

Activists vs Resource Companies as Threats to “National Security” in Canada

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Firstly even though we have heard the word bandied about for 60 years what does National Security substantively mean and what would actually be a threat to it? The accepted definitions of National Security all encompass three main points. The protection of a nation’s basic Sovereignty, very simply to ensure that the recognized government of the country retains full authority throughout their territory. The defense of a nation’s territory, international trade and foreign policy, ensuring it can maintain open trade while defending itself from espionage or undue influence of foreign entities or governments. Keeping its People and the infrastructure that sustains them and serves their interests safe and secure.

So if the RCMP is looking diligently for threats to national security then it should be looking in foreign boardrooms not Canadian coffee houses. Because even surface analysis by any reasonable professional shows that the real threat to our sovereignty, our defense and most importantly our people emanate from the boardrooms of the multinational resource companies that do business here. Let’s do the comparative threat assessment point by point.

[Sovereignty](#), in the sense of democracy, is the ability of a people through their government to conduct their own affairs within their defined geographical territory.



An obviously violent 84 year old B. Grant arrested by our vigilant security forces Burnaby Mountain 2014

Activists have certainly broken civil and sometimes minor criminal law and will likely continue to do so. The nature of these offenses from all the available data are property crimes, contempt of civil legal injunctions, and failing to follow the orders of police. The vast majority of the offenses are against private companies that are almost always multinational. This would meet some of the conditions for interfering with a government’s sovereign power within its territory. It is not however the goal of activists to fundamentally wrest power from the government control of its resources. As a point of fact all of the major organizations call for the government to take *more power* over its resources in the form of legislation and, in the case of some smaller groups, *nationalization* of resource extraction. While some case could be made that they temporarily interfere with the sovereign right of the people through their government to benefit from the extraction of its resources, two factors would mitigate this. Firstly the interruptions, when they do occur, are of very short duration and, when compared to the resource industry in Canada’s daily operations, meaningless in size. In

99% of cases they are non destructive to infrastructure. Secondly the amount of economic loss to the state is lessened by the fact that these companies pay very little in taxes or extraction fees so the amount of economic disruption to the population is minimal.

Resource companies tend not to openly defy government power but rather through influence simply gut it. They do this using the vast sums of capital at their disposal. Resource companies occupy most of the top positions in size and economic clout, some of them having bottom line far larger than 3/4 of the nation states in the world. This is not an internet conspiracy theory. It has been noted by enough academics in the last 40 years to fill a library. The RCMP routinely investigates corruption on a personal level but not on a national one in terms of resource companies. In other countries there are documented examples of resource companies literally overthrowing sovereign governments quite openly. Resource companies also regularly deny the use of Canada's sovereign territory when they leave it in a condition unusable for anything else. Perhaps no better example of the influence Resource companies have on the sovereignty is the fact that due to the influence they now have in our economy the Minister of Finance of the government of Canada is unwilling to drop his budget due to fluctuations in the price of one resource. Viewing this in any other sense than a fundamental attack on sovereignty would be ludicrous.

Defense of the nation's territory, trade and foreign policy

Activists in this area are mainly attacking on the fronts of foreign policy and trade. They want generally to decrease the trade in resources across borders and to insure that foreign policy does not give undue attention to control and trade in resources. Exclusively the tactics employed are large demonstrations against government policy in this area and legal action brought by groups to try and limit or change government activity. We will not assess the tactics of legal action for what one hopes are obvious reasons. In the area of protest there have been few examples of violent anti-resource protests in Canada and when this was not the case property damage was minor and far less serious than damage usually caused by Vancouver losing a hockey game. There has to this point been no documented espionage, actual acts of sabotage and at this time the possibilities of a ground invasion by Greenpeace or the Sierra club seem minimal.

Resource companies by their very nature are indeed looking to take physical control of a nation's territory and resources for their own use. They do this by literally staking claim to huge swaths of territory and in the case of Alberta 70% of the water rights.



Denial of Territory, the oil sands

In the area of foreign policy and trade these companies are legally mandated to do everything in their power to maximize profits. Restrictions on trade and tariffs are interference and are actively removed leaving the nation in a position where it no longer controls the resources that would be needed in the event of conflict with another state. Their influence on our foreign policy are almost always to the detriment of Canada's traditional foreign policy. Where once we led on trying to implement global policies to deal with pollution and climate change under their direct influence we have abandoned these

positions and now indeed actively fight any international efforts in this area. Where once we had trade policies designed to protect Canadian companies and workers the resource companies have led the charge in gutting these legislation. One only need look to the decimated remnants of manufacturing in Canada to see the results on our security.



Activists in Canada have no history of threatening human life in an organized way. There is no record of them committing actions like bombings of natural gas pipelines. There have been clashes between demonstrators and police over anti-resource extraction actions but I can find no credible reports of police or extraction workers being injured. Activists actions are generally designed to deny the use of equipment or territory. I will use the example of the Mk'mac residents of [Elsipogtog](#) near Rexton, New Brunswick. They successfully disrupted the activities of SouthWest Energy, an American company conducting fracking activities on their territory. They did this by blocking the workers from moving their heavy equipment out of a yard. They at all times allowed the workers to go freely and even shared food with them. Despite this the RCMP evicted them in a ridiculously dangerous paramilitary operation. (The new face of the RCMP, image right)

Resource companies pose multiple and widely demonstrated threats to Canadian citizens. The health risks posed to the Canadian population by resource extraction are too numerous to mention but very well documented. If the life expectancy and health of huge segments of your population don't qualify as a threat to 'National Security' then the term is meaningless. A recent glaring example is the fate of Lac Magantic in Quebec. Virtually the entire center of the town and 47 Canadian citizens were wiped off the map . There was another "oil train" derailment on Friday near Timmins that is still burning as I write this. The pipelines resource companies are pushing across the country will endanger huge segments of the population. Witness the suburbs full of crude oil in the U.S. Even more alarmingly they have, in collusion with the RCMP, committed the very acts they say they need to defend against. The *RCMP has admitted carrying out bombings in Alberta B.C. under the influence of resource company [Encana.](#)*

So by all rubrics for defending Canada's National Security the RCMP needs, one supposes, first to stop committing terrorist acts themselves, then stop their tradition of putting Big Business in front of their lovely sounding Moto and "Uphold the Right" for the Canadian population. Instead they have been working for years to change terminology and definitions to laughingly try to present activists that chain themselves to equipment as a fundamental threat to the Canadian state. They have been meeting openly and often in recent years directly with resource company security executives to plan strategies to wipe out a movement of peaceful Canadian citizens. Perhaps like in many industrialized western nations we the people should be regarding the security services like the RCMP as the real threat to *our* National Security.

Gill McGowan head of the Alberta Federation of Labor speaks frankly about the real politics of resource extraction in Canada

A film By [Clifton Nicholas](#) on the brutal end to a peaceful occupation by MK'Mac in New Brunswick

Article Cover image ; [Warrior Publications](#). much thx

About William Ray: *I am a ten year veteran of the Canadian Forces. I was with the 2nd Battalion PPCLI in Croatia in 1993 when they were awarded the Governor General's commendation for bravery. I started with community radio and writing articles. In 2009 I began working with CUTV Montreal. During the student strikes and subsequent social unrest I helped manage the Livestream ground teams. I am also a co-founder of 99media.org and The founder of 3RTV, both citizen media groups. I also collaborated with Michelle Moore on the documentary film Déception Durable which was selected for the 2014 Montréal International Film Festival, and Films That Matter in Calgary on resource extraction in Quebec. I am a member of the Canadian Journalists Association.*

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