

Nuclear Alternatives and ‘North American Security’ - False Canadian Solutions to the Climate Crisis

Global Research News Hour Episode 133

By [Michael Welch](#)

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Region: [Canada](#), [USA](#)

Theme: [Environment](#), [GLOBAL RESEARCH NEWS HOUR](#), [Oil and Energy](#)

In-depth Report: [Climate Change](#)

“Canada’s nuclear industry is a strategic asset for the country. It is a key driver of innovation; a leader in international collaboration; an enabler of Canada’s contributions to global safety, security, and non-proliferation objectives; and one of Canada’s largest contributors to its decarbonized grid and clean energy goals.” -Canadian Parliamentary Secretary Kim Rudd, February 25, 2016 (emphasis added) [1]

“Our (Canada’s) problem is the production for export to the United States of oil and natural gas. And that is the biggest source of our emissions. What I’m concerned about is this continental deal is going to lock Canada into being diggers of carbon fuels forever and that we can’t get a handle on our own emissions.” -Gordon Laxer (from this week’s program)

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Canada’s former Conservative Government had been quite blunt about its determination to secure economic prosperity for the country through a ravenous exploitation of its natural resources, particularly the Alberta oil sands. Prime Minister Stephen Harper notably ran afoul of Indigenous and environmental leaders in his pursuit of that resource wealth.[2] [3]

Enter the Trudeau Liberals. Since rising to power in last October’s general election they have been extremely vocal in their determination to distinguish their approach to governance from that of their predecessors, particularly when it comes to the establishment of pipelines to bring the bounty of Alberta’s resource wealth to market abroad. [4][5]

The Trudeau government was fully engaged in the recent Climate talks in Paris. Trudeau resists speaking in disparaging terms about critics of carbon-intensive industries, like oil sands projects and pipelines. Trudeau advances a determination to fully consult with First Nations, scientists and the broader public to ensure such endeavours have “social license.” [6]

Some might argue however that while the tone of the new government may be friendlier and less harsh, the overall objectives have remained virtually identical. For example, Trudeau did not criticize the Harper for pushing hard on the Keystone XL oil sands pipeline. He criticized the former Prime Minister, essentially, for not doing a better sales job! [7]

On February 12, Trudeau's Natural Resources Minister Jim Carr met with his counterparts in the United States and Mexico to forge a memorandum of understanding on a collaboration agreement on climate change and energy. [8]

And recently, on March 3, Trudeau met with Canada's Premiers and Territorial leaders to hammer out a new framework for meeting Canada's commitments on Climate Change, agreed to at the last UN Climate summit in Paris. [9]

Do these and other meetings signal a profound change of direction for the government's stewardship of the country's economy and environment? Or is the generational language a smoke-screen for a return to more plunder in service of corporate elites at home and abroad?

This week's Global Research News Hour explores these questions with two guests.

Candyce Paul is a previous guest. She has been a member of English River First Nation for about thirty years and is active with the [Committee for Future Generations](#), a Saskatchewan-based anti-nuclear group. In the first half hour of the show she outlines the incredible clout of the nuclear industry in Canada and especially in her province, as well as the environmental racism it seems to foster. She also addresses the question of whether nuclear energy is being embraced as a strategy for climate action.

Gordon Laxer is a political economist and the former head and founding director of the Parkland Institute based at the University of Alberta where he is Professor Emeritus. He is widely published in newspapers and magazines and the author of several books including [Open for Business: The Roots of Foreign Ownership in Canada](#) (Oxford University Press), and his most recent [After the Sands: Energy and Ecological Security for Canadians](#) (Douglas & McIntyre.) Professor Laxer joins us in the second half hour to examine the myths surrounding Canada's energy and economic dependence on fossil fuels, and how 'continental security pacts' may actually threaten the national interest.

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Notes:

1. <http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=1037129&tp=970>
2. Jeff Rubin (2015); “The Carbon Bubble:What Happens When It Bursts” pg 45-48, Random House of Canada, Ltd
3. http://www.cbj.ca/open_forum_with_prime_minister_stephen_harper_building_upon_our_vast_untapped_natural_resources/
4. <http://www.nationalobserver.com/2015/10/24/news/trudeau-takes-more-inclusive-approach-harper-climate-change-summit>
5. <http://globalnews.ca/video/2498677/trudeau-on-pipelines-that-approach-for-ten-years-failed-alberta>
6. <http://globalnews.ca/news/2121279/trudeau-wants-more-public-support-before-backing-energy-east-pipeline/>
7. Steven Chase and Paul Koring (Nov. 7, 2015), “Liberals plan ‘fresh start’ on energy after rejection of Keystone pipeline”, Globe and Mail; <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/trudeau-disappointed-by-keystone-rejection-but-points-to-fresh-start/article27149544/>
8. <https://www.nrcan.gc.ca/energy/international/nacei/18102>
9. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/first-ministers-premiers-trudeau-1.3474380>

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