

EDITORIAL

3 Fuelling strife

SPECIAL FEATURE

6 A Delta of Great Contention

Osasu Obayiuwana

10 Novelist, Activist, Martyr

Bimbola Oyesola

12 Africa: Obama Moves Ahead with Africom

Daniel Volman

NEWS

16 India spars with Pakistan, China over Water

Siddarth Srivastava

18 New Potential for Conflict in Peru's Amazon

Chris Hufstader

CLIMATE CHANGE

21 Hope After the Failed COP 15

Reileen Dulay

24 Rising Faster Than the Oceans

Danny Chivers

31 Politics of Failure: Why the Parties Cannot Agree on Anything

John Paul Corpus

STATEMENT

35 On the 2009 UN Climate Change Conference and the Copenhagen Accord

Peoples' Movement on Climate Change

BOOK REVIEW

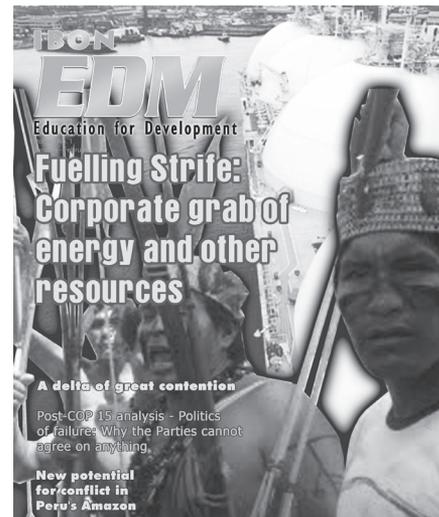
38 Michael Klare's Rising Powers, Shrinking Planet: How Scarce Energy is Creating a New World Order

Anthony Giddens

FILM REVIEW

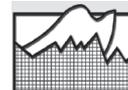
40 Avatar

Lilian Laurezo



Education for Development Magazine

is published by

**IBON International
IBON Foundation, Inc.**IBON Center
114 Timog Avenue, Quezon City
1103 PhilippinesWebsite: www.iboninternational.orgE-mail Address: ibon.international@ibon.org

Tel. Nos. +632 927 7060 to 62

Local 202

Fax +632 927 6981

Antonio Tujan, Jr.
International Director
Editor-in-Chief
International Department**Paul Quintos**
Maria Theresa Nera-Lauron
Editorial Board**Cover Design**
Jay Reyes**Layout Design**
Flor Bambo**Photo Credits**
Greenpeace / Lambon
www.raind.files.wordpress.com
www.peacecouncil.net
www.peacecouncil.net
www.army.mil
www.amazonwatch.org
Gilbert Sape/PAN
www.opdi-technologies.com
www.blogtheberkshires.com
www.lightandmatter.com
www.prlog.org



Fuelling Strife

According to the logic of the prevailing economic system, corporations must continuously strive to increase profits, expand their markets and outcompete their rivals. For this, their need for raw materials, energy and sinks (for their waste) knows no bounds.

Transnational corporations (TNCs) that dominate the global economy thus attempt to secure – and if possible, monopolize – access to resources, cheap labor and markets, relying on state backing whenever possible. Thus, securing the steady supply of raw materials from resource-rich but underdeveloped countries, at great social and ecological costs, underlies the geopolitical agenda of powerful countries then and now.

This is best exemplified by the United States, as the leading champion of the dominant global economic and political order. US imperialism is in the forefront of the plunder of forests, mineral and energy resources that has intensified poverty and social unrest and left irreparable scars on the environment.

Oil is of particular interest to the US and TNCs, making ‘energy security’ in different regions

of the world an oft-repeated justification for military offensives and wars. US interests in Gulf oil, for instance, motivated its involvement in the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s, the Iraq-Kuwait war in the 1990s, and its invasion and continued occupation of Iraq since 2003.

The growing importance of Africa's oil resources has brought the continent into the US spotlight. Despite the global financial and economic crisis, foreign investment inflows to Africa rose to a record high in 2008 at US\$88 billion, with China and other emerging powers putting their stakes in the region. Investments have been mainly in natural resources extraction such as mining and oil industries and large-scale land acquisitions.

Nigeria is specifically of high strategic significance because it is Africa's biggest oil producer, the fifth largest source of US oil

imports, and as noted by the State Department rationale for military aid to the country, "disruption of supply from Nigeria would represent a major blow to US oil security strategy." Preserving energy security meant the dislocation of people, destruction of the environment and social upheaval in the gas and oil-rich Niger Delta.

The lands of the Ogoni and other indigenous people in the Niger Delta have been grabbed from them since the discovery of oil in the area near the end of British colonialism in the 1950s to give way to the oil explorations and oil fields development of Royal Dutch Shell, Chevron, Exxon-Mobil, Julius Berger and other oil corporations. Some 900 million barrels of oil reserves have been identified, with recent estimates putting recoverable crude oil reserves at 34 billion barrels, but the people of the Niger Delta live in extreme poverty and pollution. Nigeria's economy was distorted by dependence on TNC-controlled oil extraction and abandonment of agricultural production. This bred corruption and caused displacement of communities as well as environmental degradation. The oil TNCs used private security forces and the military to crush opposition from communities, which has demanded just benefits from oil resources and reducing pollution.

It is in this milieu that the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) emerged in 2006. Shell and Chevron have lost some \$4 billion annually due to attacks by the MEND and other armed groups. The growing insurgency in the Niger Delta has been used by the US to justify its military buildup in the region and support for counter-insurgency operations of the Nigerian military that displace thousands and kill hundreds of innocent people. But as the fundamental issues of inequity, foreign exploitation and lack of democracy remain, resistance is bound to escalate and US

...the energy security agenda whether used in justifying the plunder of oil resources or the decimation of forests and farms for biofuels development in underdeveloped countries has enormous implications for social justice, human rights, environmental preservation, and genuine peace.

intervention only further inflames the conflict and jeopardizes any hope for peace.

Meanwhile, in Asia, the demand for biofuels is increasing pressure on access to large tracts of forest and farm lands. Oil crises and the drive for energy security are factors that have pushed biofuels into prominence and TNCs are quick to ride the bandwagon especially amid international concern on climate change. The US, Brazil, France, Germany and Sweden are the leaders in biofuel development and consumption. In Southeast Asia, foreign investments are pouring in from China, Japan, India, Brazil and South Korea. Oil and agribusiness TNCs such as Shell, Neste Oil, Greenergy International, BioX, Cargill and Archer Daniels Midland are rushing to invest in palm oil for biofuels. Indigenous peoples and upland farmers, such as the Dayak in Indonesia and the Senoi in West Malaysia, who have struggled for decades to save their lands from intrusion of logging and mining companies, are once again under duress.

Malaysia, for example, has planned palm expansion into roughly one million hectares of land held under native customary rights in Sarawak. In Indonesia, the government is under pressure to make more land accessible for timber and palm oil production and sacrifice customary land rights. More than five million indigenous people in West Kalimantan alone are facing displacement due to palm oil expansion. From experience, people's resistance to such projects is suppressed with violence by state forces. In Indonesia, plantation-related social conflicts reportedly account for over a third of land conflicts, which often involved military interference. Over 350 communities were reportedly engaged in conflicts in 2006 over land access for palm oil development.

A similar trend is happening in Colombia with the government's bid to make the country the global leader in biodiesel production by growing palm in six million hectares by 2020. Forests are reportedly cleared to accommodate palm plantations, the product of which – biodiesel – is much more costly, local consumers lament. The most deplorable aspect of Colombia's biodiesel production, however, is the alleged violent displacement of indigenous communities who rely on the forests for their subsistence.

Clearly, the energy security agenda whether used in justifying the plunder of oil resources or the decimation of forests and farms for biofuels development in underdeveloped countries has enormous implications for social justice, human rights, environmental preservation, and genuine peace. It is high time that the people of poor countries assert 'energy sovereignty' to counter the energy security mantra of powerful countries like the US.

A few hopeful experiences of people taking control of their energy resources can be seen in Latin America, such as Venezuela's state control over their oil industry with the view of redistributing benefits to the country's poor. This has earned the ire of US oil TNCs and of course the US government. Another is Bolivia, which has re-nationalized its oil and gas assets and increased royalties and taxes to the chagrin of foreign oil corporations. These policy changes occurred under Hugo Chavez of Venezuela and Evo Morales of Bolivia in response to demands of the people's movements in their countries that propelled them to power.

Resisting foreign intrusion and exploitation of natural resources is the people's right. After all, these resources should be theirs to harness and sustain for true development.

A Delta of Great Contention

Osasu Obayiuwana



Photo: www.raimd.files.wordpress.com

FOR YEARS, OIL TERMINALS, RIGS, and pipelines in the Niger Delta have been under incessant attack by militants who are demanding economic justice for the largely impoverished people of the Niger Delta. As a result, the treasury's flow of petrodollars has been severely cut.

Despite having an installed export capacity of over 3 million barrels a day, Shell, Exxon-Mobil, Chevron and the other oil conglomerates that operate in the Delta are struggling to reach production levels of 30%.

The drastic decline in foreign exchange as well as the high level of insecurity in the troubled region, which has done huge damage to the country's international image, has now compelled President Musa Yar'Adua's government to offer the militant groups in the region an amnesty, which he hopes will bring the low-intensity war to an end.

When he signed the amnesty proclamation on 25 June 2009, Yar'Adua granted an "unconditional pardon to all persons who have directly or indirectly participated in the commission of offences associated with militant activities in the Niger Delta." The militants are expected to surrender and hand over "all equipment, weapons, arms and ammunition" in order to qualify for the amnesty, which was extended to those already being tried, including Henry Okah, leader of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND).

Okah, who was captured during a sting operation in Angola, had been on trial for treason in the Federal High Court in the northern Nigerian city of Jos before he was freed on 13 July 2009, after Attorney-General Michael Aondoakaa--on the orders of Yar'Adua--ended Okah's trial.

Yar'Adua's amnesty, however, did not herald the immediate cessation of hostilities, as MEND launched a surprising three-hour attack on the Atlas Cove Jetty in Lagos on 12 July 2009, crippling the capacity of the facility to receive vital oil supplies. The attack, said to be part of MEND's "Hurricane Moses" offensive, was the first time the group had carried out a strike outside the Niger Delta.

A week before the Lagos incident, MEND had also blown up the Okan Manifold belonging to Chevron, taking out a large chunk of the American company's offshore oil output in Nigeria, as well as taking six foreigners hostage.

MEND is skeptical about the government's sincerity in reaching a settlement in the Niger Delta, and its spokesman, Jomo Gbomo, said they had "opted for a two-pronged approach of combining dialogue with intensifying attacks throughout the course of negotiations [with the government]." But a few days later, in a dramatic twist of events, MEND announced that it would observe a 60-day ceasefire, starting from 15 July, in response to the release of Okah.

The storm before the 'truce'

The skepticism of MEND and other armed groups towards the amnesty is largely informed by the government's decision to authorise a military strike in the Niger Delta, weeks before the June amnesty offer. Following the "ambush" and "murder" of soldiers on "routine escort duties around Chanomi Creek (in Delta State)" on 13 May, a Joint Task Force (JTF)--made up

of a combined army, navy and air force team--was authorised by Yar'Adua "to restore law and order to the region".

Vice-President Jonathan Goodluck and the governor of Delta State, Emmanuel Uduaghan, were reportedly kept in the dark about the military plans, in a bid to forestall any operational delay that their objections would have engendered.

"No responsible military leadership will fold its arms and watch its personnel being attacked and killed while on an official assignment, by a criminal gang. Hence, the military was left with no choice than to go after these criminals," said Colonel Chris Jemitola, director of defence information. On 22 May, the JTF launched an attack in Gbaramatu Kingdom in Delta State in an attempt to flush out the militants. Parliamentarians who come from the Niger Delta, as well as NGOs and other civil society groups that monitored the military incursion, insist that old men, women and children were slaughtered by the government troops.

James Manager, who represents Warri South in the Nigerian Senate, spoke candidly about his outrage during a heated debate in parliament. "The [military] attack has been indiscriminate, that is the crux of the matter. Old men, women and children ... are all being affected ... How do we protect these people?" he asked on 20 May, adding: "Between 14 and 17 May, communities in the oil-rich Gbaramatu clan were heavily bombarded by the Nigerian military--from air, land and sea ... Old men, pregnant women, nursing mothers and children have died helplessly."

A day earlier, the lower house of the National Assembly, the House of Representatives, had held a debate on the military operations in the Niger Delta, and it was no less fierce. There was

a sharp division between MPs from the Niger Delta, who called for an immediate cessation of hostilities in the region, and MPs from other parts of the country, who supported the military action--which has since been officially suspended.

The comments of Bala Ibn Na'Allah, a ruling party (PDP) MP from Kebbi State, caused a storm. He said if 20 million Niger Deltans had to be gotten rid of for the other 120 million Nigerians to have peace, "so be it".

Although Na'Allah later described his intemperate remarks as a "joke", it was a comic act completely lost on Daemi Kunaiyi-Akpanah, an MP from the Niger Delta. "It was an unfortunate and insensitive remark," Kunaiyi-Akpanah told New African. "Na'Allah was called to order for the remark but the damage had already been done. When we are dealing with an internal security problem, when innocent lives are considered as 'collateral damage', we have to do everything in our power to protect these people."

The Speaker of the House, Dimeji Bankole, supported Yar'Adua's decision to launch the military attack, describing it as "a peacekeeping option that could restore peace to the region".

...the NDDC has been unable to meet the yearnings of the people, some of whom subsequently opted for armed confrontation with the government, as they saw it as the only way to secure a better deal.

Over 3,000 people were said to have been displaced by the operation, with some living in the creeks in the delta.

The Niger Delta (comprising of Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo and Rivers States) has produced the bulk of Nigeria's oil income for nearly 50 years. Sadly, the people living in this area have seen few or no benefits from the billions of dollars generated from the oil exports. For many in the region, environmental degradation has been the unwelcome legacy that has accompanied oil production, which started with the discovery of Nigeria's first oil well in Oloibiri in 1958. Repeated oil spillages and gas flaring have polluted the region's farmlands and rivers. This has consequently embittered the people, who feel that the country's political elite cares nothing for their plight.

With the wealth of Nigeria coming from the lands of minority nationalities who lack the political clout to fight for their interests, in a country where the Hausas, Yorubas and Igbos--the three major ethnicities--are politically dominant, there is a high level of distrust between the minority and majority ethnic groups in the country. Ken Saro-Wiwa's international fight for the rights of the Ogoni people led to his execution by General Sani Abacha's government in November 1995. Following the return of democratic government in 1999, President Olusegun Obasanjo's government made some effort to address the injustice that had been meted out to the people of the Niger Delta, with the establishment of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), which was to be the vehicle through which to develop the region.

But with insufficient funds from the federal government and bureaucratic wrangling, the NDDC has been unable to meet the yearnings



Photo: www.peacecouncil.net

of the people, some of whom subsequently opted for armed confrontation with the government, as they saw it as the only way to secure a better deal. The “hit and run” tactics adopted by the militants have done untold damage to the country’s oil-exporting capacity over the last five years. While the militants claim their sole purpose for fighting is to ensure that the rights and basic human needs of Niger Deltans are recognised and taken care of, there are some who have taken advantage of the insecurity in the region to engage in criminal acts. This has, at times, made it difficult to distinguish between those who are fighting for a genuine political cause and the miscreants operating under the cover of the genuine grievances of the Niger Delta.

Before the June amnesty, President Yar’Adua had said the resolution of the Niger Delta conflict was a key part of his “seven-point” agenda for the country. He subsequently set

up a Ministry for the Niger Delta, headed by Ufot Ekaette, which is supposed to co-ordinate the government’s “Marshall Plan” for the area. A team, led by the interior minister, Major-General (retired) Godwin Abbe, negotiated the amnesty details with lawyers representing MEND and other militant leaders. But some militant leaders, such as Mujahid Asari Dokubo, have thumbed their noses at the government’s offer.

The government has threatened that anyone who refuses to accept the amnesty that expired in October will be treated as a criminal. But the key to the resolution of the crisis lies not in threats and the use of force but the ability of the government to honestly address the fundamental problems, lasting for nearly half a century, that have stoked the inferno in the Niger Delta.

Reprinted with permission from New African, August/September 2009

Novelist, Activist, Martyr

Bimbola Oyesola

On 10 November 2009, it was 14 years ago that Kenule Beeson Saro-Wiwa, a Nigerian writer, was murdered alongside eight of his compatriots.

During the military dictatorship of General Sani Abacha, they were sentenced to death. The regime had hoped to end opposition in the Niger Delta that way. Instead, violence escalated. Peace has only recently begun to look viable, and increasingly authorities are acting according to ideas Saro-Wiwa spelled out 20 years ago.

Besides being a successful writer, Saro-Wiwa was active in politics. He criticised the Federal Government for exploiting the oil resources of his tribe's traditional homeland in Rivers State. He was a founding member of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), the author of the Ogoni Bill of Rights and the primary opposition leader in the early 1990s.

The Ogoni are an ethnic group living in Rivers State, an area with huge oil and gas resources. About 900 millions barrels of oil have been mined there, mainly by the multinational Shell, since 1958. Despite the oil wealth, the people of the Niger-Delta are extremely poor and have to cope with environmental pollution and illiteracy.

In view of the downsides of multinational oil companies' activities, Saro-Wiwa drew attention to environmental violation and people's

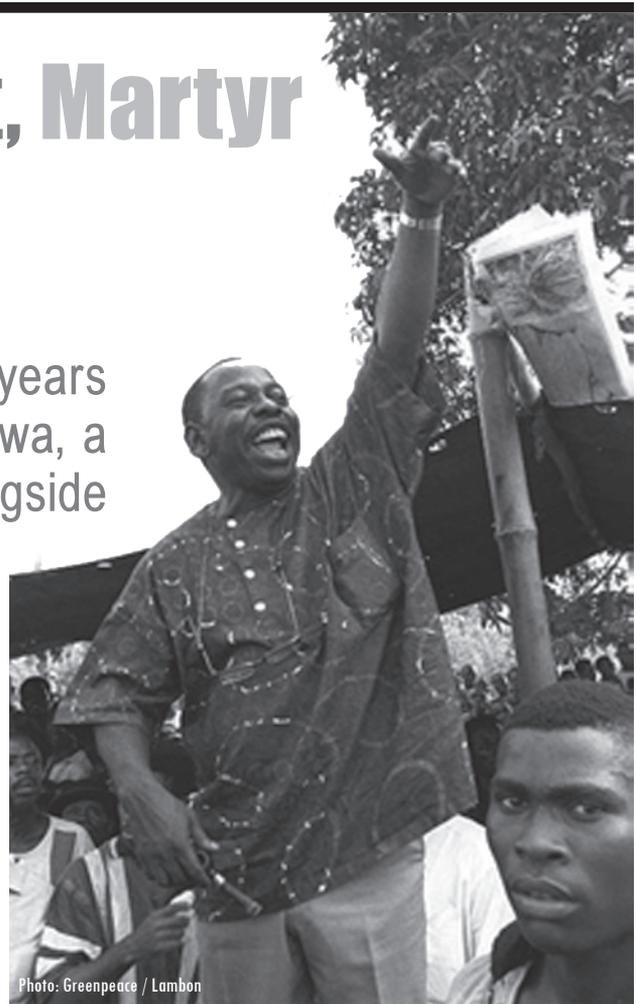


Photo: Greenpeace / Lambon

victimisation. An activist at heart, he took more proactive steps like organising protest marches. He stated that "the writer must be actively involved in shaping his present and future". So, in January 1993, Saro-Wiwa gathered 300,000 members of the Ogoni people to march peacefully, demanding a share in oil revenues and some form of political autonomy.

Saro-Wiwa paid a high price for his activism. He was detained on several occasions. He was arrested in May 1994 for alleged incitement to murder. A harrowing and lengthy trial followed. In the end, he was sentenced to death and hanged alongside eight other activists in November 1995. His case drew international attention to the cause of the Ogoni people, though the solidarity campaign was not strong

enough to prevent the execution of the “Ogoni Nine”.

It is 14 long years ago that Saro-Wiwa was killed. But his ideas remain very much alive. The flame of activism lit by the martyr has defied every effort to douse it. In his last speech at the tribunal Saro-Wiwa said: “We all stand before history. My colleagues and I are not the only ones on trial. The company has, indeed, ducked this particular trial, but its day will come. The lessons learned here may prove useful for there is no doubt that the ecological war the company has waged in the Delta, also against the Ogoni, will be questioned and punished sooner than later. In my innocence and in my utter conviction, I call upon the oppressed ethnic minorities of Nigeria to stand up and fight fearlessly and peacefully for their rights.”

Contrary to this plea, violence escalated in the Delta region, with various rebel groups fighting the government and, increasingly, one another. Oil production has dropped, and the country’s political leaders finally understood that they could not afford to stay aloof.

Lasting ideas

Former President Olusegun Obasanjo began to make an effort to recognise the activists’ legacy by financing a unity hall in memory of the fallen heroes. The present government of President Umar Musa Yar’Adua is making more progress. An amnesty programme for suspected militants in the region has been finalised, and in April the president approved the immediate start of a technical study of all locations affected by oil spillage in Ogoniland as a necessary prelude to the clean-up. The government has drafted plans to spend 10% of oil revenues on infrastructure and other services in the Delta Region. After years of strife, peace seems possible once more, as London’s Economist reported recently.

Elijah Okougho, General Secretary of the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG) believes that Saro-Wiwa will remain “celebrated in eternity”. He points out that before his death, there was no armed struggle in the Delta: “Saro-Wiwa was an intellectual and a man of peace. He did neither take up arms nor encourage people to armed struggle.” What turned protesters into militants, in this view, was the execution of the novelist/activist.

Bamidele Aturu, a constitutional lawyer and a human rights activist, sees Saro-Wiwa in a similar light: “He made his contribution to the development of his region by drawing attention to the plights of his people, the utter degradation and environmental pollution.” Aturu adds that the government is acting according to his ideas in terms of developing the region today.

Abiodun Aremu, a vocal activist and top official of United Action for Democracy (UAD), stresses that development “is not just building infrastructure”. In his eyes, the development of human capital matters more: “And that is enshrined in the Ogoni Bill of Rights.” Celestine Akpoloaki of the Ogoni Solidarity Forum disagrees: “Nobody is even talking about the fundamental issues in the Niger-Delta these days. Everybody is talking about money while basic necessities of life are missing.”

Saro-Wiwa’s family sued Shell in the USA. In summer 2009, the oil giant agreed to pay \$15.5 million in an out-of-court settlement. A spokesperson of Shell stated that the company did not acknowledge any guilt, but was prepared to contribute to a process of reconciliation.

Reprinted with permission from D+C (Development and Cooperation/Third World Network Features, February 2010.

Africa: Obama Moves Ahead With Africom

Daniel Volman

In his 11 July 2009 speech in Accra, Ghana, US President Barack Obama declared,

"America has a responsibility to advance this vision, not just with words, but with support that strengthens African capacity. When there is genocide in Darfur or terrorists in Somalia, these are not simply African problems - they are global security challenges, and they demand a global response.

"That is why we stand ready to partner through diplomacy, technical assistance, and logistical support, and will stand behind efforts to hold war criminals accountable. Our Africa Command is focused not on establishing a foothold in the continent, but on confronting these common challenges to advance the security of America, Africa and the world."

And yet all the available evidence demonstrates that he is determined to continue the expansion of US military activity on the continent initiated by President Bill Clinton in the late 1990s and dramatically escalated by President George W. Bush from 2001 to 2009. While many expected the Obama administration to adopt a security policy toward Africa that would be far less militaristic and unilateral than that pursued by his predecessor, the facts show that he is in fact essentially following the same policy that has guided US military involvement in Africa for more than a decade.

The clearest indication of President Obama's intentions for AFRICOM (United States African Command) and for America's military involvement in Africa is provided by the budget requests for the 2010 financial year submitted by the Departments of State and Defense to

Congress in May 2009. The State Department budget request - which includes funding for all US arms sales, military training, and other security assistance programmes - proposes major increases in funding for US arms sales to a number of African countries through the Foreign Military Financing (FMF) programme. The budget proposes to increase FMF funding for sub-Saharan African countries more than 300 per cent, from just over US\$8.2 million to more than US\$25.5 million, with additional increases in funding for Maghrebi countries.

Major recipients slated for increases include Chad (US\$500,000), the Democratic Republic of Congo (US\$2.5 million), Djibouti (US\$2.5 million), Ethiopia (US\$3 million), Kenya (US\$1 million), Liberia (US\$9 million), Morocco (US\$9 million), Nigeria (US\$1.4 million), South Africa (US\$800,000) and the Africa Regional Program (US\$2.8 million).

The same trend is evident in the Obama administration's request for funding for the International Military Education and Training (IMET) programme. The budget request for the IMET programme proposes to increase funding for African countries by nearly 17 per cent, from just under US\$14 million to more than US\$16 million, with additional increases for Maghrebi countries.



The Obama administration also proposes major new funding for security assistance provided through the Peacekeeping Operations programme. The 2010 financial year budget proposes to increase funding for the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership - from US\$15 million in the 2009 financial year to US\$20 million in 2010 - and for the East Africa Regional Strategic Initiative from US\$5 million in the 2009 financial year to US\$10 million in the 2010 financial year.

Furthermore, the Obama administration's budget request for International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) programmes contains US\$24 million for Sudan to support the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Accords in southern Sudan and to assist programmes to stabilise Darfur by providing technical assistance and training for southern Sudan's criminal justice sector and law enforcement institutions as well as contributing to UN civilian police and formed police units in southern Sudan and Darfur. It also includes funds for police reforms in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC);

for training, infrastructure, and equipment for police units in Liberia; to operate the American-run International Law Academy in Gaborone, Botswana; and to create a Regional Security Training Center for West, Central and North Africa. And the Obama administration is also asking for funding to be provided through the INCLE programs for the first time to provide security assistance to countries participating in the Trans-Saharan Counter-Terrorism Partnership: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Niger, Chad, and Nigeria.

The Obama administration proposed 2010 budget for the Department of Defense requests US\$278 million in operation and maintenance funds to cover the cost of AFRICOM operations and Operation Enduring Freedom-Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership operations at the AFRICOM headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany. The administration is also requesting US\$263 million to provide additional manpower, airlift and communications support to AFRICOM. In addition, the administration is requesting US\$60 million to fund CJTF-HOA operations in the 2010 financial year and US\$249 million

It is clear, therefore, that President Barack Obama has decided to follow the path marked out for AFRICOM by the Clinton and Bush administrations, based on the use of military force to ensure that America can satisfy its continuing addiction to oil and to deal with the threat posed by al-Qaeda and other Islamist extremist groups...

to pay for the operation of the 500-acre base at Camp Lemonier in Djibouti and for facilities modifications, along with US\$41.8 for major base improvement construction projects.

The administration has requested some US\$400 million for Global Train and Equip (Section 1206) programmes, some US\$200 million for Security and Stabilization Assistance (Section 1207) programmes, and some US\$1 million for the Combatant Commander's Initiative Fund. This money will be used primarily in Iraq and Afghanistan to pay for emergency training and equipment, the services of personnel from the State Department and humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi and Afghani armed forces, but it will be available for the use of AFRICOM as well.

The administration's budget request also contains US\$1.9 billion to buy three littoral combat ships and another US\$373 million to

buy two joint high speed vessels, ships that will play a crucial role in US Navy operations off the coast of Africa. In addition, the administration has requested US\$10.5 million to pay for naval deployments in west and central Africa in the 2010 financial year and another US\$10 million for naval operations in east Africa.

When Secretary of State Hillary Clinton travelled to Nigeria during her tour of Africa in August 2009, she met with Ojo Maduekwe, the foreign minister, and Godwin Abbe, the new minister of defence. In her remarks after the meeting, she was asked what the US government intended to do to help the Nigerian government establish stability and security in the Niger Delta. 'Well, the defence minister was present at the second larger meeting that the foreign minister convened,' she said, 'and he had some very specific suggestions as to how the United States could assist the Nigerian government in their efforts, which we think are very promising, to try to bring peace and stability to the Niger Delta. We will be following up on those. There is nothing that has been decided. But we have a very good working relationship between our two militaries. So I will be talking with my counterpart, the secretary of defense, and we will, through our joint efforts, through our bi-national commission mechanism, determine what Nigeria would want from us for help, because we know this is an internal matter, we know this is up to the Nigerian people and their government to resolve, and then look to see how we would offer that assistance.' Thus, in addition to the security assistance programmes in the budget request for the 2010 financial year, the Obama administration is now considering providing even more military support to the Nigerian government for use in the Niger Delta if the current amnesty programme collapses, as many analysts expect, and the government resumes

military operations against insurgent forces in this vital oil-producing region (which produces 10 per cent of America's total oil imports).

It is clear, therefore, that President Barack Obama has decided to follow the path marked out for AFRICOM by the Clinton and Bush administrations, based on the use of military force to ensure that America can satisfy its continuing addiction to oil and to deal with the threat posed by al-Qaeda and other Islamist extremist groups, rather than to chart a new path passed on a partnership with the people of Africa and other countries that have a stake on the continent (including China) to promote sustainable economic development, democracy and human rights in Africa and a global energy order based on the use of clean, safe and renewable resources.

This is the consequence of two factors. To begin with, President Obama genuinely believes in the strategy of the global 'War on Terror' and thinks that Africa must be a central battlefield in America's military campaign against al-Qaeda and other Islamist extremist groups. Many analysts believe that terrorism does not constitute a significant threat to America's national security interests and that it would be far more effective to treat terrorism as a crime and to reduce the threat of terrorism by employing traditional law enforcement techniques. But, as demonstrated by the president's decision to escalate US military operations in Afghanistan,

Somalia and Mali, the Obama administration is determined to use military force instead, despite the fact that - as US military analysts argue - this only helps to strengthen terrorist groups and jeopardises other US security interests.

And with regard to America's growing dependence on African oil supplies, President Obama understands the danger of relying upon the importation of a vital resource from unstable countries ruled by repressive, undemocratic regimes and the necessity of reducing America's reliance on the use of oil and other non-renewable sources of energy. But, for understandable reasons, he has concluded that there is simply very little that he can do to achieve this goal during the limited time that he will be in office. He knows that it will take at least several decades to make the radical changes that will be necessary to develop alternative sources of energy, particularly to fuel cars and other means of transportation (if this is even technically feasible). And he knows that - in the meantime - public support for his presidency and for his party depends on the continued supply of reliable and relatively



inexpensive supplies of gas and other petroleum-based energy to the American people, more than any other single factor. In the event of a substantial disruption in the supply of oil from Nigeria or any other major African supplier, he realises that he will be under irresistible political pressure to employ the only instrument that he has at his disposal - US military forces - to try to keep Africa's oil flowing.

Professional military officers also know that the repressive, undemocratic regimes upon which the United States relies to maintain oil production are likely to fail and that they are almost certain to find themselves sent into combat in Africa - whether they like it or not - if this leads to a major disruption of oil exports, and are already working on plans for direct military intervention in Africa. Thus, in May 2008, the Army Training and Doctrine Command, the Special Operations Command, and the Joint Forces Command conducted a war game scenario for Nigeria during war game exercise that it conducts each year at the US Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

The scenario - set in the hypothetical year 2013 - was designed to test the ability of the United States to respond to a crisis in Nigeria in which the Nigerian government fragments and rival factions within the Nigerian military begin fighting for control of the Niger Delta, creating so much violence and chaos that it would be impossible to continue oil production. The participants concluded that there was little the United States could do to bring about a peaceful resolution of the conflict and that, in the end, they would probably be ordered to send up to 20,000 American troops into the Niger Delta in what the participants clearly recognised would

be a futile attempt to get the oil flowing again. The fact that the participants in the Nigerian war games decided to go public with this information suggests that they believe that this scenario is likely to become a reality in the near future and that their only hope of avoiding this is to tell the public in the hope that this will prevent the order from being issued.

But the professional military officers who would actually have to lead their troops into Africa are not the only people who understand that America's reliance on the military to solve the energy dilemma and the threat of terrorism is a dangerous mistake. Members of the US Congress are also increasingly sceptical about this strategy and are beginning to give AFRICOM the critical scrutiny it deserves. Moreover, a number of concerned organisations and individuals in the United States and in Africa came together in August 2006 to create the Resist AFRICOM campaign in order to educate the American people about AFRICOM and to mobilise public and congressional opposition to the new command. The Resist AFRICOM campaign will continue to press the Obama administration to abandon its plan for AFRICOM and to pursue a policy toward Africa based on a genuine partnership with the people of Africa, international cooperation, democracy, human rights and sustainable economic development.

Daniel Volman is the director of the African Security Research Project in Washington DC, and a member of the board of directors of the Association of Concerned Africa Scholars. He is a specialist on US military policy in Africa and African security issues and has been conducting research and writing on these issues for more than 30 years.

Accessed from AllAfrica Global Media (allAfrica.com)

India Spars with Pakistan, China Over Water

Siddarth Srivastava

KASHMIR HAS FOR DECADES BEEN A BONE OF CONTENTION between India and Pakistan over which the two countries have fought wars.

Now, with both sides desperate for more water from population and industrialization pressures, hydroelectric projects on either side of the 550 km Line of Control are putting added pressure on an already volatile situation.

While India has been protesting the hydro projects being built in what it calls “illegally occupied territory,” Pakistan fears floods or drought in its low-lying areas due to blocking of river systems including the massive Indus and its tributaries, which have immense potential to generate hydroelectricity.

Water tension between the two countries is at least 50 years old. The Indus Waters Treaty of 1960, signed by then Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Pakistani President Mohammad Ayub Kahn with the World Bank a third signatory, sought to solve the disputes. The treaty was a considerable diplomatic achievement considering that the two countries were on the verge of war over Kashmir. Under the agreement, the two share the enormous Indus water system and its series of tributaries, with Pakistan gaining exclusive use of the Jhelum and the Chenab, which flow west. India was granted use of the Ravi, Beas and Sutlej, which flow east.

According to the treaty, only one dam could be built in the Jammu and Kashmir Valley.

Nonetheless both have begun construction, with India’s National Hydroelectric Power Company building a 330-megawatt dam, the Kishinganga project, on the Jhelum River in the Gurez Valley, which was allotted to Pakistan under the 1960 treaty. India is about two-thirds of the way finished with the dam, with completion expected in 2016. India is also building the 450-megawatt Baglihar hydro electric project on the Chenab River, which flows from Jammu and Kashmir into Pakistan. On Oct. 7, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visited Jammu and Kashmir to launch the project.

Pakistan’s Water and Power Development Authority has begun construction on its own project, the Neelum-Jhelum project 70 km away. Although Pakistan’s project began later, with completion expected in 2017, it has hired two Chinese companies, China International Water and Electric Engineering (CWE) and the CGGC-CMEC Consortium, in an attempt to speed up progress and finish it before India finishes the Kishinganga project. The MoU was reportedly signed in August during Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari’s Beijing visit.

Pakistan has approached the World Bank to request appointment of a neutral expert to

resolve the dispute if bilateral efforts fail, as stipulated in the Indus Water Treaty.

Given rising tensions across a number of fronts including dominion of the far eastern Arunachal Pradesh state, which China calls Southern Tibet, Delhi is concerned about China's deepening role in Pakistan's hydro projects in particular and infrastructure projects in general. Last year the Chinese government blocked a US\$60 million Asian Development Bank loan to India for flood management, water supply and sanitation in the Arunachal Pradesh area. India's foreign ministry has said that China has been informed of New Delhi's apprehensions and has asked Beijing to consider the long term view of Indian-Chinese relations and cease activities in Pakistan Kashmir.

China, however, has persisted with its plans, couching its words in diplomatic niceties. The Chinese foreign ministry has been quoted as saying: "The Kashmir issue is a matter left over from history. It should be settled properly through dialogue and consultation between India and Pakistan, and China's position has been consistent."

The Chinese have considerable experience in building dams due to massive developments such as the Three Gorges Project on the Yangtze River. India fears that the involvement of efficient Chinese companies will extend to other spheres such as better roads and connectivity, which could offer a military advantage to Pakistan, such as rapid troop movements.

China's presence in the region has become a touchy issue with India, whether it is winning energy blocks in Myanmar, looking at gas in Bangladesh or setting up ports and naval bases in Sri Lanka, Myanmar or Pakistan and buttressing its navy to patrol the waters of the Indian Ocean. Apart from hydro, Pakistani

and Chinese companies have signed many agreements in thermal and renewable energy projects, highways, irrigation and fisheries and mobile networks. China is closely involved with Pakistan's missile and nuclear program as well.

Late last year, India also reacted strongly to reports that the Chinese are building a dam over the Brahmaputra River, or the Tsangpo as it is called in the 1,700 km Chinese stretch. The reports have touted it as the world's largest dam, with 26 turbines. The Tsangpo Canyon is believed to be the deepest in the world and is about 150 km long before the river enters Arunachal Pradesh and eventually becomes the Brahmaputra.

As with the rest of the gigantic water system that serves both countries, the Brahmaputra is the lifeline of the Northeastern states of India, West Bengal and Bangladesh. The Tibetan plateau gives rise to the biggest river system by far in the world. Water from the region flows to 11 different countries via 10 major rivers, bringing fresh water to as much as 50 percent of the world's population. Though China has denied any such plans as "unnecessary, unfeasible and unscientific," and completely lacking government backing, New Delhi is not taking chances and has said that it would like to verify the claims independently.

There was a possibility that Pakistan and India could be more accommodating to each other's requirements, but the suspicions post the November Mumbai terror strikes in 2008 have spoilt any such scenario. In the poisonous atmosphere between India and Pakistan, Kashmir has become a convenient arena for finger pointing and gaining points in the eyes of the western world.

Pakistan has been playing up alleged "human rights violations by security forces" in Indian

New Potential for Conflict in Peru's Amazon

Chris Hufstader

MADRE DE DIOS COULD BE THE NEXT FLASHPOINT in ongoing confrontation between indigenous communities and foreign oil, gas, and mining companies.

Since the violent confrontations of last June in Bagua resulted in the death of 33 people, including 23 police officers, the Peruvian government has made an effort to increase engagement with indigenous representatives on policy issues at the national level through a series of participatory working groups to discuss indigenous lands containing valuable resources like forests, water, minerals, and oil and gas.

Unfortunately, not all indigenous groups participating in these working groups felt that the discussions were productive. AIDSESEP, a long-time Oxfam America partner and one of



Photo: www.amazonwatch.org

Kashmir in foreign forums for long to gain the sympathy of America and the military and civilian aid that follows. A bit of the jihadi terror against India has been fuelled by such assertions.

India, which has in the past defended its position in Kashmir, including holding of free and fair elections, has opted for a more aggressive posture in the recent past, highlighting the lack of basic development, absence of democratic rights in Pakistan Kashmir and the proliferation of terrorist training hideouts in the region.

The option of hot pursuit or Indian troops taking out terror dugouts in Pakistan Kashmir was hotly debated in the aftermath of the Mumbai attacks. The people of Kashmir, on both sides, meanwhile continue to be caught in the cross fire even as the fear of terror and violence has decimated the once thriving tourism sector in Indian Kashmir.

Reprinted with permission from Asia Sentinel, January 19, 2010

the largest federations representing indigenous peoples in Peru's Amazon, has withdrawn from the dialogue process, citing lack of progress and reluctance on the part of the government to accept its share of the responsibility for the violence in Bagua.

While indigenous people and the government struggle to continue a meaningful dialogue, the Indigenous Federation of Madre de Dios (known as FENAMAD) has been objecting to the presence of Hunt Oil of Texas in the Amarakaeri Communal Reserve (RCA), part of the 3.5 million-acre Block 76 oil concession located in the Madre de Dios region in southeastern Peru. FENAMAD contends that Hunt Oil could be playing indigenous communities against each other to gain access to their lands. "The current strategy of the US company Hunt Oil is to negotiate directly with the members of each native community and seek to divide them and provoke open confrontation among the brother indigenous people within each community," FENAMAD is saying in a memorandum.

There is a real danger this could emerge as the next flashpoint in a disturbing stream of conflicts between communities and oil and mining companies in Peru. The Peruvian Ombudsman Office estimates that of the 273 social and environmental conflicts in Peru in the first six months of 2009, 80 percent were related to extractive industry projects. (In 2008 there were 123 social and environmental conflicts in the same period.)

FENAMAD and other indigenous federations are insisting that foreign oil, gas, and mining companies must attain the free, prior, and informed consent from communities before they can enter any indigenous lands such as the Amarakaeri Communal Reserve. The

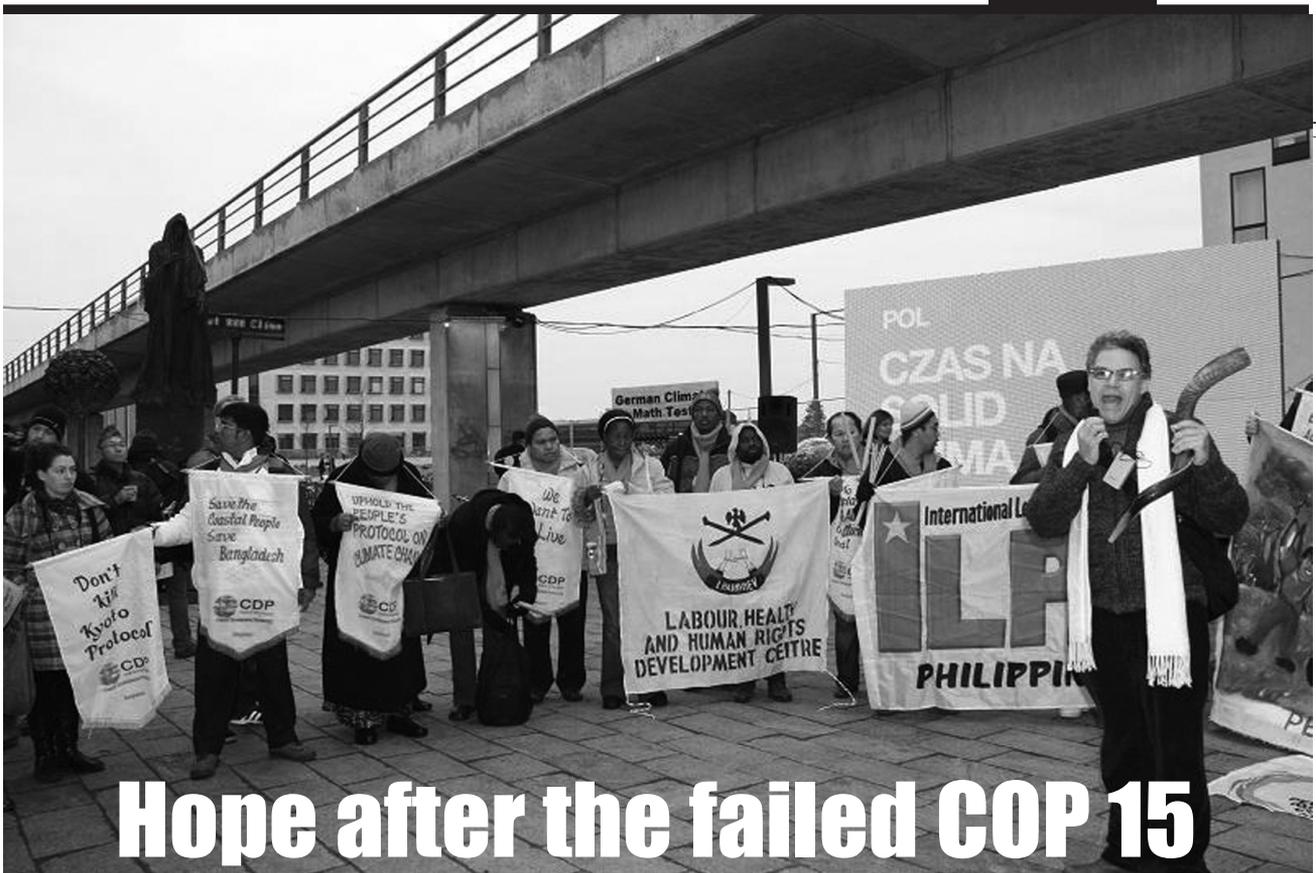
right of free, prior, and informed consent is a right of indigenous peoples established under international law, and requires free access to full information (including independent analysis of project proposals), adequate time for a community decision free of pressure and coercion, and the option to reject a proposal--or accept under certain conditions.

The failure of oil, gas, and mining companies to gain appropriate access to communities with natural resources limits Peru's ability to benefit from revenues it needs to help the approximately 50 percent of its population now living in poverty.

The legislature gave Peru's President Alan Garcia broad powers to promote economic competitiveness through decrees last year, saying it was necessary to adapt legislation to comply with new requirements of the Peru-US Free Trade Agreement. Indigenous federations and many civil society organizations have strongly protested the possible consequences of these laws for the Amazon rainforest and indigenous lands, as well as the fact that they were adopted without transparency or genuine consultation. Some of these legislative decrees were rescinded following violent confrontations last June, but many are still in force.

"There is a potential for this confrontation to escalate to violence," says Emily Greenspan, Oxfam America's policy advisor who monitors oil and gas projects in Peru's Amazon. "Companies seeking to operate in any areas need to attain the free, prior, and informed consent of communities. Those that appear to be forcing their way into communities risk serious conflict, as we have seen in the recent past."

Accessed from Oxfam America www.oxfamamerica.org/articles



Hope after the failed COP 15

Reileen Dulay

From 7-18 December 2009, the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was held in Copenhagen, Denmark. In this event, 192 nations with 115 heads of government gathered to work on a framework for climate change mitigation beyond 2012.

But the COP 15 collapsed after 11 days of negotiations as it concluded without reaching concrete agreements on the Kyoto Protocol and on how countries especially in the North will respond to the climate crisis.

And to much more disappointment of the people, this international congregation came up with the Copenhagen Accord that waters down obligations of Northern countries in arresting the climate problem while it accelerates the unfair demands from Southern countries.

But even with the flop of the COP 15, it must be noted that there had been significant developments that took place outside the negotiation hall of the official process. A large number of people from different parts of the world gathered outside Bella Center to push for genuine solutions and actions on the climate crisis which the UNFCCC failed to accomplish.

The people staged different actions parallel to the COP 15 and the Peoples' Movement on Climate Change (PMCC) had been in the

forefront in consolidating representation of the widest sectors and peoples' organisations around the globe while upholding the Peoples' Protocol on Climate Change (Peoples' Protocol), which embodies the messages of the people successfully expressed not only in Copenhagen but in different parts of the world.

PMCC and the Peoples' Protocol on Climate Change

In 2007, the PMCC was formed to be the forefront collective expression of a global campaign which involved individuals and organisations from the different global

Kenya Debt Relief Network (KENDREN), Green Movement of Sri Lanka (GMSL) and AidWatch.

In the last two years, the PMCC convened several workshops and consultations in Asia, Africa and the Middle East, along with national assemblies in key European countries. One of the outcomes of these events was the formulation of the Peoples' Protocol. In 2009, the People's Protocol was finalised and adapted widely by different peoples' organisations as a framework declaration that captures the people's stand on this most urgent problem confronting

humanity. It was endorsed by more than 500 individuals and organizations from the North and South, and was submitted to the UNFCCC prior to the COP 15. Alongside this development, the Protocol had been translated into different languages – Bahasa, Dutch, French, Arabic, Amharic and Bangla in order to reach a larger number of people in the different regions. (Access the Peoples' Protocol on Climate Change at <http://peoplesclimatemovement.net/>)



regions. It has a Facilitation Group that leads the discussions and coordinates the work in the network, and is composed of IBON Foundation, Asia Pacific Research Network (APRN), Peoples' Coalition on Food Sovereignty (PCFS), Institute for National and Democratic Studies (INDIES), International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development (INFID), Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD), Arab NGO Network on Development (ANND), IBON Europe, Global Justice Ecology Project,

Southern voices and peoples' solutions to climate crisis

The world witnessed that people are united and are actively participating to salvage the world from the climate crisis. As world leaders met inside the Bella Center in Copenhagen for the COP 15, thousands of representatives of various groups from all continents gathered outside the Bella Center to counter the futile official process of the UNFCCC.

One of the highlights of the events outside COP 15 was the Global Peoples' Assembly on Climate Change organised by PMCC on December 9 that gave a platform for Southern voices and solutions to climate change. More than one hundred participants from Asia, Africa, the Arab Region, Europe and Latin America attended the Peoples' Assembly where they gave their response to the unjust and false solutions being presented by the world leaders through the ratification of the Peoples' Protocol.

Aside from the Global Peoples' Assembly in Denmark, national peoples' assemblies were also simultaneously held by PMCC members together with other local organizations: Kenya – KENDREN, IBON Africa, and Huruma Social Forum; Nigeria – Labour, Health and Human Rights Development Center; Zimbabwe – Coalition on Debt and Development; Egypt – Housing and Land Rights Network; Morocco – Right to Water Forum in the Arab Region; Sudan – Sudanese Conservationist Society; Indonesia – International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development (INFID) and Aliansi Gerakan Reformasi Agraria (AGRA); Bangladesh – Coastal Development Partnership (CDP); Sri Lanka – Green Movement of Sri Lanka; Philippines – IBON Foundation, Philippine Climate Watch Alliance, Kalikasan-PNE; Hong Kong – Asia Pacific Missions for Migrants (APMM); Thailand – Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD); Ethiopia – Eco Yeshemachoch Mahiber (ECOYM);

Canada – Migrante Canada; and Mozambique – Christian Council of Mozambique.

The people did not place high hopes on COP 15 and other global negotiations initiated and organised by governments that did not give any regard for the majority of the world's population. Rather, real solutions to the climate crisis have been advanced, which came from an open and democratic process with the participation of people from the ground – the fundamental aspect of a substantive and necessary framework to counter the worst impacts of climate change.

The Peoples' Protocol embodies the hope for humankind to address the climate problem. After COP 15, the PMCC's advocacy to promote the Peoples' Protocol will be brought into broader space to build the capacity of more stakeholders in the South. Also, there are continuing engagements with other networks and platforms that have the same aspiration to genuinely arrest climate change.

Reileen Dulay is a Program Assistant with the Asia Pacific Research Network.



Photo: Gilbert Sape/PAN

Rising **FASTER** Than the Oceans

Danny Chivers

It has to be the least satisfying 'I told you so' in history.

Climate justice activists across the world had been predicting a shambolic outcome from COP15 all year. To actually see the desperate, miserable affair being played out, however, was another matter entirely. To see wealthy governments squirming out of their climate commitments whilst blaming the rest of the world for their failure to act; to see representatives of small and impoverished nations bullied and derided for daring to suggest that their countries might be better off above the oceans, with fertile soils and drinkable water; to see dissenting voices locked out and marginalized while the self-selected powers-that-be met behind closed doors to carve up the future; to see a final 'agreement' so weak and meaningless that negotiators may as well have spent the week go-carting instead; there's no triumph to be had in any of this. The fact that we saw it coming doesn't make it any less of a disaster.

But the COP15 summit wasn't the only gathering in Copenhagen last month. I spent the week of the summit on the streets and in the squats and social centres of the city, along with thousands of other climate activists from all over the world. I marched with 100,000 others in (probably) the most diverse climate action demonstration the world has ever seen. I took part in the 'alternative climate summit' known as

the Klimaforum, and joined with thousands of others on 16 December in attempting to enter the COP15 conference centre to hold a 'People's Assembly'; on the real solutions to climate change. In stark contrast to the official talks, the participants in these events were driven by compassion, unity, positivity and hope. People from all over the world – including, crucially, those already most affected by the climate crisis – came to Copenhagen determined to find common ground with each other, and to build a real movement for change. We quickly discovered a shared critique of the failures of our dominant political and economic systems, a determination to create something new to take its place, and the ability to curse the Danish police in an exciting selection of languages.

Summit's going on

We shouldn't underestimate the importance of all this. It felt good, natural and real to be standing together, but consider the unlikeliness of some of these alliances. African farmers leaving their fields to plan a conference centre invasion in Denmark. Vegan anarchists from Europe championing the rights of Indian fisherfolk and South American hunter-gatherers. Indigenous peoples from across the world coming to the lands of their former colonial oppressors, and debating campaign tactics in the languages of European Empire.

The mutual respect, political concessions and genuine ideas-sharing on display put the highly-paid self-interest peddlers in the Bella Centre to shame. The action on the 16th was organized by Climate Justice Action and Climate Justice Now, two vibrant and growing networks of radical groups and movements from across the globe. We succeeded in holding our Assembly for real solutions, led by Southern activists, in the jaws of what seemed to be Denmark's entire police force. December 2009 saw a real step forward for the climate justice movement.

After so much build-up, the failure of Copenhagen means that there is now a serious risk that millions of people who care about the climate will plunge into cynicism and despair, at the very moment when we need everyone to stand up and be counted. Our urgent task now is to provide them with hope

And yet, on another level we failed. The violent and oppressive tactics of the Danish police kept us out of the Bella Centre (apart from three heroic people who charged across the moat on a bridge made from inflatable lilos, into the waiting arms of the riot cops; and six others who

sneaked into the grounds after everyone else went home). The lurid tales of police brutality, tear gas, pepper spray, and innocent people being herded into cages may have shamed the Danish Government, but they also provided a distracting spectacle for the corporate media to focus on instead of our political messages. We are growing stronger, yet we are still nowhere near strong enough – and time is running out.

UNworkable?

The Copenhagen talks were never going to address the root causes of the climate problem: a global economic system based on the myth of endless growth, and a global politics skewed in favour of a wealthy, polluting minority. They instead focused on maintaining the political status quo whilst pushing false market-based solutions, at the expense of most of the world. Despite this, Copenhagen was still perceived



Photo: www.blogtheberkshires.com

by many people as humanity's last stand, the final chance to set the world on a different, sustainable course. Instead, the rich nations refused to give ground, and instead produced the equivalent of an apologetic note from their mum (in this case, Barack Obama), explaining that they really do want to tackle climate change but they just aren't feeling up to it at the moment. They've since gone on to blame the nasty bullies in China for refusing to sign up to the unjust non-deal that the industrialized nations spent so much effort trying to stitch up behind closed doors at the end of the summit.

After so much build-up, the failure of Copenhagen means that there is now a serious risk that millions of people who care about the climate will plunge into cynicism and despair, at the very moment when we need everyone to stand up and be counted. Our urgent task now is to provide them with hope.

Could the climate talks be fixed at this late stage, pummelled into a more inclusive and fairer form? It's difficult to see how. Over 17 years, the process has got steadily worse, not better – despite unprecedented pressure from mainstream NGOs and advocacy groups working within the talks. All the other international bodies with any clout (the WTO, the World Bank) are even less democratic than the UN. The UNFCCC is, for now, the best international process we can hope for – and as Copenhagen has shown, it's not even tackling the real problems.

Getting real

But if the official international process will not deliver climate justice, then what will? Taking my cue from others at Copenhagen, I found myself frequently saying things like: 'This summit is the last chance for governments to act; when they fail, then it's our turn to take



Photo: Gilbert Sape / PAN

over.’ But what does this actually mean? How on earth can we, a loosely-connected network of people and movements across the globe, create the scale of political and social change necessary to stave off climate disaster and deliver justice to those communities who did not cause the problem but are feeling its worst effects? And can we do it without a legally-binding intergovernmental deal?

Here’s a suggestion that’s already spreading amongst climate activists worldwide: we could come up with an international climate deal of our own. A global treaty based on both climate science and social justice; a Peoples’ Protocol that bypasses governments entirely and comes straight from the grassroots.

Well, maybe we can – and maybe that process is already beginning. Here’s a suggestion that’s already spreading amongst climate activists worldwide: we could come up with an international climate deal of our own. A global treaty based on both climate science and social justice; a Peoples’ Protocol that bypasses governments entirely and comes straight from the grassroots. Not a list of demands, but a set of real solutions that we intend to put in place ourselves, using every tool available to us. If governments won’t phase out fossil fuels, then we’ll have to do it for them, by shutting down their coal mines and oilfields. If they won’t protect the world’s forests – or worse, if they try to sell them off for private profit – then we’ll unite with the people of those lands and defend them ourselves.

Dealing with it

Imagine a common statement of solutions, with clear goals that fulfil the needs of climate science. Rather than the statistical, loophole-filled nightmare of country-by-country emissions targets, we could keep it bold and simple. Let’s set a schedule for the closure of

every coal mine, for the shutdown of the last Tar Sands pipeline, for the ultimate death rattle of the carbon markets. Let’s lay out plans for the reclamation of indigenous peoples’ lands, and for gaining community control over food, water and energy – all measures which would lead to rapid and measurable emissions reductions. Let’s reclaim our world democratically from below, based on the growth of human rights, health and freedom, not the destructive fiction of economic growth. Such a treaty could be a rallying point, a shared global agreement under which grassroots movements around the world could plan their own actions and set their own goals. We could link up our struggles and work together strategically, knowing that we are all striving towards the same end points. All of our protests and community projects would suddenly feel like part of a greater global whole, not just isolated acts of defiance.

Some would join us with a genuine belief in our ability to make these changes. Others would see it, at least in part, as laying down a challenge to spur governments into action. For now, these differences are less important than many people think, and give us more than enough common ground to build a powerful movement. We’ll find out who was right later on, after we’ve won.

Plans for such a reality-based ‘people’s agreement’ are already afoot. December’s Klimaforum Declaration, and the alternative People’s Protocols put forward by The Peoples’ Movement on Climate Change and IBON all provide excellent starting points, and show just how much common ground there already is amongst grassroots climate justice campaigners. The success of the People’s Assembly on 16 December has led to calls for more such gatherings to be held all over the world, and a truly grassroots People’s Treaty could be a key item for debate.

Any such agreement would be useful, but to be truly powerful it will need to stand up to scientific scrutiny. Imagine an independent scientific assessment, stating that our plans – if implemented – could actually hold back runaway climate change and preserve the small island states, while governments' proposals could not. This extra credibility would give us a serious chance of drawing in and involving the quiet millions who signed postcards and petitions for Copenhagen, only to be let down by the whole sorry process. We need to show the world that there are ways to avoid complete climate disaster outside of the established political and economic systems – that, in fact, these systems are a major part of the problem. We need to demonstrate that we have clear and credible alternative solutions. Perversely, the very urgency of the climate crisis might just be enough to spur us into doing this, forcing us to set our differences aside and achieve the unity that the last comparable uprising, the 'anti-globalisation' movement of the 1990s, never quite managed to do.

It's all a bit daunting. But strangely enough, there is still cause for hope. Here's a list of, if not reasons to be cheerful, at least reasons to be slightly less fearful in the wake of Copenhagen:

- 1) **Common ground:** The political declaration that emerged from the Copenhagen Klimaforum has a lot in common with the solutions proposed at the People's Assembly, and with the People's Protocols already drafted up by Southern movements. In a nutshell, they all call for a reduction in Northern overconsumption, the abandonment of fossil fuels for cleaner alternatives, a transfer of wealth and technology from North to South for climate mitigation and adaptation, the rejection of false market-based solutions and geoengineering, strong recognition of
 - indigenous land rights, and local sovereignty over food, land, energy and water. They also – implicitly or explicitly – call for a different kind of global economy and politics, based on the needs of people and the environment rather than corporate profit and endless growth. Grassroots campaigners are already far closer to a meaningful, scientifically robust agreement than the UNFCCC is ever likely to be.
- We need to show the world that there are ways to avoid complete climate disaster outside of the established political and economic systems – that, in fact, these systems are a major part of the problem.
- 2) **Ability to compromise:** At Copenhagen, we learned that it is possible to put our political differences aside and unite behind a common purpose – and that diversity really can be strength. For example, there are people in the climate justice movement who utterly reject global capitalism and wish to build alternative societies with which to replace it, while others envision a more gradual transformation of our economic system into something less destructive. Luckily, it turns out that opposing destructive state and corporate behaviour and creating positive grassroots climate solutions all seem like excellent ideas whether you believe you're doing it to change the system, dismantle the system, build a new system, or all of the above. We can work successfully together without having to agree on everything, so long as we're honest about our differences and create spaces in which to openly debate the issues. Which is really rather great.
 - 3) **Positive solutions:** The stuff that will sort out climate change is also stuff that can make all our lives better. Whether we're talking about the wealthier minority escaping the

consumerist treadmill and rediscovering the things that really make them happy, or everyone else gaining control over their lands and livelihoods, climate change is an issue which can bring together many different struggles and unite us with visions for a better world.

- 4) **Numbers:** We are more numerous than we realize. The majority of the world's population would agree with the above common principles for climate justice – it is only the uneven distribution of power across the world that is preventing these ideas from becoming the accepted wisdom. Now, if we could just take some of that power back ...
- 5) **Moral power:** The status quo represents a huge global injustice which we are struggling to correct. This is really important, and we should make more of it – people can be moved by the fight for global justice in a way that they won't be by the fight for polar bears.
- 6) **Tactics:** We are willing to do what it takes to create this change. More and more people across the world are putting their bodies on the line and risking their liberty to achieve justice. Millions more are coming out to actively support these actions in a range of different ways. Within our movement, we also have the skills to create our own solutions from the bottom up, and are learning how to share and spread those skills.
- 7) **Track record:** People across the world have stood up against destructive developments, and won. Farmers in Karnataka stopped the

construction of a coal plant. Campaigners in the Niger Delta beat the oil companies over gas flaring. The indigenous Totobiegosode people of Paraguay kept the logging companies off their land. Concerted campaigning has scuppered new coal power stations in the US and Britain. We now need to unite our efforts, and scale up our victories accordingly.

- 8) **Timing:** Even in the industrialized world, people are noticeably unimpressed with rampant consumer capitalism at the moment. There's never been a better time to get people fighting for sustainable alternatives.

Of course, there are serious barriers ahead of us – in Denmark we got a small taste of the kind of opposition we face. The strength of the movement varies hugely across the world, and sometimes our ability to support each other seems limited. By definition, our allies are often those with the least official power. But we should not underestimate our creativity and imagination, or the strength we can find in working towards a common purpose, and in globalizing hope. We can build and strengthen our movements by acting, by showing our strength. Copenhagen was useful in this regard – but it's time to move beyond summit-hopping. These meetings are useful focal points, but we're not expecting them to provide the answers anymore. Copenhagen was, in the end, just a meeting. Let's set our own timetable from now on.

Reprinted from New Internationalist, January 2010

Politics of Failure: Why the Parties Cannot Agree on Anything

John Paul Corpus

COP-15 was a failure waiting to happen.

Hardly any of the disagreements between countries on major issues that the two-year Bali Roadmap intended to resolve were bridged, in time to conclude with a full set of agreements in Copenhagen. Coming into the summit, almost everyone knew that a final deal could not be reached. As the deadline closed in, leaders downgraded expectations for the summit's presumed outcome to a "political agreement", something that can at least provide a framework for details to be filled in as negotiations extend for another six to twelve months. This, despite the science pointing to the need for urgent and drastic action, particularly as emissions continue to climb and as changes in the climate continue to overshoot earlier projections.

In seventeen years of international climate diplomacy under the

UNFCCC, there has been little agreement between states, divided in coalitions of Northern and Southern countries, on how to move forward in implementing the Framework Convention. The Convention set out a framework by which burdens in cutting emissions are to be allocated across countries on the basis of historical responsibility, equity, and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR). Looked at another



Photo: www.opdi-technologies.com

way, it sets out a framework by which the remaining carbon budget might be reallocated in such a way as to avert catastrophic climate change, and at the same time allow developing countries to develop within a safe emissions path. The Convention explicitly states that the North must take the lead in reducing emissions and assist developing countries to reduce emissions and in adaptation. The Convention, meanwhile, recognizes that development and poverty alleviation remain as the main goals of developing countries, and that while they too have commitments, they are not of the same weight and status as those of developed countries.

This might have been a relatively straightforward guide for the Parties to agree on the more specific details of the Convention's implementation, in particular, on the quantities of emissions reductions and the allocation thereof, and the timetables in which they should proceed. But this has not been the case. The rich and industrialized countries of the North have demonstrated little commitment to fulfill their obligation, as the largest historical

polluters, primarily make deep domestic emissions reductions, but also to support international mitigation and adaptation efforts. This unwillingness is most starkly displayed by the United States, to which other developed countries eventually fell behind: first, in the introduction of "flexibility mechanisms" that allow developed countries to fulfill national targets by paying cheaper emissions reductions done overseas; and then, in demanding developing countries, particularly major economies such as China and India, to submit to formal commitments comparable to those of developed countries themselves.

This last move, one that is described as an attempt to renegotiate the Convention and modify the architecture that has been in place since the creation of the Kyoto Protocol, has been the bone of contention between developed and developing countries for at least the last ten years. Southern governments see this as an attempt on the part of developed countries to backslide from their obligations. They insist that the international balance of commitments enshrined in the Convention

and the Protocol, and implied in the principle of CBRD, is not up for negotiation, and that Southern actions should remain dependent on Northern leadership in emissions reductions as well as in the provision of international support for mitigation and adaptation actions.

This is the international



Photo: www.lightandmatter.com

[Combating climate change requires] abandoning the unsustainable and unequal growth economy, and transitioning to a system whose sustainability derives from greater equity, cooperation, and democracy in the use of resources and the distribution of economic benefits.

impasse that has bogged down the multilateral negotiations and kept a strong and equitable response far from reach. At the heart of this impasse is a shared commitment by governments of both the North and the South to a model of development and material welfare based on growth, i.e., accumulation, rising national and individual incomes, and rising levels of production and consumption. Notably, it is a model that has been, and still is, being powered by energy from the increased burning of fossil fuels, which is primarily responsible for climate change. Notably still, it is a model underpinned by inequalities in the distribution and control of the resources required to feed growth, as well as of the material and financial benefits that accrue from it.

Advanced industrialized countries owe their developed status to this model. Two hundred years of fossil-fuelled growth bestowed the North with disproportionate economic power: they now account for more than half of the world economy, and enjoy levels of material consumption up to eight times higher than in the world's poorer regions. But this degree

of material affluence is supported by their disproportionate use of the planet's resources, often beyond their own borders, and through colonial and unequal relations. With just 15% of the world's population, the North consumed around 80% of the global carbon budget in the course of its growth. They now consume over half the planet's biocapacity, close to 50% of all fossil fuel energy, and emit up to five times more carbon dioxide per person than developing countries.

At stake for the North, should they ever abide by the balance of obligations provided in the UNFCCC, is their economic ascendancy. This would have required them to commit to long-term structural changes in their energy sectors, particularly to shift away from conventional fossil fuels, and in other domestic industries dependent on it. Domestic measures such as this would likely raise costs for corporations – especially as alternative energy sources remain expensive – and thus risk undermining their profitability and competitiveness. And, insofar as the international allocation of emissions targets is seen as the redistribution of emissions rights, this would require the North to progressively pare back their resource use to more equitable levels – a measure that would impact directly on the power their economies command, as well as the levels of consumption their populations enjoy. But planned de-growth is a policy no Northern government has seriously contemplated.

Meanwhile, poor and developing countries of the South shared little of the economic growth that the resource-intensive development path brought the North, more so to the extent that they had been subject to patterns of colonial exploitation and wealth appropriation. Per capita income and levels of material consumption remain low in these countries, often well below levels that can sustain human

well-being. Their overriding priority remains overcoming poverty and building economies that can secure dignified standards of living for their populations. And this demands, almost unavoidably, improved access to energy and natural resources.

Since the middle of the last century, Southern governments have embarked on strategies of development aimed at ‘catching up’ with the North, that is, closing the wide gaps in living standards the North’s development had left in its wake. These development efforts have all been pursued with the same carbon-intensive and unequal growth-centered model of development as the North’s. Rapid economic growth in developing countries will drive much of the forecasted increase in global output, energy consumption, and energy-related CO₂ emissions. Between 1990 and 2030, global energy consumption and CO₂ emissions are projected to double, while the global economy is projected to almost quadruple in size. Developing countries will be responsible for 60% of the global GDP growth, 75% of energy consumption growth, and 80% of CO₂ emissions growth.

It is obvious that this path to development is not consistent with the science, and would, should it come to pass, most certainly endanger the planet. And this is the South’s dilemma. They remain overwhelmingly poor, but they also remain tied to a model of development that allocates the benefits of growth very unequally, such that growth achieved at great environmental cost will have to be sustained over long stretches of time for it to have more than a marginal effect on the poor. This would require more emissions space and more natural resources to accommodate greater growth – of which, because of the North’s development path, we have little left.

Northern governments call attention to the South’s growing share of emissions to pressure them to submit to greater obligations, not because of its unsustainability, for which the North is no doubt more culpable, but to offload their responsibilities to the South. The South fears the North would lock in the inequitable share of emissions and crowd them out of the remaining carbon budget, imperiling their drive to development, more so to the extent that it is emissions-intensive. In response, Southern governments point out that their per capita emissions and income levels are still very low relative to those of developed countries. They insist that it is their right to develop; that their emissions have to increase in order to achieve a certain level of development; and that they cannot commit to mitigation obligations that would truncate their growth and undermine their paths to development.

Copenhagen demonstrates that the ruling fossil-fuelled growth economic model cause and exacerbate global warming and climate change. Because of its colonial and exploitative legacy and the economic divisions it occasions, the growth economy also guts the international political effort to address the climate crisis. Copenhagen tells us that the global effort to combat climate change demands far more than agreeing on emissions targets and timetables, or allocating the remaining carbon budget. It would require, at bottom, abandoning the unsustainable and unequal growth economy, and transitioning to a system whose sustainability derives from greater equity, cooperation, and democracy in the use of resources and the distribution of economic benefits. This is the key to unlock the political process.

John Paul Corpus is a Research Assistant with IBON International.

Statement on the 2009 UN Climate Change Conference and the Copenhagen Accord

6 January 2010

Peoples' Movement on Climate Change (PMCC)

Millions of people across the planet had hoped that governments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) would walk away from Copenhagen with a strong, just, and timely climate deal. Predictably, the summit failed to deliver.

Copenhagen is the latest, and – with runaway climate change looming large on the horizon – perhaps the costliest, of the UNFCCC's long list of failures.

Coming in to the summit, it was clear what outcomes the planet and those most vulnerable to climate change demand.

Science requires that warming be held to as far below 1.5°C as possible, and that to achieve this, emissions must peak no later than 2015 and approach zero by 2050.

Equity and justice requires the North to compensate the South, first, by taking on deep emissions cuts – 45% to 50% by 2020 and 95% to 100% by 2050 against 1990 levels – and second, by enabling Southern adaptation and low-carbon development – through sufficient, long-term, and mandatory technology transfer, capacity building support, and provision of finance amounting to \$500bn to \$1tn annually as reparations for climate debt.

These obligations require an international enforcement and compliance architecture that legally binds the North to fulfill their twin commitments, and places enhanced mechanisms for mobilizing and delivering financial, technology, and capacity building support to the South.

The UN climate summit failed to meet any of these demands. The Copenhagen Accord, a document parachuted down on the conference in its final hours, is a hollow, unjust, and potentially disastrous agreement.

The dangerously conservative 2°C limit to warming that the Accord sets ignores the growing scientific consensus and popular demand for the safer warming limit of 1°C and below, and threatens the very survival of many vulnerable countries.

The Accord sets no internationally legally-binding emissions reduction target for developed countries. Instead, it calls on rich countries to submit non-binding individual pledges, which to date are so little that if implemented could lead to catastrophic warming of 4°C by 2100.

The Accord further waters down the North's emissions commitments by installing a REDD (Reducing Emission from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) mechanism that creates private sinks out of Southern forests and links them to the market for carbon offsets, encouraging land-grabbing and the conversion of forests into monoculture plantations, and risking the displacement and loss of livelihood of forest-dependent communities.

While it downgrades rich countries' emissions obligations, the Accord raises those of poor countries, tasking them to register their mitigation actions and submit them to international monitoring. This lays the ground for greater emissions obligations from poor countries in the future.

The funding the Accord commits – \$30bn for mitigation and adaptation over 2010-12, and \$100bn per year by 2020 for mitigation – is only a tiny fraction of the amount developing countries need. Small as they are, these amounts will not come from mandatory payments, but will be raised through a hodgepodge of public and private sources, including carbon offsetting and voluntary aid from Northern development agencies.

This means that under the Accord, funding for poor countries will be left to the vagaries of carbon markets and Northern donors, that debt-creating loans will still be pushed on poor countries, and that developed countries will continue to raid their long-underfunded aid flows to fulfil their climate funding commitments.

Finally, the Accord sketches out a toothless and patchwork architecture for global climate action that would likely leave even its measly targets hanging unfulfilled.

The emissions reduction system it sets up relies entirely on voluntary and individual pledges by rich countries, doing away with targets and timetables that are multilaterally-negotiated, science-based, and internationally-binding.

Similarly, the North's financing pledges in the Accord do not have the force of legally-binding targets and can be ignored at will.

The Accord also preserves the existing system of climate change finance dominated by the market for carbon offsets, Northern aid agencies, and the World Bank through which most of the money flows. It means the UNFCCC will continue to have little control over climate funding, and that developing countries will have to keep begging for the funds they are entitled to get.

The responsibility for this unjust and disastrous outcome lies squarely on Northern governments.

Two years of negotiations passed with no developed country offering the numbers for emissions cuts and finance needed to seal an effective deal. They single-mindedly refused to honor their historical obligations and unjustly insisted on passing their responsibilities on to the South.

During the summit, the North used underhanded tactics to force developing country delegates into accepting their weak offers. As the conference faded with no deal in sight, the United States with the help of the Danish government went behind the back of the conference to stitch up the Copenhagen Accord with a handful of developing country governments committed to the status quo (Brazil, South Africa, India, and China). In the early morning of 19 December, the Danish prime minister dropped the Accord on the delegates who had been kept in the dark about this deal's existence.

We share developing countries' indignation over this blatant show of power and contempt for transparency, multilateralism, and the equality of nations, and laud them for fighting to block the Accord's adoption as the official outcome of the summit.

While we continue to fight alongside developing country governments for greater commitments from the North within the UN process, we believe that the UNFCCC is fatally flawed, and the 2009 climate summit has only exposed this more fully.

This is because it does not tackle the prevailing organization of ownership, production, and consumption at the root of man-made climate change – the highly unequal and unsustainable, growth-centered and profit-driven capitalist system.

The UN process has become a venue for competing elite interests to negotiate the terms on how to share among themselves future growth under a climate-constrained world. This finds expression in the struggle between states with the greatest stakes in the global growth economy – the G7 on one hand and emerging powers on the other – which has come to define global climate politics.

Corporations have hijacked official climate policy both at the international and national levels. Nearly all solutions on the table are about managing climate change through market and technology quick-fixes such as carbon trading and offsetting, agro-fuels, nuclear power, “clean coal”, and genetically modified organisms (GMOs), to name a few.

These false solutions further the unsustainable profit system by creating new profit opportunities, and expanding corporate and elite control over resources (privatizing the atmosphere, transforming forests and soils into private sinks or agro-fuel plantations, etc.)

Moreover, institutions more powerful than the UN such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB), and World Trade Organization (WTO) sponsor the free reign of corporations and the expansion of their ecologically damaging but also highly unequal practices such as industrial agriculture, fossil fuel extraction, mining, logging, and unfair trade.

The power of corporations and elites over the UN process shows that arresting climate change requires no less than fundamental social transformation. Our societies need to abandon the pursuit of limitless wealth and profit, and this requires putting people and communities back in control of our shared resources.

The UNFCCC's bankruptcy contrasts with the dynamism and vitality present in the movements who mobilized hundreds of thousands of people in Copenhagen and across the globe to demand a just deal, real solutions, and system change.

They prove that solutions lie in the peoples' hands – in the movements of workers, farmers, and communities to reclaim power over their livelihoods, resources, rights, and cultures that they have lost to the North, corporations, and elites both in the course of causing climate change and in the false solutions to it.

We call on peoples, communities, and social movements to take our struggles forward, in their local contexts and internationally, and mobilize along the following platform for action set out in the Peoples' Protocol:

- Deep, rapid, and sustained emissions reduction based on binding domestic cuts by the North (95%-100% by mid-century), and the end to fossil fuel use, carbon-intensive activities, (production, extraction, and wars) and all investments thereto;
- Full reparation of climate debt owed by the North and elites to the South and the poor through unconditional and mandatory transfer of technology and finance without the involvement of IFIs, aid agencies, carbon markets, and large private financial institutions;
- Rejection of false solutions that allow the North and corporations to continue inflicting social and ecological harm, provide new and greater opportunities for profit, and expand corporate control over natural resources and technologies;
- System change based on people-centered, democratic, cooperative, and community-based control of production, natural resources, and institutions; and
- Movement building across sectors (farmers, workers, women, fisher folk, youth, indigenous people, etc.) around the people's agenda for climate justice and social change.



Michael Klare's Rising Powers, Shrinking Planet: How Scarce Energy is Creating a New World Order

Anthony Giddens

The dust jacket of this book proclaims that “the price of oil has doubled in less than two years. And it is still rising”. Not now it isn't.

In early 2008, US investment bank Goldman Sachs, at that time seemingly lording it over the financial world, predicted that the price of oil could reach \$200 (£136) a barrel. But today, the firm has been humbled and the price per barrel tumbled below \$40 by the end of 2008.

All over the world, economic growth is slowing or shuddering to a halt. It has become apparent that the big developing countries can't hold

out against the economic downturn originating in the West.

Russia, which built its attempted return as a great power on high oil and gas prices, will have to rethink its ambitions. And China and India, which figure prominently in

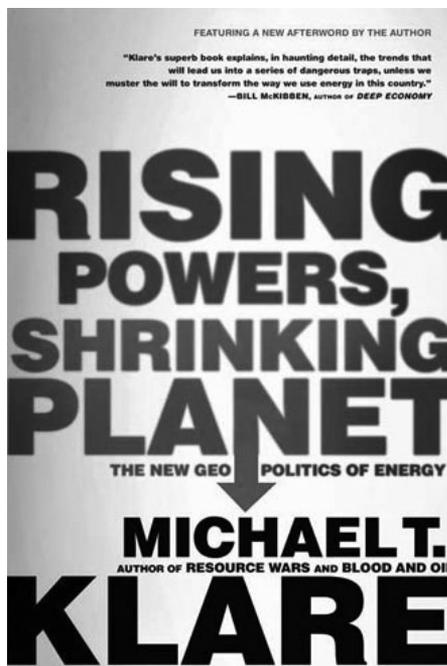
Michael Klare's book, could face a very difficult period, too.

Klare's work is based on the thesis that oil is becoming a scarce resource and that the nature of international relations in the future will change as a consequence.

The West, he says, will have to compete with a Sino-Indian juggernaut and with “a resurgent Russia (which) holds Europe to ransom”. But has his book already become obsolete?

Some reviewers will probably say yes, but not this one. In my view, his analysis is spot on and anyone who ignores what he has to say could be in for a shock. The price of oil may be relatively low now, but it will almost certainly climb steeply again as soon as there are signs of recovery from recession, whenever they might occur. At that point, the dynamics he discusses will come back into play and probably in an urgent and dramatic way.

George W. Bush got it right when he said that the US is “addicted to oil”. It may guzzle more of it per head of population than any other country, but in truth our industrial civilisation as a whole has an oil habit.



Well over 90 per cent of transport is oil-based. In one way or another, oil is involved in almost all the manufactured goods that figure so large in our lives today. And we are nowhere near replacing oil with more advanced energy resources. Renewable energy accounts for less than 1 per cent of global energy production.

As economic growth resumes, the struggle to control the world's oil resources is likely to become more and more acute. The requirement for primary energy is expected to rise by some 60 per cent over the next two decades or so.

Where is it all going to come from? Klare points out that almost half the world's oil production comes from just over 100 oil fields. Almost all were discovered years ago, and most are showing signs of depletion.

New reserves lie mostly in areas where they will be difficult to extract, such as in Central Asia, off the coast of Brazil or in the melting Arctic.

Moreover, much of the oil that is accessible comes from countries that are politically unstable. Natural gas may be able to step into the breach, but the discovery rate for new gas fields has been falling, too.

Natural gas is even more concentrated in terms of its distribution than oil is. Some 56 per cent of proven reserves are in three countries: Iran, Qatar and Russia.

A scramble for resources could serve to intensify world conflicts, a prospect that promises great dangers. The main protagonists, the US and China, could start building a military strategy around their competition for scarce energy resources.

Klare quotes official American documents in which just such a strategy is outlined. The

motives behind the US-led invasion of Iraq were mixed, but no one can doubt that the country's large oil reserves figured significantly in the equation.

Gunboat diplomacy has been deployed in recent years by America in a number of contexts. For instance, in the summer of 2007, it stationed two aircraft carriers, a large number of smaller warships and warplanes in the Gulf as a threat to Iran.

The demand for energy is driving not only a scramble for oil, it also bears directly on another major threat - climate change. If it is allowed to advance unchecked, it could intensify the battle lines that already exist.

The conflict in Darfur has been called "the first climate-change war" because the drying-up of Lake Chad helped produce the population migration that helped cause the bloodshed. Yet it is also an "energy war" because the Chinese have supported the Sudanese Government to gain access to the country's oil.

So how can we prevent a second Cold War? The US and China, Klare says, should get together. As the world's greatest consumers of energy and biggest greenhouse-gas polluters, they should recognise that what they have in common outweighs their differences.

They should work jointly on developing alternatives to fossil fuels and share technological knowledge. An improbable prospect? Klare says not: after all, the US and the Soviet Union co-operated fruitfully on arms reduction even at the height of their hostilities. Let's hope he is right.

Anthony Giddens is a Labour peer in the House of Lords.

Reprinted with permission from Times Higher Education www.timeshighereducation.co.uk

Avatar

(2009, 162 minutes, Rated PG-13)

Lilian Laurezo

Carrot and stick — but there’s no carrot actually!

Set more than a hundred and fifty years in the future, a human company called RDA is conducting an exploration in planet Pandora for a very high-valued substance, the Unobtonium that costs \$20M per kilo. The RDA has its own group of security headed by Colonel Quaritch, and a research team of scientists headed by Dr. Grace Augustine.

Pandora is inhabited by creatures called the Na’vi, blue-colored humanoids living in communities, which in many ways are similar to that of humans on Earth. But one very

significant difference is the Na’vi peoples’ high regard for nature, believing in a network of energy that flows between all living things.

Eywa, the great deity of the Na’vi people, is well revered as exhibited in their respect for every creature of the forest. Thanks to science, Dr. Grace was able to fuse human DNA with that of the Na’vi in the bodies of avatars. Her team, including herself, drives the bodies of these avatars to explore Pandora as native inhabitants do.

Jake Sully, a former US Marine disabled from a battle in Venezuela, took over his identical twin’s job when he was killed before his flight

to Pandora to join Dr. Grace’s team. Jake took the job with the promise of good pay and his real legs back in good shape.

With no training, Jake was deployed to work using his avatar to explore the forest. Jake’s curiosity and ignorance almost cost him his life after a chase with very aggressive creatures. That’s when he met Neytiri, an heiress of the Omaticaya clan of Na’vi. Neytiri was about to exterminate the alien



Photo: www.prlog.org

when the Seed of the Sacred Tree landed on her arrow, a sign that made her opt to spare Jake's life. The "sign" became Jake's ticket for entry into the community of the natives to learn their ways.

This golden ticket served its purpose both for Col. Quaritch and Dr. Grace, and ultimately to the company. The paramilitary needs on-the-ground intelligence work, while science needs samples from organisms out of reach for outsiders. Just the same, they're all under the same mission: finding a "diplomatic" way to drive the Omatcayas out of their Home Tree and get them to evacuate, as emphasized by Parker Selfridge, the overall boss on-site. Underneath the Home Tree lays a very rich unobtonium deposit.

Jake learned well, providing information to the Colonel while enabling Dr. Grace to once again enter the community. The more Jake immerses himself into the life of the natives, the clearer the revelation is: "There's nothing we have that they'd want." In their scheme of carrot and stick, there's no carrot actually.

What you feed the mind drives the heart [and the body follows]

We have a common notion that all actions are motive-driven. Some people may have skills to hide ulterior motives while others act innocently or in good faith, but are nevertheless influenced by either culture or some set of norms, standards or rules. To start off, Dr. Grace is engrossed in discovering from her science anything that they can offer the Na'vi and bring them to the negotiating table.

Parker Selfridge, the corporate boss, is highly focused on the interest of the company. That is profit. His depiction of the natives is the typical psyche of the ontological other. He sees the Na'vi as blue monkeys, savages whose

lives are nasty, brutish and short. For him, the Omitcayas living in the Home Tree are rubbishes that should be swept away so he can get into the gold mine beneath. Showing no value for life, Parker is willing to use all sticks if diplomacy is not possible.

One would wonder for a while why Col. Quaritch was so fired up, very anxious to pull the trigger and roll the bombs. When he was talking to Jake about his task, the Colonel mentioned that he's been to Nigeria thrice without a scratch. On his first day in Pandora, he got three great cuts on his head; he could have turned home but opted to stay. And those stitches remind him every day of what's out there. [But was that enough to pump the adrenalin and annihilate an entire race?!] The powerful [and familiar] lines delivered by the Colonel to his death squad bring to mind the widely and wildly proclaimed war on terror:

"Everyone on this base is fighting for survival, and that's a fact. There's an aboriginal horde out there, massing for an attack. These hostiles grow in numbers... Our only security lies in pre-emptive attack. We will fight terror with terror.

... and when we destroy [the Tree of Souls], we will blast craters in their racial memory so deep that they won't come within a thousand clicks of this place ever again."

Most of the security group are former members of the state army, just as the protagonist Jake Sully. They have become mercenaries for the Company. But not all of them are ruthless, stone-hearted killers or mere blind followers. Many played as obedient employees given the [mis]education and followed the command as they ought to. This reminds us that "the chain is only as good as its weakest link." Trudy Chacon proved to be a pivotal weak link and played an

important role in breaking the chain of worthless violence. The turn of heart is an affirmation that her loyalty to the chain of command ends when her respect for life prevails.

Faced with the ultimate dilemma, Jake Sully embodied the many conflicts of class struggle, self interest, and finding liberty. For a while, who has the gold ruled over Jake, following every order of Selfridge and Quaritch. But after a long time of being impaired, he was once again able to walk through his avatar. A certain sense of completeness made him see in a different light, feel his surroundings with more energy and vigor. The ways of the Na'vi revealed to him a new appreciation for life, and made him see the evils caused by human greed.

Greed and arrogance gave humans a false sense of control over life and the resources to sustain it.

Profit-driven invaders of Pandora thought that the superiority of their machines could not be matched. That it would be impossible for the Na'vi people to prevent them from getting what they want. Jake said, "When people sit on the shit that you want, they're your enemy," when he was dismissed from the mission by the Colonel. Parker Selfridge even said that there are other trees wherein the tribe can move, without understanding that all organisms are connected with each other – a network of life like the synapses to the neurons but with more connections than the human brain.

This kind of plunder to nature and mankind is happening at a rate much faster than we can restore our depleted resources, and at a vast global expanse. We're now living on a planet threatened by environmental and climate crisis. Jake lamented to Neytiri, "They have killed their mother and they're going to do the same here." Neytiri told Jake that "Our great mother [Eywa] does not take sides... she protects only the balance of life." This may be a reminder to us that man is just one part of nature, not detached from it and not the ruler of it.

The Na'vi peoples' victory was won at a high cost. Many lives were lost, just as all the wars we've seen in the

history of man. It is said that history is written by the victors, and this is the undertone of many critiques. Jake is the white man, renegade agent of the devil turned super-Na'vi that lead the battle to victory. This is among the reason why the story of Avatar is said to be a remake of Kevin Costner's *Dances with Wolves* and Tom Cruise's *Last Samurai*, and that the battle scenes remind us of Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan. But let us just collectively remember and pay respect to all brave men and women, regardless of race and origin, who lost their life in battles against their colonizers and the neo-colonial plunderers of present day.

James Sully is an agent sent to Pandora to do intelligence work, learn from the natives and later dominate them, conflicted by his commitment to deliver the mission and his sense of oneness with the people of Na'vi. In the end, he chose to defend the people's right to life. But amidst the characters, the flow of the story, not to mention the superb technology of visual effects, the critical eye should see beyond and realize that this movie should not feed a fantasy of an enlightened-oppressor-turned-savior to come and release people from their bonds.

Earth is now turning its wrath on its inhabitants, and its impacts are worse among the marginalized than those among who have exploited. Yet, the imperialist plunderers are still not satisfied; wars have been launched in the guise of anti-terrorism. But the smoke has cleared and the intent is already revealed. Greed for profit massacred millions of lives. We must realize that it is from the oppressed that true leaders would rise. And victory will be won, not by a single man, but through collective struggle to end oppression to its last shadow.

Lilian Laurezo is a Program Assistant with IBON International.

Dear EDM Reader,

We'd like to know your thoughts on this publication to improve it as an information source and capacity-building tool. Kindly give a few minutes to answer the questions below and send this feedback form to us at:

IBON Education for Development Magazine
 3/F IBON Center, 114 Timog Avenue
 Quezon City, 1103 Philippines

Thank you for helping us make EDM better for valued partners in development like you.

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Country: _____

Email address: _____

Frequency and access

1. Aside from the current issue, have you read previous issues of EDM?

- Yes No

2. How do you receive EDM?

- Mailed subscription Distribution in meetings/conferences Passed on from colleagues

Relevance

3. How relevant is the information in EDM for you? Please check the activity/ies that the publication was of use to you.

- Knowledge building Research
 Writing Training/Education
 Other/s (please specify) _____

4. What topics or issues in the publication interested you most?

- Agriculture/rural development/food sovereignty Debt/ODA/Aid
 Migration/employment Human rights and peace
 Climate change/natural resources/environment Trade and finance
 Globalization and development Consumer/human interest
 Other/s (pls. specify) _____

5. Has reading EDM prompted you to:

- Share EDM with others Read more on issues
 Join organizations Engage in advocacy
 Other/s (pls. specify) _____

6. How will you assess the design and layout of EDM?

- Excellent Very good Satisfactory Poor

Future preferences

7. What topics or issues would you like to read in EDM in the future?

8. Any other comments or suggestions?

