the use of force in international relations and the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations;

***4.DECLARATION ON THE USE OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS IN THE INTERESTS OF PEACE, 1975)**

1. All States shall promote international co-operation to ensure that the results of scientific and technological developments are used in the interests of strengthening international peace and security, freedom and independence, and also for the purpose of the economic and social development of peoples and the realization of human rights and freedoms in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

ACTION; CALL UPON UNESCO TO PROMOTE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS DECLARATION

***5.FAIR AND JUST TRANSITION**

ACTION: Promote a fair and Just Transition which must protect Jobs and the environment by ensuring that all workers' livelihoods will be protected and secured during and after the process of reduced military spending through new job creation, placement and re-skilling for socially and environmentally beneficial work.

***6.PEACE EDUCATION CULTURE OF PEACE**

The culture of peace and non-violence is a commitment to peace-building, mediation, conflict prevention and resolution, peace education, education for non-violence, tolerance, acceptance, mutual respect, intercultural and interfaith dialogue and reconciliation. UNESCO

B.

ACTIONS THAT IMPEDE (HINDER INHIBIT) PEACE MUST END

***1. GLORIFYING WAR AND CONFLICT**

ACTION; END THE GLORIFICATION OF WAR; THE FIRST WORLD WAR WAS INTENDED TO BE "THE WAR TO END ALL WARS"

***2. MISCONSTRUING THE ESSENCE OF THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

2.1. OBJECTIVE OF THE UNITED NATION;

to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind {HUMANITY} and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained

2.2 CHAPTER VI

Article 33

1. The parties to any dispute, the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, shall, first of all, seek a solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice.
2. The Security Council shall, when it deems necessary, call upon the parties to settle their dispute by such means.

2.3. CHAPTER VII; BESTOWING LEGALITY ON WAR

Article 41

The Security Council may decide what measures not involving the use of armed force are to be employed to give effect to its decisions, and it may call upon the Members of the United Nations to apply such measures. These may include complete or partial interruption of economic relations and of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio, and other means of communication, and the severance of diplomatic relations.

Article 42

Should the Security Council consider that measures provided for in Article 41 would be inadequate or have proved to be inadequate, it may take such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security. Such action may include demonstrations, blockade, and other operations by air, sea, or land forces of Members of the United Nations.

ACTION: URGE STATES TO NOT BYPASS CHAPTER VI-PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES

2.4 VOTES AT THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

1. **Decisions of the Security Council on all other matters shall be made by an affirmative vote of nine members including the concurring votes of the permanent**

members; provided that, in decisions under Chapter VI, and under paragraph 3 of Article 52, a party to a dispute shall abstain from voting.

2.

2.5 TOLERATING THE VETO POWER OF THE 5 PERMANENT MEMBERS

The Veto power violates a fundamental principle of the United Nations – the sovereign equality of states.

ACTION: CALL FOR THE DISBANDING OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL AND BUILDING ON THE UNITING FOR PEACE RESOLUTION, TO GIVE POWER TO THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY WHICH DOES ENCOMPASS THE PRINCIPLE OF SOVEREIGN EQUALITY OF STATES.

3. DEFYING OCCUPATION LAW

The duties of the occupying power are spelled out primarily in the 1907 Hague Regulations (arts 42-56) and the Fourth Geneva Convention (GC IV, art. 27-34 and 47-78), as well as in certain provisions of Additional Protocol I and customary international humanitarian law.

Agreements concluded between the occupying power and the local authorities cannot deprive the population of occupied territory of the protection afforded by international humanitarian law (GC IV, art. 47) and protected persons themselves can in no circumstances renounce their rights (GC IV, art. 8).

ACTION; END THE OCCUPATION OF PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

***4. CONCOCTING PRETEXTS FOR WAR, EUPHEMISMS, SPIRITUAL JUSTIFICATION**

Using pretexts for military intervention such as the following: “human security” (Iraq 1991), “Humanitarian intervention” (Kosovo, 1999), “self-defence” (Afghanistan 2001), “Pre-emptive/ preventive” attack (Iraq, 2003) “Responsibility to Protect (Haiti, 2004, Libya, 2011) or “will to intervene” (Mali, 2013)

ACTION; EXPOSE AND CONFRONT THE PRETEXTS OF WAR

***5. EXPOUNDING THEORIES OF A JUST WAR**

a) Legitimate Authority:

(b) Just Cause

(c) Just Intent:

(d) Last Resort: All other means to resolve the dispute must have been tried and shown to fail, before one may justifiably unleash the dogs of war

(e) Reasonable Chance of Success: All 5 of the principles of **ius ad bellum** must be met before JWT believes it morally justifiable to go to war.

(f) Ius in Bello Principles or Just Means:

1. The Principle of Discrimination:
2. The Principle of Proportionality. **The war's harm must not exceed the good accomplished.**

ACTION: COUNTER THE PRINCIPLES OF THE JUST WAR THEORY AND CALL FOR THE DELEGITIMIZATION OF WAR.

GIVEN THE SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH, HUMAN RIGHTS, ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF WAR, UNDER NO CONDITION OR CIRCUMSTANCE IS WAR LEGAL OR JUST. END THE PRACTICE OF DISRESPECTING OF THE JURISDICTION AND DECISIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE.

***6. PRIORIZING PEACE BUILDING AFTER CONFLICT OVER PREVENTION**

Reaffirming the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and stressing the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.... (UNSC 1325, 2000)

ACTION: CALL FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE PREVENTION OF WAR NOT JUST IN PEACE BUILDING

***7. IGNORING INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS TO REDUCE THE GLOBAL MILITARY BUDGET**

In 1976 at Habitat 1, member states of the United Nations affirmed the following in relation to the military budget: "The waste and misuse of resources in war and armaments should be prevented. All countries should make a firm commitment to promote general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, in particular in the field of nuclear disarmament. Part of the resources thus released should be utilized so as to achieve a better quality of life for humanity and particularly the peoples of developing countries" (II, 12 Habitat 1).

ACTION; URGE THE FULFILLMENT OF THIS COMMITMENT THROUGH PURSUING THE FOLLOWING; BEGIN A PHASED REDUCTION OF GLOBAL

MILITARY SPENDING, BEGINNING WITH A 50 % REDUCTION IMMEDIATELY;

***8. ESTABLISHING FOREIGN MILITARY BASES IN SOVEREIGN STATES AROUND THE WORLD.**

China 1, Germany 2, France 11, India 6, Italy 2, Japan 1, Russia 10, Turkey 7, UK 22, US 34, (MORE LIKELY 1000?)

ACTION: CALL FOR THE CONVERSION OF FOREIGN MILITARY BASES TO PEACEFUL PURPOSES

***9. ENGAGING IN PROPAGANDA FOR WAR**

1. Any propaganda for war shall be prohibited by law. (Article 20, International covenant on civil and political rights)

ACTION: URGE STATES TO INCLUDE IN “PROPAGANDA FOR WAR” PROHIBITION OF ENGAGING WAR GAMES, OF MOVING MILITARY VESSELS CLOSE TO ENEMY STATES, OR OF ADVANCING WITH A MILITARY ORGANIZATION CLOSE TO BORDER OF AN ENEMY STATE

***10. PERPETUATING MILITARIZATION THROUGH EXEMPTIONS**

In 1997, the US insisted in having the contribution of militarism to greenhouse gases exempt from the UNFCCC

ACTION; CALL FOR THE REMOVAL OF THE EXEMPTION OF CONTRIBUTION OF MILITARISM TO GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

***11. TOLERATING COMPLICITY THROUGH PENSIONS AND INDIVIDUAL INVESTMENT**

Many pensions do not have negative or positive screens

ACTION: LOBBY FOR PENSION FUNDS TO HAVE A NEGATIVE SCREEN WHICH EXCLUDES MILITARISM AND A POSITIVE SCREEN WHICH PROMOTES PEACE

***12. BEING COMPLICITY IN MILITARISM AND AGGRESSION**

1. NATO

(a) reneging on commitments:NATO expansion

(b)destabilizing other nations

(c)engaging in propaganda for war

(d) initiating or being complicit in acts of aggression(e) (bypassing chapter vi of the charter of the united nations- peaceful resolution of disputes,

(f) defying international law, by not complying with conventions

(g) using prohibited conventional weapons and new weapons,

(h) being a nuclear weapons Alliance whose positions violate the NPT and undermine the 13 steps:

NATO says that:

- (1) Nuclear weapons must be maintained indefinitely.
- 2) We will improve their use and accuracy (modernize them).
- 3) We can use them first.
- 4) We can target non-nuclear weapon states.
- 5) We can threaten to use them.
- 6) We can keep them in Europe as
- 7) We can launch some on 15 minutes warning
- 8) We say “they are essential for peace

On the NATO web site: NATO commits itself to the goal of creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons – but reconfirms that, as long as there are nuclear weapons in the world, NATO will remain a nuclear Alliance.

The conditions for a world without nuclear weapons would be for all states to sign and ratify and implement the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and to call upon all NATO States and nuclear weapon states to participate in the UN negotiations for a legally binding Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Currently, the US has urged all NATO States to not participate in the negotiations.

(i) failing to reallocate exorbitant military spending

(j) condoning the exemption of military contributions to greenhouse gas emissions

(k) propagating untenable myths and rhetoric and coercing conformity

partners for peace 22 countries

(l) perceiving its members to be beyond the judgment of the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice

(m) engaging in weapons testing

ACTION; CALL FOR THE DISBANDING OF NATO ON THE ABOVE GROUNDS AND URGE FOR ALL NATO STATES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS AND SUPPORT THE TREATY

2. UNRELENTING CONSEQUENCES OF WAR

GENOCIDE CONVENTION

(a) GENOCIDE

Convention the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of **Genocide adopted by the general assembly of the United Nations on 9 December 1948**

HAVING CONSIDERED the declaration made by the General Assembly of the United Nations in its resolution 96 (I) dated 11 December 1946 that genocide is a crime under international law, contrary to the spirit and aims of the United Nations and condemned by the civilized world ;

Article I The Contracting Parties confirm that genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and to punish.

ACTION; URGE ALL STATES TO RATIFY THE LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT AND ENACT THE NECESSARY LEGISLATION TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE

(b) INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT ROME STATUTE

Part II Jurisdiction, admissibility and applicable law Article 5 Crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court

1. The jurisdiction of the Court shall be limited to the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole. The Court has jurisdiction in accordance with this Statute with respect to the following crimes: (a) The crime of genocide; (b) Crimes against humanity; (c) War crimes; (d) The crime of aggression.

ACTION: URGE ALL STATES TO SIGN AN RATIFY THE ICC AND ENACT THE

NECESSARY LEGISLATION TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE. LOBBY FOR THE ICC TO ALSO BE PREPARED TO SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER

(c) CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE

ACTION; URGE ALL STATES TO RATIFY THE LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT AND ENACT THE NECESSARY LEGISLATION TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE

Article 1

1. For the purposes of this Convention, the term "torture" means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions.

***C**

FURTHERING DISARMAMENT THROUGH OPPOSING THE FOLLOWING

1. PRODUCTION OF WEAPONS

***(1) WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION**

***(a).NUCLEAR**

(i)Non Proliferation Treaty (1968)

Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty ("NPT") states in full: "Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a Treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control."

ACTION; URGE ALL STATES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE NEGOTIATION OF THE TREATY ON THE PROHIBITION NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND RATIFY THE LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT.

THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE TO NEGOTIATE A LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT TO PROHIBIT NUCLEAR WEAPONS, LEADING TOWARDS THEIR TOTAL

ELIMINATION, NEW YORK MARCH - JULY 2017 see <http://www.icanw.org/> for updates

CALL FOR THE PROHIBITION OF THE PRODUCTION AND CIRCULATION OF NUCLEAR POWERED AND NUCLEAR ARMS CAPABLE VESSELS.

[USS CARL VINSON](#)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Carl_Vinson

USS Carl Vinson (CVN-70) is the third United States Navy Nimitz-class supercarrier and is named after Carl Vinson, a Congressman from Georgia, in recognition of his contributions to the US Navy. The **ship** was launched in 1980, undertook its maiden voyage in 1983, and ... **ship's** motto, and also represents the **power** that resides in the **ship's** aircraft. The ship is now close to North Korea.

The Nimitz-class supercarriers are a class of ten **nuclear-powered** aircraft carriers in service with the United States Navy. The lead **ship** of the class is named for World War II United States Pacific The presence of **nuclear weapons** on board U.S. aircraft carriers since the end of the Cold War has neither been confirmed nor denied

(ii) **ANTI-BALLISTIC MISSILE (ABM) TREATY OF 1972.**

It limits anti-missile sites to only two in the US and now Russia. It was an agreement not to attempt to create invulnerability, by one of the

superpowers thereby violating the basic deterrent principle of MAD

ACTION; TO ABIDE BY THE TREATY

***(b) BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS**

BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION (1972)

Article I Each State Party to this Convention undertakes never in any circumstances to develop, produce, stockpile or otherwise acquire or retain: (1) Microbial or other biological agents, or toxins whatever their origin or method of production, of types and in quantities that have no justification for prophylactic, protective or other peaceful purposes; (2) Weapons, equipment or means of delivery designed to use such agents or toxins for hostile purposes or in armed conflict.

ACTION; URGE ALL STATES TO RATIFY THE LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT AND ENACT THE NECESSARY LEGISLATION TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE

***(c) CHEMICAL WEAPONS (1993)**

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LETHAL AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS SYSTEM

(II) DRONES

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<https://unoda-web.s3-accelerate.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/assets/publications/more/drones-study/drones-study.pdf>

**ACTON: URGE THE DISCONTINUING OF THE PROMOTION OF DEVELOPMENT OF DRONES, CONFIGURABLE FOR MILITARY PURPOSES AT UNIVERSITIES
END DRONE WARFARE**

***3 DEPLETED URANIUM**

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION DEPLETED URANIUM CLEAN-UP (2014)

<http://www.bandepleteduranium.org/en/timeline>

ACTION; LOBBY IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESOLUTION TO BAN THE USE OF DEPLETED URANIUM: URGE CANADA TO SUPPORT THE RESOLUTION

ACTION; DEPLETED URANIUM SHOULD BE PROHIBITED UNDER THE PROTOCOL OF THE 1925 GENEVA CONVENTION

[International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons \(ICBUW\) –](#)

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As weaponry and warfare have become more sophisticated, so their long-term effects have become more insidious and deadly. (Rosalee Bertell, Planet Earth: The Latest Weapon of War)

***4 CONVENTION ON CERTAIN CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS 1980)**

The [Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects as amended on 21 December 2001](#) (CCW) is usually referred to as the Convention on Certain Conventional

Weapons. It is also known as the Inhumane Weapons Convention.

4.1. CLUSTER BOMBS

THE CONVENTION ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS (CCM 2008)

ACTION; URGE ALL STATES TO RATIFY THE LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT AND ENACT THE NECESSARY LEGISLATION TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE

The Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) is an international treaty that addresses the humanitarian consequences and unacceptable harm to civilians caused by cluster munitions, through a categorical prohibition and a framework for action.

The Convention prohibits all use, production, transfer and stockpiling of cluster munitions.

4.2 LETHAL AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS SYSTEMS

The Group of Governmental Experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems will meet for one week in either April or August (depending on UN finances) and again on 13-17 November 2017. This is the bare minimum required to demonstrate credible progress in the process to discuss questions relating to these future weapons that would select and attack targets without meaningful human control.

4.3 GBU-43, known as "the mother of all bombs"

ACTION; CALL FOR ALL STATES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MEETING IN 2017 ON LETHAL AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS SYSTEMS LEADING TOWARDS THE BANNING OF THESE WEAPONS

<http://www.stopkillerrobots.org/2016/12/formal-talks>

4.3 DRONES

Do they fall under this convention?

***5 CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE USE,**

STOCKPILING, PRODUCTION AND TRANSFER OF

ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION (1997)

General obligations

1. Each State Party undertakes never under any circumstances:
 - a) To use anti-personnel mines;
 - b) To develop, produce, otherwise acquire, stockpile, retain or transfer to anyone, directly or indirectly, anti-personnel mines
 - c) To assist, encourage or induce, in any way, anyone to engage in any activity prohibited to a State Party under this Convention.
2. Each State Party undertakes to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in accordance with the provisions of this Convention.

***6.ARMES TRADE TREATY (2013)**

Article 6 Prohibitions 1. A State Party shall not authorize any transfer of conventional arms covered under Article 2 (1) or of items covered under Article 3 or Article 4, if the transfer would violate its obligations under measures adopted by the United Nations Security Council acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular arms embargoes. 2. A State Party shall not authorize any transfer of conventional arms covered under Article 2 (1) or of items covered under Article 3 or Article 4, if the transfer would violate its relevant international obligations under international agreements to which it is a Party, in particular those relating to the transfer of, or illicit trafficking in, conventional arms. 3. A State Party shall not authorize any transfer of conventional arms covered under Article 2 (1) or of items covered under Article 3 or Article 4, if it has knowledge at the time of authorization that the arms or items would be used in the commission of genocide, crimes against humanity, grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, attacks directed against civilian objects or civilians protected as such, or other war crimes as defined by international agreements to which it is a Party.

URGE STRENGTHENING AND THEN RATIFYING OF THE TREATY

***7. INTERNATIONAL ARMS TRADE SHOWS**

ACTION: CALL FOR THE END OF DEFENCE AND SECURITY TRADE SHOW

***8. ARMS AS PART OF AID OR THROUGH NGOS OR INSTITUTIONS**

ACTION: URGE THE END TO THE USE OF AID ETC. TO PROMOTE MILITARISM

***9. WEAPONS IN SPACE**

OUTER SPACE TREATY OF (1967)

Outer Space Treaty of 1967 in force 1967

The exploration and use of outer space, including the moon and other celestial bodies, shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development, and shall be the province of all mankind [humankind]....(Art. 1 Outer Space Treaty of 1967 in force 1967)

ACTION: CALL FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TREATY

By Joan Russow PhD

Global Compliance Research Project

(OUTLINE FROM A LARGER DOCUMENT)

(RE POSTED 2020-09-17) LEST WE FORGET INCREASED MILITARISM AND DEFIANCE OF THE RULE OF INTERNATIONAL LAW)

DISARMAMENT POSTER - NORTHERN FRIENDS' PEACE BOARD 1935

UPDATE IN 2020

In December 2016, Canada along with US allies gave the reason for not adopting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapon, that US nuclear weapons are necessary for the security of Canada and that Canada would never agree that nuclear weapons would never be used

And in July 2017 Canada refused to sign and ratify a Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons which 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.

And instead Canada had agreed, at a NATO Conference, to the following;

- 1) Nuclear weapons must be maintained indefinitely.
- 2) we will improve their use and accuracy (modernize them).
- 3 we can use them first.
- 4) we can target non-nuclear weapons states.
- 5) We can threaten to use them.
- 6) We can keep them in Europe, as we are now doing.
- 7) We can launch some on 15 minutes warning.
- 8) We say "they are essential for peace."

And We will never agree that they should never be used.

A.

PEACE PROMOTION

***COMMON SECURITY**

1. We must reappropriate the word "security" and not allow it to be distorted by the military. (Dr. Ursula Franklin, internationally renowned scientist and pacifist (1984 at the lead up conference to Nairobi Conference on Women, 1985)

2. "True security exists when all are secure, through "common security" (Olof Palme, 1982) whose objectives could be extended to include but not limited to the following:

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

expenses and delegitimization of war;

(b) to promote and fully guarantee respect for human rights including labour rights, civil and political rights, indigenous rights, social and cultural rights – right to food, to housing, to safe drinking water and sanitation , right to education and right to universally accessible not for profit health care system; right to water and sanitation

(c) to ensure the preservation, conservation and protection of the environment, the respect for the inherent worth of nature beyond human purpose, to reduce the ecological footprint and to move away from the current model of unsustainable and excessive overconsumption

(d) To enable socially equitable and environmentally sound employment, energy and transportation,

(e) to fully implement the UN Declaration the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

DRAFT OUTLINE

1. RIGHT TO LIFE, LIBERTY AND SECURITY OF PERSON.

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person. Article 3

***2 INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE [AND DISARMAMENT]**

Recalling its [resolution 36/67](#) of 30 November 1981,

1. Decides that, with effect from the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, the International Day of Peace shall be observed on 21 September each year, with this date to be brought to the attention of all people for the celebration and observance of peace;

2. Declares that the International Day of Peace shall henceforth be observed as a day of global ceasefire and non-violence, an invitation to all nations and people to honour a cessation of hostilities for the duration of the Day;

ACTION; TO CELEBRATE ON SEPTEMBER 21, THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE [AND DISARMAMENT]

***3. DECLARATION ON THE RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO PEACE APPROVED BY GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 1984**

Solemnly proclaims that the peoples of our planet have a sacred right to peace;

2. Solemnly declares that the preservation of the right of peoples to peace and the promotion of its implementation constitute a fundamental obligation of each State;

3. Emphasizes that ensuring the exercise of the right of peoples to peace demands that the policies of States be directed towards the elimination of the threat of war, particularly nuclear war, the renunciation of the use of force in international relations and the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations;

***4.DECLARATION ON THE USE OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS IN THE INTERESTS OF PEACE, 1975)**

1. All States shall promote international co-operation to ensure that the results of scientific and technological developments are used in the interests of strengthening international peace and security, freedom and independence, and also for the purpose of the economic and social development of peoples and the realization of human rights and freedoms in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

ACTION; CALL UPON UNESCO TO PROMOTE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS DECLARATION

***5.FAIR AND JUST TRANSITION**

ACTION: Promote a fair and Just Transition which must protect Jobs and the environment by ensuring that all workers' livelihoods will be protected and secured during and after the process of reduced military spending through new job creation, placement and re-skilling for socially and environmentally beneficial work.

***6.PEACE EDUCATION CULTURE OF PEACE**

The culture of peace and non-violence is a commitment to peace-building, mediation, conflict prevention and resolution, peace education, education for non-violence, tolerance, acceptance, mutual respect, intercultural and interfaith dialogue and reconciliation. UNESCO

B.

ACTIONS THAT IMPEDE (HINDER INHIBIT) PEACE MUST END

***1. GLORIFYING WAR AND CONFLICT**

ACTION; END THE GLORIFICATION OF WAR; THE FIRST WORLD WAR WAS INTENDED TO BE ``THE WAR TO END ALL WARS``

***2. MISCONSTRUING THE ESSENCE OF THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

2.1. OBJECTIVE OF THE UNITED NATION;

to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind {HUMANITY} and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained

2.2 CHAPTER VI

Article 33

1. The parties to any dispute, the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, shall, first of all, seek a solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice.
2. The Security Council shall, when it deems necessary, call upon the parties to settle their dispute by such means.

2.3. CHAPTER VII; BESTOWING LEGALITY ON WAR

Article 41

The Security Council may decide what measures not involving the use of armed force are to be employed to give effect to its decisions, and it may call upon the Members of the United Nations to apply such measures. These may include complete or partial interruption of economic relations and of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio, and other means of communication, and the severance of diplomatic relations.

Article 42

Should the Security Council consider that measures provided for in Article 41 would be inadequate or have proved to be inadequate, it may take such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security. Such action may include demonstrations, blockade, and other operations by air, sea, or land forces of Members of the

United Nations.

ACTION: URGE STATES TO NOT BYPASS CHAPTER VI-PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES

2.4 VOTES AT THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

1. **Decisions of the Security Council on all other matters shall be made by an affirmative vote of nine members including the concurring votes of the permanent members; provided that, in decisions under Chapter VI, and under paragraph 3 of Article 52, a party to a dispute shall abstain from voting.**
- 2.

2.5 TOLERATING THE VETO POWER OF THE 5 PERMANENT MEMBERS

The Veto power violates a fundamental principle of the United Nations – the sovereign equality of states.

ACTION: CALL FOR THE DISBANDING OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL AND BUILDING ON THE UNITING FOR PEACE RESOLUTION, TO GIVE POWER TO THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY WHICH DOES ENCOMPASS THE PRINCIPLE OF SOVEREIGN EQUALITY OF STATES.

3. DEFYING OCCUPATION LAW

The duties of the occupying power are spelled out primarily in the 1907 Hague Regulations (arts 42-56) and the Fourth Geneva Convention (GC IV, art. 27-34 and 47-78), as well as in certain provisions of Additional Protocol I and customary international humanitarian law.

Agreements concluded between the occupying power and the local authorities cannot deprive the population of occupied territory of the protection afforded by international humanitarian law (GC IV, art. 47) and protected persons themselves can in no circumstances renounce their rights (GC IV, art. 8).

ACTION; END THE OCCUPATION OF PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

***4. CONCOCTING PRETEXTS FOR WAR, EUPHEMISMS, SPIRITUAL JUSTIFICATION**

Using pretexts for military intervention such as the following: "human security" (Iraq 1991), "Humanitarian intervention" (Kosovo, 1999), "self-defence" (Afghanistan 2001), "Pre-emptive/ preventive" attack (Iraq, 2003) "Responsibility to Protect (Haiti, 2004,

Libya, 2011) or "will to intervene" (Mali, 2013)

ACTION; EXPOSE AND CONFRONT THE PRETEXTS OF WAR

***5. EXPOUNDING THEORIES OF A JUST WAR**

a) Legitimate Authority:

(b) Just Cause

(c) Just Intent:

(d) Last Resort: All other means to resolve the dispute must have been tried and shown to fail, before one may justifiably unleash the dogs of war

(e) Reasonable Chance of Success: All 5 of the principles of **ius ad bellum** must be met before JWT believes it morally justifiable to go to war.

(f) Ius in Bello Principles or Just Means:

1. The Principle of Discrimination:
2. The Principle of Proportionality. **The war's harm must not exceed the good accomplished.**

ACTION: COUNTER THE PRINCIPLES OF THE JUST WAR THEORY AND CALL FOR THE DELEGITIMIZATION OF WAR.

GIVEN THE SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH, HUMAN RIGHTS, ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF WAR, UNDER NO CONDITION OR CIRCUMSTANCE IS WAR LEGAL OR JUST. END THE PRACTICE OF DISRESPECTING OF THE JURISDICTION AND DECISIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE.

***6. PRIORITIZING PEACE BUILDING AFTER CONFLICT OVER PREVENTION**

Reaffirming the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and stressing the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.... (UNSC 1325, 2000)

ACTION: CALL FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE PREVENTION OF WAR NOT JUST IN PEACE BUILDING

***7. IGNORING INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS TO REDUCE THE GLOBAL**

MILITARY BUDGET

In 1976 at Habitat 1, member states of the United Nations affirmed the following in relation to the military budget: "The waste and misuse of resources in war and armaments should be prevented. All countries should make a firm commitment to promote general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, in particular in the field of nuclear disarmament. Part of the resources thus released should be utilized so as to achieve a better quality of life for humanity and particularly the peoples of developing countries" (II, 12 Habitat 1).

ACTION; URGE THE FULFILLMENT OF THIS COMMITMENT THROUGH PURSUING THE FOLLOWING; BEGIN A PHASED REDUCTION OF GLOBAL MILITARY SPENDING, BEGINNING WITH A 50 % REDUCTION IMMEDIATELY;

***8. ESTABLISHING FOREIGN MILITARY BASES IN SOVEREIGN STATES AROUND THE WORLD.**

China 1, Germany 2, France 11, India 6, Italy 2, Japan 1, Russia 10, Turkey 7, UK 22, US 34, (MORE LIKELY 1000?)

ACTION: CALL FOR THE CONVERSION OF FOREIGN MILITARY BASES TO PEACEFUL PURPOSES

***9. ENGAGING IN PROPAGANDA FOR WAR**

1. Any propaganda for war shall be prohibited by law. (Article 20, International covenant on civil and political rights)

ACTION: URGE STATES TO INCLUDE IN "PROPAGANDA FOR WAR" PROHIBITION OF ENGAGING WAR GAMES, OF MOVING MILITARY VESSELS CLOSE TO ENEMY STATES, OR OF ADVANCING WITH A MILITARY ORGANIZATION CLOSE TO BORDER OF AN ENEMY STATE

***10. PERPETUATING MILITARIZATION THROUGH EXEMPTIONS**

In 1997, the US insisted in having the contribution of militarism to greenhouse gases exempt from the UNFCCC

ACTION; CALL FOR THE REMOVAL OF THE EXEMPTION OF CONTRIBUTION OF MILITARISM TO GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

***11. TOLERATING COMPLICITY THROUGH PENSIONS AND INDIVIDUAL INVESTMENT**

Many pensions do not have negative or positive screens

ACTION: LOBBY FOR PENSION FUNDS TO HAVE A NEGATIVE SCREEN WHICH EXCLUDES MILITARISM AND A POSITIVE SCREEN WHICH PROMOTES PEACE

***12. BEING COMPLICITY IN MILITARISM AND AGRESSION**

1. NATO

(a) reneging on commitments:NATO expansion

(b)destabilizing other nations

(c)engaging in propaganda for war

(d) initiating or being complicit in acts of aggression(e) (bypassing chapter vi of the charter of the united nations- peaceful resolution of disputes,

(f) defying international law, by not complying with conventions

(g) using prohibited conventional weapons and new weapons,

(h) being a nuclear weapons Alliance whose positions violate the NPT and undermine the 13 steps:

NATO says that:

- (1) Nuclear weapons must be maintained indefinitely.
- 2) We will improve their use and accuracy (modernize them).
- 3) We can use them first.
- 4) We can target non-nuclear weapon states.
- 5) We can threaten to use them.
- 6) We can keep them in Europe as
- 7) We can launch some on 15 minutes warning
- 8) We say “they are essential for peace

On the NATO web site: NATO commits itself to the goal of creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons – but reconfirms that, as long as there are nuclear weapons in the world, NATO will remain a nuclear Alliance.

The conditions for a world without nuclear weapons would be for all states to sign and ratify and implement the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and to call upon all NATO States and nuclear weapon states to participate in the UN negotiations for a legally binding Treaty on the

Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Currently, the US has urged all NATO States to not participate in the negotiations.

- (i) failing to reallocate exorbitant military spending**
- (j) condoning the exemption of military contributions to greenhouse gas emissions**
- (k) propagating untenable myths and rhetoric and coercing conformity**

partners for peace 22 countries

(l) perceiving its members to be beyond the judgment of the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice

- (m) engaging in weapons testing**

ACTION; CALL FOR THE DISBANDING OF NATO ON THE ABOVE GROUNDS AND URGE FOR ALL NATO STATES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS AND SUPPORT THE TREATY

2. UNRELENTING CONSEQUENCES OF WAR

GENOCIDE CONVENTION

(a) GENOCIDE

Convention the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide adopted by the general assembly of the United Nations on 9 December 1948

HAVING CONSIDERED the declaration made by the General Assembly of the United Nations in its resolution 96 (I) dated 11 December 1946 that genocide is a crime under international law, contrary to the spirit and aims of the United Nations and condemned by the civilized world ;

Article I The Contracting Parties confirm that genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and to punish.

ACTION; URGE ALL STATES TO RATIFY THE LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT AND ENACT THE NECESSARY LEGISLATION TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE

(b) INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT ROME STATUTE

Part II Jurisdiction, admissibility and applicable law Article 5 Crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court

1. The jurisdiction of the Court shall be limited to the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole. The Court has jurisdiction in accordance with this Statute with respect to the following crimes: (a) The crime of genocide; (b) Crimes against humanity; (c) War crimes; (d) The crime of aggression.

ACTION: URGE ALL STATES TO SIGN AN RATIFY THE ICC AND ENACT THE NECESSARY LEGISLATION TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE. LOBBY FOR THE ICC TO ALSO BE PREPARED TO SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER

(c) CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE

ACTION; URGE ALL STATES TO RATIFY THE LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT AND ENACT THE NECESSARY LEGISLATION TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE

Article 1

1. For the purposes of this Convention, the term "torture" means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions.

***C**

FURTHERING DISARMAMENT THROUGH OPPOSING THE FOLLOWING

1. PRODUCTION OF WEAPONS

***(1) WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION**

***(a).NUCLEAR**

(i)Non Proliferation Treaty (1968)

Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (“NPT”) states in full: “Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a Treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.”

ACTION; URGE ALL STATES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE NEGOTIATION OF THE TREATY ON THE PROHIBITION NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND RATIFY THE LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT.

THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE TO NEGOTIATE A LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT TO PROHIBIT NUCLEAR WEAPONS, LEADING TOWARDS THEIR TOTAL

ELIMINATION, NEW YORK MARCH - JULY 2017 see <http://www.icanw.org/> for updates

CALL FOR THE PROHIBITION OF THE PRODUCTION AND CIRCULATION OF NUCLEAR POWERED AND NUCLEAR ARMS CAPABLE VESSELS.

[USS CARL VINSON](#)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Carl_Vinson

USS Carl Vinson (CVN-70) is the third United States Navy Nimitz-class supercarrier and is named after Carl Vinson, a Congressman from Georgia, in recognition of his contributions to the US Navy. The **ship** was launched in 1980, undertook its maiden voyage in 1983, and ... **ship's** motto, and also represents the **power** that resides in the **ship's** aircraft. The ship is now close to North Korea.

The Nimitz-class supercarriers are a class of ten **nuclear-powered** aircraft carriers in service with the United States Navy. The lead **ship** of the class is named for World War II United States Pacific The presence of **nuclear weapons** on board U.S. aircraft carriers since the end of the Cold War has neither been confirmed nor denied

(ii) **ANTI-BALLISTIC MISSILE (ABM) TREATY OF 1972.**

It limits anti-missile sites to only two in the US and now Russia. It was an agreement not to attempt to create invulnerability, by one of the superpowers thereby violating the basic deterrent principle of MAD

ACTION; TO ABIDE BY THE TREATY

***(b) BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS**

BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION (1972)

Article I Each State Party to this Convention undertakes never in any circumstances to develop, produce, stockpile or otherwise acquire or retain: (1) Microbial or other biological agents, or toxins whatever their origin or method of production, of types and in quantities that have no justification for prophylactic, protective or other peaceful purposes; (2) Weapons, equipment or means of delivery designed to use such agents or toxins for hostile purposes or in armed conflict.

ACTION; URGE ALL STATES TO RATIFY THE LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT AND ENACT THE NECESSARY LEGISLATION TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE

***(c) CHEMICAL WEAPONS (1993)**

CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTION, STOCKPILING AND USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION (1968)

CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTION, STOCKPILING AND USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION

SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES 1. 2. When a dispute arises between two or more States Parties, or between one or more States Parties and the Organization, relating to the interpretation or application of this Convention, the parties concerned shall consult together with a view to the expeditious settlement of the dispute by negotiation or by other peaceful means of the parties' choice, including recourse to appropriate organs of this Convention and, by mutual consent, referral to the International Court of Justice in conformity with the Statute of the Court.

ACTION; URGE ALL STATES TO RATIFY THE LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT AND ENACT THE NECESSARY LEGISLATION TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE

***2 NEW WEAPONS**

FIRST PROTOCOL OF THE GENEVA CONVENTION

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

Article 35. BASIC RULES. 1. In any armed conflict, the right of the Parties to the conflict to choose methods or means of warfare is not unlimited. 2. It is prohibited to employ weapons, projectiles and material and methods of warfare of a nature to cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering. It is prohibited to employ methods or means of warfare which are intended, or may be expected, to cause widespread, long-term and severe damage to the natural environment.

(i) LETHAL AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS SYSTEMS (KILLER ROBOTS

LETHAL AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS SYSTEM

(II) DRONES

UNODA-web@un.org .

<https://unoda-web.s3-accelerate.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/assets/publications/more/drones-study/drones-study.pdf>

ACTON: URGE THE DISCONTINUING OF THE PROMOTION OF DEVELOPMENT OF DRONES, CONFIGURABLE FOR MILITARY PURPOSES AT UNIVERSITIES END DRONE WARFARE

***3 DEPLETED URANIUM**

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION DEPLETED URANIUM CLEAN-UP (2014)

<http://www.bandepleteduranium.org/en/timeline>

ACTION; LOBBY IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESOLUTION TO BAN THE USE OF DEPLETED URANIUM: URGE CANADA TO SUPPORT THE RESOLUTION

ACTION; DEPLETED URANIUM SHOULD BE PROHIBITED UNDER THE PROTOCOL OF THE 1925 GENEVA CONVENTION

[International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons \(ICBUW\) -](#)

www.bandepleteduranium.org/en/legal-status

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URGE STRENGTHENING AND THEN RATIFYING OF THE TREATY

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ACTION: CALL FOR THE END OF DEFENCE AND SECURITY TRADE SHOW

***8. ARMS AS PART OF AID OR THROUGH NGOS OR INSTITUTIONS**

ACTION: URGE THE END TO THE USE OF AID ETC. TO PROMOTE MILITARISM

***9. WEAPONS IN SPACE**

OUTER SPACE TREATY OF (1967)

Outer Space Treaty of 1967 in force 1967

The exploration and use of outer space, including the moon and other celestial bodies, shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development, and shall be the province of all mankind [humankind]....(Art. 1 Outer Space Treaty of 1967 in force 1967)

ACTION: CALL FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TREATY

Last Updated on Monday, 21 September 2020 07:07

82 readings

[Repurposing Site C dam to meet "the nutritional needs of over one million people a year, in perpetuity"](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 11 October 2020 13:36

Wendy Holm: The Province

The land to be flooded by the Site C Dam could, if planted to horticulture crops, meet the nutritional needs of over one million people a year, in perpetuity.

Oct 11, 2020

B.C. Peace Valley farmland to be flooded by the Site C dam ranks as some of the highest capability land in Canada. Photo by ian lindsay /Vancouver Sun

The COVID-19 pandemic has unmasked many truths in our society — one of the most important being the folly of becoming dependant on others for our food supply.

The B.C. Peace Valley farmland to be flooded by the Site C dam ranks as some of the highest capability land in Canada. With the same cropping capability as B.C.'s Fraser Valley, the Peace Valley's deep alluvial soils and class one climate for agriculture makes it perfectly suited to the production of fruits and vegetables, the building blocks of life.

Based on B.C. Hydro's own analysis, the land to be flooded by the Site C Dam could, if planted to horticulture crops, meet the nutritional needs of over one million people a year, in perpetuity.

With recent B.C. Hydro reports revealing major stability problems with the spillway, generating station and dam itself (attempting to anchor to deep prehistoric shales, the geologic equivalent of billiard balls), it is time to add up all the costs that lie ahead for this project (already at double the budget to produce energy three times the cost of today's renewables) and head off in a new direction. The Stone Age didn't end because our ancestors ran out of stones. They chose a better direction.

As an agrologist, I had the privilege of being part of a two-person team charged with the responsibility of assessing the agricultural impact of the Site C Dam. Gary Runka, P.Ag. and I began our work in 2011. Eveline Wolterson, P.Ag., continued Gary's work after his passing. In January 2014, Eveline and I appeared before the Joint Federal-Provincial Environmental Impact Assessment Review Panel as expert witnesses on behalf of the B.C. Women's Institute and the Peace Valley Environment Association, both intervenors in the EIA process.

The flaws in the process have been well documented by many experts, including panel chair Harry Swain. My 2018 book *Damming the Peace: the Hidden Costs of the Site C Dam* draws together top journalists and scientists to explain the many costs and risks of this dam that were ignored. And the many rights it violates. As a retired agrologist, food security tops my list.

B.C. imports over 60 per cent of the fruits and vegetables we could

produce here — mostly from California and Mexico, supply areas that are already running out of water. The Peace River Valley is closer to the Lower Mainland and on the doorstep of the Yukon and NWT, both of which are nutrition deficient. In its recent Speech from the Throne, the federal government again promised to address food insecurity in northern Canadian communities. Ottawa's last attempt — a program called Nutrition North — was labelled an abject failure by Canada's Auditor General. Although hunting, fishing and trapping provide protein in the traditional diets of many northern families, the building blocks of human nutrition are fresh fruits and vegetables. When broccoli costs \$8 a stalk, fresh vegetables are beyond the reach of many northern households.

This advertisement has not loaded yet, but your article continues below.

Children in Canada's North have the same rights to nutrition as do children in the south. They need veggies on their plates. With the Peace Valley on their doorstep, the greengrocer is at hand. We just need the vision to make it happen.

What might this new vision look like? Working with universities in B.C., Alberta, NWT and the Yukon, take the land to be flooded by the dam, less what is still being farmed, and create a Peace Valley Organic Cooperative. Each university would be allotted land commensurate with the number of students to whom they would like to offer sustainable agriculture practicums. The land would be divided into small plots where students would learn and practise cutting edge organic production techniques and then move off to begin farming land in a cooperative food commons. A pan-university educational complex would be part of the cooperative, providing support and guidance and training. Small cooperative industries could be encouraged to grade, sort and pack the fresh produce for transport to northern and southern markets.

This would take a few years to set up properly, in the meantime Mother Nature can begin healing the land.

Like the dinosaurs stuck in those tar pits unable to save themselves, the white Site C elephant is wallowing in the prehistoric mud, losing stability and purpose. Unless stopped now, the sucking sound you will soon hear is taxpayer and ratepayer dollars going to support a dam that may never be built — and if it is, may never be safe.

In these times of COVID, proceeding with Site C is fiscally irresponsible. We have far more important things to do with this money. And with this fine fertile farmland.

Grow nutrition for families. Grow new young farmers for tomorrow. Grow new examples for the world.

Imagine...

Wendy Holm is a Bowen Island-based journalist, writer and retired

agrologist.

<https://theprovince.com/opinion/wendy-holm-like-the-dinosaurs-of-old-the-site-c-white-elephant-is-mired-in-prehistoric-mud>

Like the dinosaurs of old, the Site C white elephant is mired in prehistoric mud

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Wendy Holm is a Bowen Island-based journalist, writer and retired agrologist.

Last Updated on Sunday, 11 October 2020 13:47

[The Next Eco Moves](#)



Posted by Dragonslayer

Thursday, 29 October 2020 12:34

We are entering a new phase of understanding in the world today. The covid-19 virus is bringing it all home to everyone that the planet we live on is rejecting us as a species. Greta Thunberg has brought the youth of the planet to an awakened state of consciousness.

The pandemic has shut down much of the world economy. This is giving us a window into what effect the shut down is having on the effects of industry on the planet and how fast the planet can recover during the shutdown. Extrapolating the data during shutdown will give us a base line of what needs to happen to mitigate the damage of climate change and industrial pollution.


Many have noticed how fast the ocean water near shore has cleared during the pandemic.

If we cannot live with less and we cannot reign in our rampant population growth, It appears that forces we don't see until it is almost too late will come into view and it becomes obvious to everyone that the ecosystems we live in will fight back. When we become wreckless in our attitudes to the planet and cannot adjust our populations and reduce our environmental foot print the planet will reduce our populations and fix the problem of human reckless behaviour with things we didn't see coming like

devastating forest fires, flooding and runaway pandemics that will force the issue with very violent means.

If we can't find peaceful and loving solutions, the planet will reject us and that process is visible to anyone who cares to look. The change requires we all take the peril of others as if it were our own.

Last Updated on Thursday, 29 October 2020 18:02

[Reassessment of Need for the Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion Project Production forecasts, economics and environmental considerations](#) 

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 31 October 2020 18:22

AUTHOR(S):

[David Hughes](#)

OCTOBER 29, 2020




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3.57 MB28 pages

This report concludes that the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project (TMX) is not needed to meet forecasted Canadian capacity needs. The author, J. David Hughes, also demonstrates that contrary to claims that bringing heavy oil to tidewater for export to Asia will fetch a higher price, it will likely instead sell at a loss of \$4-\$6 per barrel.

Arguments for TMX look even worse in the context of Canada's commitment to net-zero emissions by 2050 as TMX will exacerbate Canada's emissions reduction problem by incentivizing additional oil production growth Hughes says, adding that as it stands Canada has no viable plan to even meet the Paris Agreement, let alone the federal government's promise of net-zero emissions by 205

346 readings

[Protesters add new blockade to stop old-growth logging near Port Renfrew](#)   

[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 11 December 2020 10:11

<https://www.vicnews.com/news/protestors-add-new-blockade-to-stop-old-growth->

[logging-near-port-renfrew/](#)



A group of forest activists have created a new blockade along Bugaboo Creek, near Port Renfrew, where logging company Teal Jones Group is working to clear cut another section of old-growth trees on the southern part of Vancouver Island. (Facebook/Fairy Creek Blockade)

Protesters add new blockade to stop old-growth logging near Port Renfrew

Bugaboo Creek protesters demands B.C. to immediately stop old-growth logging on Island

- [Aaron Guillen](#)
- Dec. 8, 2020 2:15 p.m.

A group of old-growth logging protesters near Port Renfrew have added a new

blockade at a nearby site.

On Monday (Dec. 7), six activists stood their ground along Bugaboo Creek to stop Surrey-based logging company Teal Jones Group from clear-cut logging in the area.

A 30-minute drive from Port Renfrew, the area that is being blockaded, holds Western red and yellow cedars that are hundreds of years old. A small group has also maintained blockades at Fairy Creek, where the same logging company operates, just a 20-minute drive away.

Organizer Joshua Wright, who's kept protesters informed remotely while based in the Olympic Peninsula in Washington, said protesters were able to turn away road-building crews with their bus and banners on Sunday.

"If we keep going down this path, there most likely won't be any old-growth forests in the next three to five years," said the 17-year-old.

"We're not against stopping all logging because we care about timber communities, but we want the work to be sustainable and to benefit local and First Nations communities. The B.C. government has let its people down, and

it's time to take matters into our own hands.

[ALSO READ: Vancouver Island old-growth protesters release video highlighting B.C.'s hypocrisy](#)

The group has dubbed themselves Rain4est Flying Squad and has been keeping close contact with Pacheedaht elder Bill Jones, who has been supporting the group since they first started a blockade at Fairy Creek in August.

It breaks my heart in half when I see these last remaining stands being ravaged so a few people can have jobs for a few more months," said Jones in a social media post last September. He goes on to express his hope that more Indigenous activists would join in the efforts to protect these sacred lands.

The group has three demands for the provincial government.

Firstly, it wants B.C. to declare an immediate suspension on all old-growth logging, at least until they deliver their old-growth policy, which is expected in two years.

The group also wants the government to act on its 2020 elections to implement the

14 recommendations of the old-growth strategic review, which stated the province would protect up to 1,500 of B.C.'s most significant trees and over 350,000 hectares of old forest.

Lastly, the Rainforest Flying Squad request the province to work with First Nations to build a comprehensive plan for sustainable and restorative second and third growth forestry models.

Teal Jones hasn't responded to Black Press Media's request for an interview.

[READ MORE:Â Morale remains strong as protesters near a month of blockades to stop old-growth logging](#)

Â

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[READ MORE:Â Morale remains strong as protesters near a month of blockades to stop old-growth logging](#)

207 readings

[A GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE EMERGENCY STATEMENT FOR COP26 in Glasgow from 1-12 November 2021](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Tuesday, 29 December 2020 14:10

image removed

The activists confronting Shell at the COP24: Three Nigerians Nnimmo Bassey, Gowin Ojo and Rita Uwaka are part of the action

BY GLOBAL COMPLIANCE RESEARCH PROJECT

RECALLING THAT In 1988, at the Climate Change Conference in Toronto, three hundred global scientists, along with other participants concluded:

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 changed at an unprecedented rate by pollutants resulting from depositions of hazardous, toxic and atomic wastes and from wasteful fossil fuel use. These changes represent a major threat to international security and are already having harmful consequences over many parts of the globe.... it is imperative to act now."

In the Conference statement, Changing Atmosphere Conference in 1988 and they called for the global community, 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.

AWARE THAT In 1992, under article 4 of UNFCCC developed states made a commitment to return to 1990 levels by the end of the decade (i.e. 2000) (Article 4, UNFCCC);

RECALLING THAT in September 2007, at the UN, the Chair of the IPCC Rajendra Pachauri supported,"moving from a meat-based diet to a plant based diet.

RECALLING THAT In 2009 at an IPCC press conference at COP15, it was proclaimed that at a 2 degree rise in temperature, the poor, the vulnerable and the disenfranchised would not survive, at 1.5, they might

AWARE THAT in 2013, all member states adopted Sustainable Development Goal 13- Climate change presents the single biggest threat to development, and its

widespread, unprecedented impacts disproportionately burden the poorest and most vulnerable. Urgent action to combat climate change is needed.

APPRECIATING THAT in 2015, at COP 21, Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, in Paris, urged states to negotiate with a global vision NOT with vested national interests

WELCOMING ON August 4 2019 Secretary General Antonio Guterres stated: We are facing a grave climate emergency. We need urgently to accelerate with Climate Action for the transformation the world needs. This is the battle of our lives. It is a battle we can win. It is a battle we must win.

IMPLEMENTING SDG13, ACHIEVING A GLOBAL VISION, ADDRESSING THE CLIMATE CHANGE EMERGENCY, AND KEEPING THE RISE IN TEMPERATURE BELOW 1.5 C WOULD INVOLVE:

(i) Fulfilling article 2, The ultimate objective the UNFCCC Convention and any related legal instruments that the Conference of the Parties may adopt is to achieve stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system;

(ii) Being determined to protect the rights of future generations, and to invoking the precautionary principle (Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage from climate change, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing such measures to prevent the threat); and enforce the pollution pay principle

(iii) Supporting the principle of common and differentiated responsibility, compensating for historical emissions, and instituting a fair and just transition for workers and communities affected negatively by the new vision;

(iv) Ending subsidies for fossil fuel, and the investment in fossil fuels;

(v) Ending fossil fuel exploration, production and distribution through infrastructure such as pipelines and tankers and closing LNG ports

(vi) Conserving carbon sinks -such as old growth forests and bogs, planting trees, ensuring food security and strengthening conservation of biodiversity,

Â (vii) Promoting nature-based solutions, moving away from car dependency and instituting socially equitable and environmentally sound public transit and energy such as solar, wind, tidal, and geothermal, and avoiding all false solutions such as nuclear, geo-engineering, fracking and biofuels;

(viii) Reducing the global military budget by 75%, signing and ratifying the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, ending the exemption of greenhouse gases emanating from militarism, and transferring the savings to address the climate change emergency

(ix) Making a commitment to use the baseline of 1990, and given the climate change emergency, in COP 25 to use time lines and targets reflecting existing and emerging science such as 50% below 1990 levels by 2022 ,75 % below 1990 levels by 2025, 100% below 1990 level by 2030 and decarbonization with 100% ecologically sound renewable energy, The state delegates must be provided with all the emerging science before attending the conference . For too long the negotiators are not sufficiently briefed on the science

(x) Addressing the climate change emergency would also require, in each article at at COP 26 a striving for consensus with a fallback of 75%




Â

(xi) Seeking an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice on whether the developed states have failed to comply with the objective of the UNFCCC and have not prevented dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system

Last Updated on Wednesday, 30 December 2020 13:14

2021

465 readings

[Renewable Energy Transition Key to Addressing Climate Change Challenge](#)   

[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 13 January 2021 11:41

Renewable Energy Transition Key to Addressing Climate Change Challenge

ByNalisha Adams

A wind energy generation plant located in Loiyangalani in northwestern Kenya. The plant is set to be the biggest in Africa, generating 300 MW. This renewable energy

project was supported by the African Development Bank. Credit: Isaiah Esipisu/IPS

BONN, Germany, Jan 13 2021 (IPS)- 2021 is going to be critical, not only for curbing the rapidly spreading COVID-19 pandemic, but also for meeting the climate challenge.

But as Dr Fatih Birol, Executive Director of the International Energy Agency (IEA) was clear to point out, the climate challenge is essentially an energy challenge. And as large polluters continue to commit to targets of net zero emissions by 2050, the world could in theory potentially address the climate challenge.

The energy that powers our daily lives our economies also alone produces about 80 percent of global emissions, Birol noted while addressing the virtual [COP26 Virtual Roundtable on Clean Power Transition](#) earlier this week on Jan. 11

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comment

And as the UN plans to focus on building a global coalition for carbon neutrality by the middle of this current century, there will be increased focus and a push towards providing clean, renewable energy to all by 2030.

Clean and renewable energy was the focus of discussion of this weeks COP26 Virtual Roundtable on Clean Power Transition.

Birol said the good news was that China, the European Union, UK and Japan have ambitious 2050 net zero emission targets. He said he was positive that once he took office, United States President Elect Joe Biden would make similar commitments and other major developing nations may join. The joint global emissions by the current countries committed to the net zero emission targets amount to 60 percent of the world's emissions.

The issue is how to transform these ambitions into real energy action, Birol said. He said in light of this the IEA was going to introduce the world's first roadmap to net zero emissions by 2030, scheduled to be released on May 18 so that it can be used for input for COP26.

The roadmap will outline how the world needs to transform the energy sector, how much investment is needed and what needs to be done to reach the target and provide a concrete plan for all of us.

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, also addressed the COP26 Virtual Roundtable on Clean Power Transition, saying that to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, an urgent transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy was needed but also that developing countries needed to be supported with this shift.

Noting the figures of some 789 million people across the globe without access to electricity – the majority of whom live in sub-Saharan Africa, Guterres said that while all nations need to be able to provide electricity to all, this energy needed to be clean and renewable so it does not contribute to the dangerous heating of our planet.

According to the IEA, while the number of people without access to electricity has decreased over past years – with some two-thirds of the world's progress occurring in India – where the government announced that more than 99 percent of the population had access to electricity in 2019, thanks to the ambitious Saubhagya Scheme launched in October 2017 – reaching a low in 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic has reversed past gains particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

Sub-Saharan Africa, home to three-quarters of the global population without access to electricity, has been particularly hard hit, and recent progress achieved in the region is being reversed by the effects of the pandemic: our first estimates indicate that the population without access to electricity could increase in 2020 for the first time since 2013, [IEA states in its SDG7 Data and Projections report](#).

>Damilola Ogunbiyi, CEO of [Sustainable Energy for All](#), Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Sustainable Energy for All, co-chair of UN-Energy, and co-chair of the COP Campaigns Energy Transition, said it would be impossible to achieve zero emissions without delivering sustainable energy to all.

> We have to make something clear. The energy transition story is also the energy access story, especially in Africa. We must recognise that we cannot achieve net zero emissions by 2050 without delivering sustainable energy for all by 2030, she said.

>Ogunbiyi, [who was the first female Managing Director of the Nigerian Rural Electrification Agency](#), went on to say that 2021 was a pivotal year for Sustainable Development Goal 7 which focuses on access to affordable and clean energy for all.

>She said with less than 10 years to go on the SDGs, the world must now turn towards supporting bold and ambitious plans that will deliver impact at scale to help achieve SDG 7 by 2030.

>Dr Akinumi Adesina, president of the African Development Bank (AfDB), which is also a member of the COP26 energy transition council, outlined what the bank

was doing in support of energy transition across the African continent.

>Adesina acknowledged that Africa had the lowest levels of access to energy in the world with 570 million people without electricity.

> ^ The challenge for Africa is simple. Africa has so little electricity. This presents a real opportunity to build reliable, affordable and sustainable energy systems for Africa, ^ Adesina said. He said this is one of the reasons why the bank had launched the Light Up and Power Africa project as one of its High 5 priorities for transforming the continent. Since 2015 the bank has provided electricity for 16 million people by focusing mainly on renewable energy, Adesina said.

>Indeed, his comments comes as just last week the AfDB announced it would roll out a second giant electricity-generation project this time in the the Sahel. The first, largest solar power project in the world is funded by the bank and based in Morocco.

>[The bank stated that the Desert-to-Power project](#) ^ which covers 11 countries from Senegal in the west to Djibouti in the east, and includes the Sahel countries of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger ^ when completed, ^ will turn the Sahel into one of the largest solar-power-generating areas in the world ^ . The AfDB went on to state that the \$20-billion programme ^ aims to produce 10 gigawatts of electricity by 2025, providing 250 million people with power, of whom at least 90 million will be connected to the electricity grid for the first time ^ .

> ^ The bank has been at the forefront of transformative renewable energy projects in Africa, including large-scale concentrated solar power projects, in Morocco ^ which are the largest in the world, the wind to power project which is the largest in sub-Saharan Africa, ^ he said, adding that the AfDB would no longer support coal projects.

> ^ Unlocking that renewable energy future will ensure that we have a clean Africa, however, there are some challenges, ^ he said, explaining that this included the intermittency of solar and wind, the need for baseload power for grid stability, and the prohibitive costs of energy storage with policy and regulatory environments for renewable energy.

>Adesina said the bank expected to invest \$10 billion over the next five years in the energy sector.

>Meanwhile Ogunbiyi highlighted the importance of commitments as well as their financing and technical support for successful transition to renewable energy.

> ^ Both the COP26 campaign and the UN high-level dialogue on energy need to be mutually reinforcing, just as energy access and energy transition are support another, ^ Ogunbiyi said. She said that the UN energy compact ^ an outcome of the UN high-level dialogue on energy ^ would be where countries can pledge their new ambitious commitments on sustainable energy in writing.

- >As member states, organisations, countries and cities sign up to the UN energy compacts, Ogunbiyi said it was critical that the international community rally around these commitments and support them with financing and technical assistance.
- >Meanwhile, Birol said critical to achieving net zero emissions was bringing the world's countries together and providing momentum within an international context.
- >COP26 will be hosted by the United Kingdom and held in Glasgow, Scotland Nov. 1 to 12 and could provide the impetus for this momentum.
- >The UK announced the Climate Compatible Growth (CCG) programme a £38 million fund that will focus on supporting developing nations transition to green energy.
- >Dr Amani Abou-Zeid, Commissioner for Energy and Infrastructure at the African Union said that 900 million people in Africa depended on charcoal and firewood for cooking.
- > This is not only an economic problem but mainly a moral issue and cause, Abou-Zeid said.
- >Indeed the access to energy is also about human rights.
- >Last September, Ogunbiyi led a panel at the UN Global Compact's Uniting Business Live event, where Chebet Lesan, founder of renewable energy startup BrightGreen discussed how their work in providing renewable cooking energy to vulnerable communities across Kenya and East Africa was impacting on a basic human right.

Last Updated on Friday, 26 February 2021 18:43

575 readings

[The Earth Does Not Belong to Jeff Bezos or Elon Musk](#)
[Justice News](#)



Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 17 January 2021 15:24

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JANUARY 17, 2021

from TOMDispatch

Only one thing truly hurt him at a gut level, and it wasn't the endangerment of

his vice president in a Capitol attacked by a rabid mob sporting the Confederate flag, MAGA hats, and anti-Semitic T-shirts. Nor, believe it or not, was it even the threat of being the first president in American history to be impeached twice; nor having Deutsche Bank (which kept him afloat for years) and other major corporate entities suddenly sever ties with him; nor even having one of his major financial supporters, Sheldon Adelson, die on him. For Donald Trump, the biggest blow of last week was reportedly the Professional Golfers Association, or P.G.A., announcement that it was taking its 2022 championship match away from the Trump National Golf Club in Bedminster, New Jersey. In other words, the man who had visited golf courses more than 300 times during his presidency had suddenly become the golf equivalent of an undocumented immigrant and, according to those close to him, that truly gutted him.

As to what gutted so many other Americans in the last year, ranging from evictions to job loss, racism to death by Covid-19, this president could clearly have cared less and the eternally richer billionaires of this country didn't seem to give much of a damn either; nor, in fact, did his wife Melania who, in what may have been her final message from the White House, vaguely bemoaned violence on Capitol Hill only after she had fiercely bemoaned her own treatment by unnamed critics (salacious gossip, unwarranted personal attacks, and false and misleading accusations on me).

As it happens, with just days left in Trump's presidency, the self-proclaimed richest, most awesome superpower on planet Earth is now a basket case of the first order and a symbol around the globe of what not to do in a pandemic. As even the Washington swamp deserts Donald Trump, Joe Biden and crew face a hell on Earth of a kind that TomDispatch regular Liz Theoharis, co-chair of the Poor People's Campaign and author of Always With Us?: What Jesus Really Said About the Poor, lays out vividly on Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Tom

The Earth Does Not Belong to Jeff Bezos or Elon Musk

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s True Legacy

2020 will go down as the deadliest year in American history, significantly due to the devastation delivered by the coronavirus pandemic. In addition, count in nearly two trillion dollars in damage from climate events (many caused by, or heightened by, intensifying global warming), a surge of incidents of police violence inflicted on Black and Native peoples, and millions more Americans joining the ranks of the poor even as small numbers of billionaires soared ever further into the financial heavens. And it's already obvious that 2021 is likely to

prove another harrowing year.

Many have claimed that those rioters (and the president's infamous base more generally) were all, in essence, poor, working-class white people. In reality, however, among those who have led such racist attacks are business leaders, executives, and multimillionaires. As author Sarah Smash writes, Poor uneducated whites are neither the base/majority nor the explanation for Trumpism: stories now abound of middle-class and even affluent white insurrectionists leading and joining the hateful charge at the U.S. Capitol.

Questions Must Be Raised

At the same time, the wealth of America's 651 billionaires increased by more than \$1 trillion to a total of about \$4 trillion. At the start of 2020, Jeff Bezos was the only American with a net worth of more than \$100 billion. By the end of the year, he was joined by Mark Zuckerberg, Bill Gates, and Elon Musk and just last week Elon Musk passed Bezos as the richest person in the world.

A recent report by the Institute for Policy Studies and Americans for Tax Fairness put it this way:

This last point is especially damning since the first and largest Covid-19 relief bill, the CARES Act, handed out billions of dollars worth of benefits to the upper-middle-class, the rich, and corporations. Most of us will only remember the \$1,200 checks that went to some of those in need, but the bill also included provisions that favored the already well-off, including higher corporate interest deductions, flexible corporate loss rules, increased charitable tax deductions, and big tax breaks for the super-rich. Other parts of the CARES Act like the Paycheck Protection Program, as well as significant allocations to universities and hospitals, gave generously to large corporations and the wealthiest of institutions.

Of course, the acceleration of inequality and tepid policy solutions to poverty are hardly unique to the United States. This year, the Bloomberg Billionaires Index recorded a 31% increase in wealth among the 500 richest people in the world, the largest single-year gain in the list's history. Meanwhile, the United Nations Development Programme projected that the long-term effects of Covid-19 could force 207 million more people across the globe into extreme poverty. That, in turn, would bring the official U.N. count of those making less than two dollars a day to more than a billion, or a little less than one-seventh of the world's population and, mind you, that's at the onset of a decade that promises escalating economic

dislocation, mass migration, and climate crisis.

This week, President-elect Joe Biden will be sworn into office and inherit a crisis that demands bold action. He has already said that on "day one" he will commit his administration to confronting the pandemic, the recession, systemic racism, and climate change. Four months ago, during an "event" with the Poor People's Campaign, he also told an audience of more than a million people that "together we can carry on Dr. King's Poor People's Campaign, which is based on a simple, moral truth: that we're all created in the image of God and everyone is entitled to be treated with dignity and respect." He concluded by promising that "ending poverty will not just be an aspiration, it will be a theory of change to build a new economy that includes everyone."

On the anniversary of the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr. (who, had he not been assassinated, would have been 92 years old this January 15th), it is only fitting to share these still "timely and prophetic words" of his:

Exchange Mr. Musk and Mr. Bezos for Mr. Rockefeller and Mr. Ford, and King's words couldn't be more timely, could they?

After all, every January, students, workers, and community members sign up for service projects to celebrate King's birthday. In fact, MLK Day is the only federal holiday designated as a "national day of service, when people paint schools, clean up trash, serve lunch to the hungry, and so much more. Over the last few decades, the spirit of volunteerism has become inextricably linked in the American imagination to King's life and this year will be no exception. Today, amid unprecedented social, political, economic, and health upheaval, and the need to mask and social distance, even President-elect Biden's inaugural committee is organizing a "day of service."

Reagan's noxious remarks remind us that Dr. King was once considered a profound threat to the established order. The reality of Dr. King's "radical life" has over time been almost unrecognizably smoothed over into an image that, so many years later, even Reagan, even Trump, might applaud. By casting Dr. King as an apolitical champion of charity, however, Americans have whitewashed not just his legacy, but that of the Black freedom struggle he helped lead, which broke Jim Crow, thanks to the most militant kinds of organizing.

Through a wicked transmutation of history, those with the most money and power

in society are now allowed to use his name as a bulwark against the collective action of poor and dispossessed people, propping themselves up instead. Today, with carefully excerpted texts like “everyone can be great, because everyone can serve” as proof, King’s words are all too often manipulated to sanctify a truly superficial response to the burning crises of systemic racism, poverty, homelessness, hunger, and so much more. Yet even a cursory glance at the historical record should remind us all that King represented an incendiary reality in terms of the America of his time (and, sadly, of ours, too) and that there was nothing corporate-friendly about his image.

“We are called upon to help the discouraged beggars in life’s marketplace. But one day we must come to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring. It means that questions must be raised. And you see, my friends, when you deal with this you begin to ask the question, “Who owns the oil?” You begin to ask the question, “Who owns the iron ore?” You begin to ask the question, “Why is it that people have to pay water bills in a world that’s two-thirds water?” These are the words that must be said.”

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Liz Theoharis, a TomDispatch regular, is a theologian, ordained minister, and anti-poverty activist. Co-chair of the Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival and director of the Kairos Center for Religions, Rights and Social Justice at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, she is the author of Always With Us?: What Jesus Really Said About the Poor. Follow her on Twitter at @lizthe

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538 readings

[UN Blue Could Urgently Solve Triple Climate Emergency](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 19 February 2021 12:53

/IPS Biodiversity, Climate Change, Development & Aid, Editors' Choice, Environment, Featured, Global, Green Economy, Headlines, IPS UN: Inside the Glasshouse, Population, Poverty & SDGs, TerraViva United Nations CLIMATE CHANGE UN Blueprint that Could Urgently Solve Earth's Triple Climate Emergencies By Manipadma Jena BHUBANESWAR, India, Feb 19 2021 (IPS) - "Our war on nature has left the planet broken. This is senseless and suicidal. The consequences of our recklessness are already apparent in human suffering, towering economic losses and the accelerating erosion of life on Earth," Antonio Guterres Secretary-General of the United Nations said. "By transforming how we view nature, we can recognise its true value. By reflecting this value in policies, plans and economic systems, we can channel investments into activities that restore nature and are rewarded for it," the UN Chief told the media while releasing a UN Environment Programme's (UNEP) major new report. "Making Peace with Nature: A scientific blueprint to tackle the climate, biodiversity and pollution emergencies" lays out the gravity of Earth's triple environmental emergencies of climate, biodiversity loss and pollution but provides detailed solutions too by drawing on global assessments, including those from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, as well as UNEP's Global Environment Outlook report, the UNEP International Resource Panel, and new findings on the emergence of zoonotic diseases such as COVID-19.

Without nature's help we will not thrive, not even survive," Guterres cautioned. The UN chief was, however, particularly hopeful climate and biodiversity commitment will see progress as he is set to welcome United States back to the Paris Agreement today, Feb. 19. The "net-zero club" is growing, Inger Andersen, Executive Director of UNEP said. "Before the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 was emerging as a moment of truth for our commitment to steer Earth and for our commitment to steer Earth and its people toward sustainability. (But) loss of biodiversity and ecosystem integrity, together with climate change and pollution will undermine our efforts on 80 percent of assessed SDG targets particularly in poverty reduction, hunger, health, water, cities and climate," Anderson said.

Women represent 80 percent of those displaced by climate disruption; polluted water kills a further 1.8 million, predominantly children; and 1.3 billion people remain poor and some 700 million hungry," Guterres said. Christian Walzer, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Executive Director for Health Programs and one of the co-authors of the Making Peace with Nature report, told IPS via email: "Intact and functioning nature is the foundation on which we must build back better. Trying to separate economic recovery from healthy environments and climate change neglects the essential fact that the solutions to these crises are tightly interconnected and reinforce each other." He underlined how ecosystem degradation heightens the risk of pathogens making the jump from animals to humans, and the importance of a "One Health" approach that considers human, animal and planetary health together. Walzer is a veterinarian who leads on One Health issues across the world.

Economic growth has brought uneven gains in prosperity to a fast-growing global population, leaving 1.3 billion people poor, while tripling the extraction of natural resources to damaging levels and creating a planetary emergency. Subsidies on fossil fuels, for instance, and prices that leave out environmental costs, are driving the wasteful production and consumption of energy and natural resources that are behind all three problems. Guterres pointed out how governments are still paying more to exploit nature than to protect it, spending 4 to 6 trillion dollars on subsidies that damage environment. He said over-fishing and deforestation is still encouraged by countries globally because it helped GDP growth, despite drastically undermining livelihoods of local fishers and forest dwellers. In the current growth trajectory despite a temporary decline in emissions due to the pandemic, the earth is heading for at least 3°C of global warming this century; more than 1 million of the estimated 8 million plant and animal species are at substantially increased risk of extinction; and diseases caused by pollution are currently killing some 9 million people prematurely every year. INTER PRESS SERVICE News Agency News and Views from the Global South 2/19/2021 UN Blueprint that Could Urgently Solve Earth's Triple Climate Emergencies | Inter Press Service www.ipsnews.net/2021/02/un-blueprint-that-could-urgently-solve-earths-triple-climate-emergencies/ 2/2 A farmer in Kerala's hinterlands applies chemical fertilisers to his rice paddies. Large areas under unsustainable agricultural methods world-over in a drive for higher food production has damaged the environment. Scientific climate friendly methods are available and are equally productive. Credit: Manipadma Jena/IPS The blueprint for solution

The authors of Making Peace with Nature report assess the links between multiple environmental and development challenges, and explain how advances in science and bold policymaking can open a pathway towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and a carbon neutral world by 2050 while bending the curve on biodiversity loss and curbing pollution and waste. Taking that path means innovation and investment only in activities that protect both people and nature. Success will include restored ecosystems and healthier lives as well as a stable climate. Amid a wave of investment to re-energise economies hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, the blueprint communicates the opportunity and urgency for ambitious and immediate action. It also lays out the roles that everyone – from governments and businesses to communities and individuals – can and must play. “2021 is a make-it or break-it year, a mind-shift year,” said Guterres. 2021, with its upcoming climate and biodiversity convention meetings, is the year where governments must come up with synergistic and ambitious targets to safeguard the planet.

To turn the tide of current unsustainability, the UNEP blueprint has several recommendations some of which include that governments include natural capital while measuring economic performance of both countries and businesses, and putting a price on carbon and shift trillions of dollars in subsidies from fossil fuels, non-sustainable agriculture and transportation towards low-carbon and nature-friendly solutions. It is high time, the report advises, to expand and improve protected area networks for ambitious international biodiversity targets.

Further, non-government organisations can build networks of stakeholders to ensure their full participation in decisions about sustainable use of land and marine resources, the report recommends. Financial organisations need to stop lending for fossil fuels, and boost renewable energy expansion. Developing innovative finance for biodiversity conservation and sustainable agriculture is of utmost importance now.

Businesses can adopt the principles of the circular economy to minimise resource use and waste and commit to maintaining transparent and deforestation-free supply chains. Scientific organisations can pioneer technologies and policies to reduce carbon emissions, increase resource efficiency and lift the resilience of cities, industries, communities and ecosystems

Individuals can reconsider their relationship with nature, learn about sustainability and change their habits to reduce their use of resources, cut waste of food, water and energy, and adopt healthier diets. two-thirds of global CO2 emissions are linked to households. “People’s choices matter,” Guterres said. <https://www.ipsnews.net/2021/02/un-b>

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361 readings

[The Day UN Buried its Report Focusing on Apartheid in Israel](#)   

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 12 May 2021 19:31

The Day UN Buried its Report

Focusing on Apartheid in Israel



credit: The UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)

- by Thalif Deen (United Nations)
- Friday, April 30, 2021
- Inter Press Service

UNITED NATIONS, Apr 30 (IPS) - When the UN's Beirut-based Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), released a landmark 2017 report on "apartheid" in Israel, the United Nations disassociated itself with the study and left it to die--- unceremoniously and unsung.

According to a March 2017 report in Foreign Policy Journal, both the Israeli and the Trump administrations put "enormous pressure on UN Secretary-General António Guterres to withdraw the report".

But the head of the ESCWA, Rima Khalaf, refused to withdraw it and resigned from her UN position in protest. Later, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas announced he will award Khalaf the Palestine Medal of the Highest Honor for her "courage and support" for the Palestinian people.

And now, more than four years later, the apartheid policies of Israel have come back to haunt the United Nations with the release, on April 27, of a detailed report which says Israel's abusive apartheid policies towards Palestinians constitute "crimes

against humanity.”

Authored by Human Rights Watch (HRW), a widely known international human rights organizations, the 213-page report, “[A Threshold Crossed: Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution](#),” singles out “the overarching Israeli government policy to maintain the domination by Jewish Israelis over Palestinians and grave abuses committed against Palestinians living in the occupied territory, including East Jerusalem.”

Originally coined in relation to South Africa, “apartheid” today is a universal legal term, says HRW, pointing out that the prohibition against particularly severe institutional discrimination and oppression or apartheid constitutes a core principle of international law.

But whether the new report will have any impact on the UN is doubtful.

Asked whether the UN should re-visit its own 2017 report on Israel and apartheid, UN spokesperson Farhan Haq told reporters April 27: “Well, again, without characterizing it one way or another, we have been getting the various facts out about the situation on the ground, including in the report, by the way, that you mentioned, which, I believe, the facts of the report were released, and we’ll continue to do that. Ultimately, it’s important to have a solid base of information about what’s happening, and that’s what we try to provide.”

Dr Richard Falk, professor emeritus of international law at Princeton University, who co-authored the 2017 UN report, told IPS the narrative of the apartheid discourse (extends) from the original smears at the UN to the B’Tselem Report, and now the HRW Report.

The Israeli Basic Law of 2018, which proclaimed Israel as an apartheid state without using the word, he said.

“The one large issue in which the critical discourse still lags behind what we argued in 2017 is the insistence that Israeli apartheid is best conceptualized by reference to the Palestinian people rather than land”

“We believed this is an essential element because Israeli apartheid unlike South African apartheid created a victimized Palestinian diaspora by way of ethnic cleansing, and still shout the slogan 'less Arabs, more land,' said Dr Falk, who served a six-year term as the UN Special Rapporteur on “the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967.”

Palestinian refugees. Credit: UNRWA

Kenneth Roth, executive director of Human Rights Watch, said “prominent voices have warned for years that apartheid lurks just around the corner if the trajectory of Israel’s rule over Palestinians does not change.”

“This detailed study shows that Israeli authorities have already turned that corner and today are committing the crimes against humanity of apartheid and persecution,” he added.

Dr. Ramzy Baroud, a journalist and Editor of The Palestine Chronicle, told IPS the HRW report was indeed historic, though overdue. “As pointed out by an equally earth-shattering UN report in March 2017, Israel is already an apartheid state”.

“In fact, we can take this further and claim that a country that is essentially founded on the racial supremacy of one group and racial discrimination against another, is, per academic definition at least, an apartheid state”, he argued.

What the HRW report has done is providing more than an intellectual argument regarding Israel’s apartheid status, but a legal one, he added.

“This is crucial, because Palestinians and the supporters of their struggle everywhere can now push for legally indicting Israel for its ongoing crime of apartheid, which should be added to the imminent International Criminal Court investigation of crimes committed in occupied Palestine.”

Even though the UN report in 2017 was pulled out under US pressure, Dr Baroud said, the legal arguments it contained remain valid.

Since then, two equally important voices were added to strengthening the argument of Israeli apartheid, a decisive and comprehensive report by the prominent Israeli rights group B’tselem in January and the just-released HRW’s report.

Judging by the evolution of the language considering Israel’s systematic racism and apartheid in Palestine, it is now a matter of time before the label, that of apartheid, becomes synonymous with Israel, as at one point in the past became synonymous with South Africa, before apartheid was dismantled, he noted.

“Despite its relentless efforts at winning the legitimacy war and launching smear campaigns against anyone who dares to criticize it, Israel is losing, not only the moral war, but the legal battle as well.”

This is good news for anyone who supports justice in Palestine, said Dr Baroud, a Non-resident Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Islam and Global Affairs (CIGA), Istanbul Zaim University, and at the Johannesburg-based Afro-Middle East Center (AMEC). www.ramzybaroud.net.

In its report, Human Rights Watch found that the elements of the crimes come together in the occupied territory, as part of a single Israeli government policy.

“That policy is to maintain the domination by Jewish Israelis over Palestinians across Israel and the occupied territory. It is coupled in the occupied territory with systematic oppression and inhumane acts against Palestinians living there”.

Drawing on years of human rights documentation, case studies, and a review of

government planning documents, statements by officials, and other sources, HRW compared policies and practices toward Palestinians in the occupied territory and Israel with those concerning Jewish Israelis living in the same areas.

It also wrote to the Israeli government in July 2020, soliciting its perspectives on these issues, but received no response.

Across Israel and the occupied territory, Israeli authorities have sought to maximize the land available for Jewish communities and to concentrate most Palestinians in dense population centers, HRW said.

The authorities have adopted policies to mitigate what they have openly described as a “demographic threat” from Palestinians.

In Jerusalem, for example, the government’s plan for the municipality, including both the west and occupied east parts of the city, sets the goal of “maintaining a solid Jewish majority in the city” and even specifies the demographic ratios it hopes to maintain.

To maintain domination, Israeli authorities systematically discriminate against Palestinians. The institutional discrimination that Palestinian citizens of Israel face includes laws that allow hundreds of small Jewish towns to effectively exclude Palestinians and budgets that allocate only a fraction of resources to Palestinian schools as compared to those that serve Jewish Israeli children.

In the occupied territory, the severity of the repression, including the imposition of draconian military rule on Palestinians while affording Jewish Israelis living in a segregated manner in the same territory their full rights under Israel’s rights-respecting civil law, amounts to the systematic oppression required for apartheid.

Ambassador Gilad Erdan, Israel’s envoy to the US, dismissed the report as bordering on anti-Semitism. “When the authors of the report cynically and falsely use the term apartheid, they nullify the legal and social status of millions of Israeli citizens, including Arab citizens, who are an integral part of the state of Israel,” he said.

***Thalif Deen, Senior Editor at the UN Bureau of Inter Press Service (IPS) news agency, is the author of a newly-released book on the United Nations titled “No Comment and Don’t Quote Me on That” available on Amazon. The link to Amazon via the author’s website follows: <https://www.rodericgrigson.com/no-comment-by-thalif-deen/>**

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384 readings

[IMPERATIVE TO END OLD GROWTH LOGGING](#)



[Earth News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 23 May 2021 09:05



goal 15: protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably MANAGE FORESTS,

combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

By Joan Russow PhD

Global Compliance Project

FOR YEARS, BRITISH COLUMBIAN GOVERNMENTS HAVE IGNORED INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS INCURRED AND COMMITMENTS MADE ABOUT SAVING OLD GROWTH FORESTS NO END THERE IS SO LITTLE LEFT THAT NOW THERE IS AN ABSOLUTE IMPERATIVE TO SAVE THE LITTLE REMAINING INTACT OLD GROWTH FOREST IN FAIRY CREEK. HORGAN HAS EMBARKED UPON SUPPORTING THE TOURIST INDUSTRY YET, AT THE SAME TIME, HE IS WILLING TO DESTROY BC'S ECOLOGICAL HERITAGE.

A END LOGGING OLD GROWTH LOGGING




A.

COMMITMENTS THROUGH THE CARACAS DECLARATION THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON PARKS

Through this intention to be "mindful of this Declaration" the member states. through its Ministries of Environment and Forests have made a commitment to move from logging old growth to second growth"[relocated **from primary to secondary forests** (Report on implementation requirements of the Caracas Declaration, Mar. 1992)

Last Updated on Thursday, 10 June 2021 18:55

199 readings

[Lies, guitars and a few facts about Fairy Creek](#)   

[Justice News](#)

Posted by Joan Russow

Sunday, 01 August 2021 12:25

By David Broadland April 6



As arrests at Fairy Creek Rainforest begin, arm yourself with some truth about what's actually happening. The injunction was obtained by inaccurate, self-serving descriptions of the impact of the blockades by the company.

IF THERE'S ONE SITUATION in which you would expect a company's accountant to be accurate about the numbers, it would be in a sworn affidavit in which the company is seeking a high-profile injunction from the BC Supreme Court. Right?

Not these days.

Teal Cedar Products Ltd filed such an application in mid-February, asking for injunctive relief, enforceable by the RCMP, in response to ongoing blockades of some of its logging operations in TFL 46 on southern Vancouver Island. On April 1,

Justice Fritz E Verhoeven ruled in favour of Teal's application. Verhoeven accepted information in affidavits provided by Teal CFO Gerrie Kotze concerning the impact of the blockades on Teal. Some of the information was grossly inaccurate, and Verhoeven based his decision on that information.

I [wrote recently](#) about the fact that Teal's cut in TFL 46 rose dramatically above the previous two years logging in spite of the blockades. In 2018, when there were no blockades in place, Teal took 255,975 cubic metres of timber out of TFL 46. In 2019, again with no blockades in sight, the company removed 282,096 cubic metres. In 2020, the year in which the blockade started (in August), Teal trucked 437,982 cubic metres of logs out of the TFL. That's an increase of 71 percent over 2018 and 55 percent over 2019.

Teal Cedar Products Ltd is clearcutting old-growth forests, like this former forest in the Caycuse River Valley (Photo by TJ Watt)

Yet Teal stated in its application that the company had suffered "irreparable harm" as a result of the blockades, and Verhoeven agreed. A finding of irreparable harm was a legally necessary condition for allowing Teal's application for injunctive relief and civil damages.

Not only did Teal apparently misstate the impact that the blockades had on its operations, but other details, including information in affidavits provided by Kotze, appear to seriously underestimate the value of the logs the company removed from TFL 46 and the value of the products manufactured from those logs. Verhoeven accepted this information, analysed it in his judgment and concluded that Teal had suffered irreparable harm.

I find the details of this case particularly compelling because they demonstrate how, in the face of industrial destruction of Earth's life support systems, institutions that are needed to support the public interest "like government and the courts" are failing the public. The evidence of this is deep in the details of this case. C'mon in.

In a section of Teal's injunction application covering "Impact of the Blockades," the document stated: "Teal Cedar estimates that the value of the products manufactured from timber sourced from TFL 46 to be about \$19.4 million, which is an incremental value-added over the value of the logs of approximately \$9 million." This statement cites "Kotze Affidavit #1" as the source of that information. Again, Kotze is Teal's chief financial officer, and his numbers are not credible.

The market value of the 437,982 cubic metres of raw logs removed from TFL 46 in 2020 was close to \$60 million, based on the volume and the ministry of forests' average log price that year. According to the ministry of forests' Harvest Billing System, Teal paid \$10,580,295.06 in stumpage to the Province for those logs, the

most stumpage it has ever paid for its logging in TFL 46.

The value of the wood products manufactured from the logs Teal removed from TFL 46 in 2020 was likely around \$220 million, not \$19.4 million. (FOCUS estimated this number by using information provided in Western Forest Products' 2020 financial statement, and the volume Western Forest Products harvested from its coastal operations, as determined by the ministry of forests' Harvest Billing System. Western Forest Products has TFLs on Vancouver Island, one of which is beside Teal's TFL 46.)

It's evident that Teal grossly underestimated the value of the wood that it had removed in 2020. Yet that inaccurate information was then used by Justice Verhoeven to determine whether to grant Teal an injunction. Did Teal intentionally construct numbers that would lead Verhoeven to find in its favour?

In the "Irreparable Harm" section of Verhoeven's decision, the judge stated, "Teal employs approximately 450 people within its processing and manufacturing facilities. If Teal is unable to log within the area of TFL 46, it will not have an adequate timber supply for its mills. It may be forced to shut down its mills, resulting in layoffs of employees, and Teal's inability to supply its customers. Teal estimates that the end product value of the products that it will produce from the timber sourced from TFL 46 is approximately \$20 million. Teal stands to lose market share, and to suffer damage to its reputation as a reliable supplier of its products."

Two points stand out:

First, Verhoeven's speculation about Teal being "unable to log within the area of TFL 46," suggests he had little understanding of the situation on the ground. According to the ministry of forests, there is plenty of second growth the company could have logged. It isn't being defended by blockades. I will come back to this point later.

Second, Verhoeven took the information Kotze supplied, added \$600,000 for unknown reasons "rounding?" and used this updated total of "approximately \$20 million" to find that Teal had suffered "irreparable harm." As mentioned above, irreparable harm was a necessary condition for Verhoeven to award injunctive relief.

Our estimate of \$220 million for the value of products manufactured from logs removed from TFL 46 was only part of Teal's revenue in 2020. In its application for an injunction, the company stated, "Teal Cedar relies on its own timber licences to supply approximately 50 percent of its fibre needs for the three mills, mostly from TFL46."

If TFL 46 supplied most of that 50 percent, then Teal's total sales for all the volume it processed in 2020 would be roughly twice the \$220 million we estimated for TFL 46, or \$440 million.

In its injunction application, Teal especially highlighted a decline in production of its Tonewood Division, which supplies old-growth Red Cedar to guitar manufacturers. For that division, Teal claimed a loss of \$250,000. Based on our estimate of total sales of over \$400 million in 2020, the Tonewood decline would represent a loss in sales of just five-tenths of one percent. To put that decline in perspective, Verhoeven's careless rounding error in restating the "value of the products" produced by Teal amounted to \$600,000.

Teal didn't provide any additional numbers that would have summarized how the value of its products "like lumber" declined, because they didn't. They went up over sales in 2019. Way up.

Keep in mind that the blockades are aimed only at Teal's logging of old-growth forest. The company has plenty of second-growth forest available for logging in TFL 46. Verhoeven did not seem to understand this when he speculated that Teal would be "unable to log within the area of TFL 46." The most recent (2011) review of the TFL by the ministry of forests set the allowable annual cut (AAC) for the TFL at 403,000 cubic metres, well under what the company took out in 2020. The 2011 review assumed that "at least 180,000 cubic metres per year" would come from second-growth stands. Over the past 11 years, Teal's cut has averaged 392,172 cubic metres per year and the stumpage assessed by the ministry of forests has averaged \$8.20 per cubic metre. Teal has been cutting close to the AAC and, until recently, paying very low stumpage rates. In 2011, it paid just 56¢ per cubic metre for 401,567 cubic metres of wood.

Last Updated on Sunday, 01 August 2021 14:28

118 readings

[SIERRA CLUB BC REACTS TO POLICE VIOLENCE](#)



[Justice News](#)

Posted by admin

Tuesday, 24 August 2021 16:39



[SIERRA CLUB BC REACTS TO POLICE VIOLENCE AGAINST OLD-GROWTH FOREST DEFENDERS ON VANCOUVER](#)

ISLAND

Sierra Club BC statement in response to police violence against old-growth forest defenders on Vancouver Island

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Sierra Club BC is deeply disturbed by the increasingly aggressive tactics deployed by the RCMP and captured on [video](#) in Ada'itsx (Fairy Creek). These acts of violence come less than two weeks after the B.C. Supreme Court found the RCMP's use of exclusion zones, which place certain areas off-limits to protesters, members of the media and observers, [to be unlawful](#).

“Once again, in ways that echo the police raids on Wet'suwet'en territory in 2019 and 2020, the RCMP is being deployed to violently protect corporate interests. This is a shameful abuse of power that militarizes the police against Indigenous youth and other land defenders that are choosing to act as the provincial government fails to uphold their promises on Indigenous rights, climate action and old-growth protection,” said Sierra Club BC Executive Director Hannah Askew.

The B.C. government made an [election promise](#) in the fall of 2020 to implement the recommendations from its own Old Growth Panel “in totality.” Delivery of this promise would have resulted in a solutions-focused path to protect at-risk old-growth forests like Ada'itsx (Fairy Creek) across the province and assured concerned citizens that the provincial government was acting in the public interest. The violence we are witnessing is the direct result of government inaction and broken promises.

“The images of police violence against peaceful protesters seeking to save some of the last ancient forests on the planet from destruction for corporate short-term profit would be shameful for any country in the world calling itself democratic, at any given time. The fact that this is happening during the rapidly escalating climate and extinction crises of 2021 makes this political failure even more unbearable,” said Sierra Club BC Senior Forest and Climate Campaigner Jens Wieting.

Almost a year has passed since the B.C. government committed to protecting endangered old-growth ecosystems yet almost all at-risk forests [remain open to logging](#).

“The lack of action, funding and proper timelines for the implementation of B.C.'s Old Growth Panel recommendations is resulting in battlegrounds like Ada'itsx (Fairy Creek), where land and water defenders are putting their wellbeing on the line to do what Horgan's government promised to do. We are calling for an immediate halt to the violence against youth and others courageously standing up

for our collective future, and demand that all levels of government act swiftly and meaningfully to protect old-growth forests in this time of climate emergency,” added Askew.

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