

Elephant(s) in the Room, Militarism, Finance and Civil Society Access

Note: Maggie Zhou of Climate SOS was to deliver a press conference today on the topic below, however she along with many other civil society members has had her badge revoked for participating in non-disruptive, yet “unsanctioned”, civil action inside the Moon Palace.

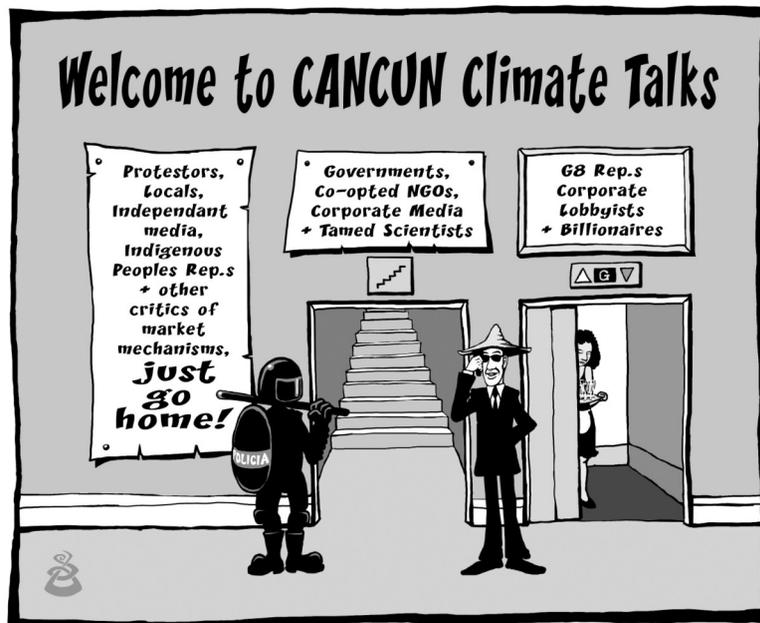
On this 62nd International Human Rights Day, the deafening silence on militarism in all the wrangling over climate finance is quite astounding.

While the Copenhagen Accord pledged \$10 billion annually from 2010-2012 in fast start finance and up to \$100 billion by 2020, the majority of these funds will come not as reparations and grants, but rather as loans, private investments and even recycled overseas development aid. Given that the developed countries of the world were able to mobilize trillions in 2008 to bail out global banks, it is shocking that the same effort cannot be made with regard to climate finance.

Of course the elephant in the room in all this is that the world’s military budget is at least \$1.5 trillion annually and by some accounts far higher. The USA alone

at the expense of millions of lives and countless misery, is a clear violation of human rights. Further, refusing to take strong action on climate change and repay climate debt directly threatens, with extinction-scale, global human rights violation (the UN high commission has recognized climate change as a direct human rights threat).

The US military is also the world’s largest institutional source of greenhouse gases, while causing massive ecosystem destruction worldwide. Meanwhile, climate change is predicted to be a “threat multiplier”, resulting



Source: shtig(.net)

spends well over \$1 trillion annually on military related expenses, magnitudes higher than the climate ‘assistance’ chicken feed. Even more appalling, President Barack Obama received the Nobel Peace prize exactly one year ago, although it has done nothing to stop him from increasing the U.S.’s military budget.

Using military force to control access to oil and other resources,

in *more* wars and conflicts.

A statement signed by over 70 organizations (see climatesos.org) will be sent to COP 16 delegates today demanding a break in the war-warming cycle. It is time to demand a shift from oppression to cooperation for planetary survival.

Maggie Zhou, Ph.D.
Climate SOS

LULUCF loopholes critical to “balanced package”

Concerns over broad definitions of “forests”, finance mechanisms, unproven modalities for garnering carbon credits, and the prospect of “land grabbing” has many developing countries balking at current LULUCF texts...and rightfully so.

For example, ‘no-till’ GM crops are seen as a serious threat to sustainable agro-ecological farming practices. Also, so-called ‘carbon neutral’ bioenergy could result in high-carbon habitats such as for-

ests, grasslands and wetlands being destroyed and converted to bioenergy crops with no account made for biodiversity losses. Further, soil carbon management opens the door for unproven industrial biochar with yet further demand for damaging tree plantations.

Countries such as Tuvalu and Bolivia have submitted text proposals that remove ‘no till’ GM crops and soil carbon sequestration as credit-generating projects.

Calls were also made for a revision to the definition of forests. Unfortunately their proposals have been ignored.

On Saturday the Chair proposed a non-paper in which the original contentious text was reinserted and then publicly commented that a deal was very likely. Despite Bolivia’s continued dissent, the session closed on Wednesday with general consensus to move forward on the basis of the Chair’s

(LULUCF, Continued on page 2)

(LULUCF, Continued from front)

draft.

LULUCF, by offering potentially unlimited and highly profitable carbon credit, is definitely high on developed countries priority list. Canada, Australia, the U.S. and even Europe are suggesting that there can be no agreement on future mitigation efforts without LULUCF.

This has put objectors in a tricky position. If they consent, they accept large-scale land grabs and corporatisation of their environmental resources and agricultural systems. If they block, they risk being enemy #1 in the post-COP16 blame game for the breakdown of the climate negotiations.

Deepak Rughani
Biofuelwatch

Who We Are

Alter-ECO is published by a group of social movements and impacted communities organizations at the UNFCCC COP-16, who call for climate change solutions based on social and ecological justice.

Alter-ECO does not necessarily reflect the views of the participating organizations, networks or contributors to Alter-ECO.

To submit articles, cartoons, etc., please email smg.justice@gmail.com.

Selling Nature, Shutting People off in Cancun

Cancun is generously endowed with nature's gifts. Stark blue seas, lush flora and fauna, tropical weather, but anytime you try to get to these spots of 'natural beauty' – you find walls, you find 'security guards'!

Almost every place of natural wealth is privatized, parceled and sold to the wealthy, shunting out those who cannot pay the 'price'. In a way, it's appropriate that COP16 is being held in Cancun, as government delegations are

busy planning to compartmentalize, buy and sell every conceivable form of nature – its forests by REDD, its air by offsets, its water by green-washed big-hydro, and even its people at the altar of big-green-technologies.

The Yucatan peninsula has such natural richness. It was here 65 million years ago that an asteroid struck, leading to the extinction of dinosaurs and creating a niche of opportunity for the rise of *Homo Sapiens*. This was Nature at

work, divining our path. Nature creating society so the two could exist as one. But over the last two centuries we have divided Nature and society. Now Nature is something to be bought, sold and owned by the few powerful and rich. Science says technology is not enough, and we need major systemic changes, but as long as business is good – why should 'they' listen?

Till the day

Soumya Dutta
India Climate Justice

Carbon Markets, Measurement, and Sovereignty

At least some middle income developing countries are cautiously voicing support for 'Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions' as an alternative to the CDM carbon market.

The issue is that developing country governments have very little control over ad hoc CDM investment within their borders; they view NAMAs as a way to direct mitigation activities at the level of national economic planning and to seek out more systematic forms of finance. Indeed carbon offset developers tend to view NAMAs as a direct threat to their business strategy because it opens their projects up to alternative forms of finance and because NAMAs are meant to anticipate re-

ductions commitments within a global regime.

What CDM developers really dislike is the idea of having to work closely with national planning agencies: they want the least-effort means to get in, earn their money, and leave. But the other side of this is that NAMA projects would be organized most likely through the very planning bodies that put together national development plans including the World Bank's Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs).

It is a choice between fast capital globalization-style investment and the sort of 'soft' neoliberalism the World Bank has increasingly defined over the past 20 years.

A Malaysian delegate expressed

to me the crux of this frustration. When donor countries start to insist on precise accounting of quantified reductions as a quid pro quo for mitigation finance, it turns NAMAs once again into stark payments for carbon reduction services: you consume, we reduce. That, for him, is where sovereignty is challenged. It is not a matter of infringement on sovereignty as when a foreign body takes on some of the role of the national government, but the subordination of one sovereign government to the prerogatives of another.

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