The Brief

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Energy East is dead – here's the real reason why

BY ANDREA HARDEN-DONAHUE & MAUDE BARLOW

Hundreds marched against the proposed Energy East bitumen pipeline in Red Head, shown here, in May 2015. The proposed pipeline would have ended at an oil tank farm in the small community near Saint John's other industrial plants. Photo by Tracy Glynn.

Were it not the failings of the National Energy Board and the newly proposed climate test, it would have been the protection of drinking water, Indigenous rights and community opposition that killed Energy East. But you'd never know this from the coverage of TransCanada's cancellation of the largest oilsands pipeline proposed to date.

As the tsunami of responses begins to recede, it's time to tell the truth about the nation-building, Quebec-blaming myths Energy East's death is perpetuating.

Energy East was never about getting Canadian oil to Canadians, nor was it about reducing imports of so-called foreign oil. Even if the three refineries along the pipeline route had used only crude from Energy East, a whopping 428,000 barrels per day was still for export. But this wouldn't have happened. Quebec refineries have access to cheaper Canadian and U.S. oil sources, meaning more like 90 per cent of Energy East's 1.1 million barrel per day pipeline was for export.

Meanwhile, Ian Whitcomb, president of Irving Oil, admitted to the *Financial Post*'s editorial board that Energy East would not stop the company from importing oil from Saudi Arabia.

A real conversation about energy security would mean talking about redirecting Newfoundland oil exports to Atlantic Canada. It would mean Prime Minister Justin Trudeau renegotiating the restrictive energy provisions of NAFTA that lock Canada into energy exports to the U.S.

Instead of discussing the very real risks identified in Energy East for Quebec, pundits rehashed tired old clichés bashing Quebec. Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall went so far as to question Saskatchewan's role in the federal system because of equalization payments.

Transfer payments were put in place to help assure comparable levels of education, health care and welfare in all provinces. It is absurd to think that those who contribute more get to buy political influence (particularly coming from a recently have-not province). This also overlooks the very real impacts the rising Canadian dollar, driven in part by the Western Canadian energy sector, had on manufacturing jobs in Quebec and Ontario.

TransCanada dug its own grave in Quebec.

It proposed an export port in protected beluga-inhabited waters. The pipeline crossed key water sources supplying more than three million residents' drinking water. A spill of diluted bitumen, known to sink in water, would have had devastating consequences, a point consistently raised in public hearings held in Montreal that TransCanada refused to join. The corporation offered very few temporary jobs while threatening to undermine provincial climate action.

In a pivotal misstep, TransCanada hired Jean Charest, a former Quebec premier, as a project lobbyist. *The National Observer* exposed a private meeting between the NEB and TransCanada, which was later found to be a conflict of interest, effectively grinding the pipeline's review to a halt.

The partisan fireworks witnessed last week also tried to pin Energy East's death on the federal Liberals. But let's remember this is a government that continues to insist new oilsands pipelines such as Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain expansion and TransCanada's Keystone XL are compatible with doing our fair share to address climate change.

It also shouldn't be assumed these two controversial projects will proceed. They faced opposition as strong as the resistance to Energy East, based on the assertion of Indigenous rights, community resistance, and the protection of our water and climate.

We should be talking about the more than 100,000 messages the NEB received in support of a pipeline climate test, more than 2,000 applications to intervene citing a climate test and pressure from countless actions exposing the 1.1 million barrel-per-day pipeline's climate impact. TransCanada first suggested it would drop Energy East the day after the NEB announced it would include a climate test in the review of Energy East.

While we can't overlook the impact of volatile oil prices on undermining the economic case for Energy East, the backdrop of all of this is a much larger shift ending the era of fossil-fuel dominance.

While climate chaos unfolds daily, the global movement to stop fossil fuels is blocking new coal mines, banning fracking and Arctic offshore drilling and, yes, stopping pipelines. It's high time we stop fighting over fossilized energy projects and start the hard work of realizing a sustainable economy that works for people and the planet.

Andrea Harden-Donahue is a climate justice campaigner for the Council of Canadians. Maude Barlow is the honorary chairperson of the Council of Canadians.

Community Calendar

To list your community event, email **info@nbmediacoop.org**. For an updated listing of events, check **nbmediacoop.org**.

Cinema Politica believes in the power of art not only to entertain but to engage, inform, inspire, and provoke social change. Cinema Politica is the largest volunteer-run, community and campus-based documentary-screening network in the world. In Fredericton, films are screened on Fridays during the fall and winter at 7:00 pm at Conserver House, 180 St. John St. Check out film schedules and venues, or start your own chapter at: cinemapolitica.org.

"Taken" tells the story of Gladys Simon from Elsipogtog

By SOPHIE M. LAVOIE

The unsolved mysterious death of Gladys Simon, a New Brunswick Indigenous woman, was the focus of a film screened recently in Fredericton to raise awareness about missing and murdered indigenous women. Andrea Colfer, sister of Gladys Simon and an indigenous educator, participated in a panel discussion after the screening with Imelda Perley, University of New Brunswick's Elder-in-Residence, and Lisa Meeches, the creator of the episode from the acclaimed series "Taken."

UNB Fredericton's Mi'kmaq-Wolastoqey Centre hosted the film screening on Oct. 11 as one of the events in the third annual Red Shawl Campaign which strives to raise awareness about missing and murdered indigenous women in Canada.

Professors Evie Plaice and Margaret Kress, both from UNB's Faculty of Education, hosted the event. Kress also organizes the Faculty's Critical Film Series which addresses "issues of colonization, globalization, revolution, gender, class, ability, sexuality, and life."

New Brunswick connection

On Sept. 10, 2012, human remains were found by chance on difficult terrain at New Dam Lake, a very isolated location in Sugarloaf Park, south of Campbelltown. Ultimately, the coroner's report identified the remains as those of Gladys Simon, and found no sign of foul play.

Originally from Elsipogtog, Simon was 41 years old when she disappeared in 2004 from the Restigouche Hospital, a psychiatric institution. Her sister Andrea Colfer was not made aware of her disappearance until two weeks had passed, at which point Colfer mobilized the community to find Simon. Community leaders, family and friends like Robert Levy (featured in the film) did as much as they could to find Simon but were not successful.

Simon's family believed there was little chance she could have made it out to New Dam Lake alone. As an adult, Simon had "made poor decisions" following the death of her mother and a number of years in foster care. Patty Musgrave, Aboriginal student advisor for the New Brunswick Community College, was interviewed in the episode. She mentioned that Simon was a victim of the Sixties Scoop as she was taken to foster care in Moncton from her home community after her mother's death.

Simon eventually ended up in Restigouche Hospital where her niece and friends remember her as being happy all the time. Earlier in her life, Simon had violent behaviours and on the day she disappeared, Simon had not been allowed a hospital activity. Authorities assumed that Simon had wandered away during her daily walk and become disoriented.

The episode on Simon featured a dramatization of the memories reported by family members and friends, as well as photos and historical documents such as police reports and letters. The episode also contained beautiful shots of New Brunswick. According to Meeches, the series seeks to show "how much Gladys [Simon] was loved, will always be

Gathered at the screening of "Taken" in Fredericton on Oct. 17 were Imelda Perley, Leona Colfer, Evie Plaice, Margaret Kress, Andrea Colfer and Natasha Martin Mitchell (left to right). Photo by Sophie M. Lavoie.

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Diplomacy the only rational solution with North Korea: St. Thomas historian Luc Walhain

By CHRIS WALKER

The escalating war of words between Donald Trump and Kim Jong Un has received mainstream news attention in the last few months, but much of it eludes the historical complexities of the North Korean regime, and its relations with its neighbors, according to Luc Walhain, Associate Professor of History at St. Thomas University and an expert on modern Korean history. The NB Media Co-op's Chris Walker caught up with him to provide greater context.

CW: North Korea recently referred to the U.S, as engaging in "reckless provocations." One can easily think of Donald's Trump's rhetoric, his "fire and fury like the world has never seen" comment made in August. Is North Korea simply reacting to rhetorical flourish or are there more substantial concerns that justify the term "provocations?"

LW: North Korea's communiqués have consistently been inflammatory and colourful, but the North's regime has said so many times that it would turn Seoul into a sea of fire – or something along those lines – that it's hard to imagine that there is more than one volume setting on its disagreement lexicon: high. This being said, the North Koreans would be right to describe Donald Trump's off-the-cuff statements as reckless provocation. Indeed, Pyongyang may find what comes out of Trump's mouth irritating, but was more alarmed by the military exercises that took place south of the 38th parallel this past August.

As in the past, the Ulchi-Freedom Guardian joint exercises involved tens of thousands of U.S. and South Korean troops in land, sea and air drills. While the U.S. characterized those exercises as a deterrent against North Korean aggression, it's worth appreciating that North Koreans may actually see them as a dry run for an invasion. They have some ground to be suspicious: besides U.S. threats, such as "to totally destroy North Korea," the South Korean government just announced a plan to create a special "decapitation unit." Even though this concept has been mostly talk until now, we have learned that it will be established by the end of the year.

CW: Doug Bandow of the American libertarian Cato Institute, in an interview with the CBC on Sept. 6, 2017, made several disconcerting comments. He suggested that if one wants to "bring North Korea to its knees," tougher sanctions, such as "cutting off energy and cutting off food," might not work because the North Korean regime is quite willing to "sacrifice its own population" in order to survive. He then adds that if these sanctions are not imposed, however, North Korea will most certainly continue to pursue nuclear weapons. Can you respond?

LW: We have here a Senior Fellow at the Cato Institute suggesting that a genocide is acceptable "for the greater good," even though he has serious doubts that it will accomplish that purpose. I hope he doesn't have the ear of the U.S. government.

CW: Michael Auslin, from the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, in the same interview, comments that nothing short of "force" will compel North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons. He goes on to say that "we've tried coercion that doesn't work. We've tried bribery that doesn't work, and we've certainly tried engagement, and that doesn't work." In Auslin's view, "we've" tried everything in good faith and failed because of "them." Is that true? Does the historical record support these claims?

LW: Michael Auslin is probably correct to say that North Korea will only give up its nuclear weapons if it's "forced" to do so. At this point, I don't see how one could denuclearize North Korea without overthrowing its current regime. And, this would likely lead to war, a colossal death toll, massive destruction, and a long-lasting uncertainty in that region of the world. But why does Auslin conclude this is the only option left? Suggesting that "we've tried everything in good faith, and it hasn't worked" is either disingenuous or misinformed.

For nine years, the 1994 US-North Korea Agreed Framework halted Pyongyang's plutonium processing. In 1998, the Sunshine Policy initiated by South Korean President Kim Dae-jung led to an unprecedented détente on the Korean peninsula and to the strengthening of inter-Korean economic cooperation and relations. Unfortunately, as soon as he was sworn in as U.S. President, George W. Bush declared his opposition to those constructive developments, in effect taking away any chance of continuing rapprochement. The Six-Party agreements of 2005 and 2007 later showed that even a hawkish U.S. administration acknowledged that engagement was the realistic approach.

For all its faults, North Korea is not the only one to be blamed. Over the past three decades, the changes of administration – and thereby policies about the Korean conundrum – in the six countries involved have made it difficult to maintain the delicate balance necessary to work towards a diplomatic solution. But, saying that engagement has never worked is simply false.

CW: Michael Auslin argues that U.S. security guarantees were originally given in the context of the Cold War when the U.S. was facing an "existential threat" vis-à-vis international communism. Now, with the collapse of communist Russia, the original strategic purpose of containing communism no longer exists. Further, Auslin argues, it's difficult to rationalize the costs involved in defending South Korea, particularly in light of how wealthy and robust the South Korean economy has become since the 1950s. Can you talk about this version of events? As a historian, does this story pass muster, or is it lacking in balance and nuance?

LW: The so-called "domino theory" may no longer apply in today's global context, but, during the Cold War, containing communism was only one amongst several reasons to keep hundreds of U.S. military bases across the world, (including at least 60,000 U.S. troops in Northeast Asia alone since WWII). The U.S. military presence abroad continues to allow the U.S. government to achieve U.S. policy in the world, and it protects access to resources and markets, as well as American interests. The threat of a conquering communism may be gone, but empires don't readily relinquish their means of hegemony. Therefore, it's unlikely that the U.S. will want to leave East Asia while China demonstrates growing self-confidence in the region. And, a bellicose North Korea is a valuable excuse to justify a continued U.S. military presence.

CW: What salient events of the last 70 years really stick out for thinking about the current conflict?

LW: Answering this question is difficult because so many important events have contributed to the current crisis. There have been serious battles between the two Koreas, and they often involved the United States over the past 70 years. The first one is the Korean War itself. It still resonates strongly amongst Koreans. Most North Koreans literally lived underground, while U.S. planes carpet-bombed their country incessantly. After the signing of a ceasefire in 1953, most of the confrontations were not actual military engagements, but acts of verbal and strategic posturing.

There is a long list of provocations and retaliatory responses coming from both sides of the 38th parallel, and one could conclude that there is no peaceful way out of this situation. However, I would rather point out two events which suggest that, with goodwill on all sides, things could become untangled surprisingly fast.

In 1984, as South Korea (still ruled by a U.S.-backed military dictatorship) was struck by devastating floods, Pyongyang offered to deliver relief goods. Incredibly, they were accepted by the South. In the aftermath, Seoul and Pyongyang discussed ways to establish economic ties, and plans to allow families which had been separated since the Korean War to meet again at the demilitarized zone.

The second set of events I wish to mention is the 1997 and 2002 elections of the South Korean presidency, of Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun, respectively. Kim, a former dissident, had fought for South Korea's democratization for decades, and Roh Moo-hyun was a human rights lawyer. Both made rapprochement with North Korea one of their governments' central policies but, unfortunately, their efforts were systematically sabotaged by the administration of George W. Bush. Even so, during their tenures, Koreans witnessed two historic summits between the leaders of North and South Korea, and concrete economic and family ties were re-established.

CW: The background and historical context you've covered really changes how we might want to think about this situation. Do you recommend any specific historians, journals or media sources that interested people could turn to for more information and analysis?

LW: As suggested in my replies above, a better understanding of the last 70 years in East Asia is key to ensuring that the premises we base our future policies are solid. I would therefore encourage people interested in the topic to read historians of modern Korea, such as Charles Armstrong, Andrei Lankov and Bruce Cumings. For those interested in getting a South Korean media perspective, mainstream Korean newspapers have pages with their leading stories translated into English, like the Dong-A Ilbo and the hankyoreh.

The human disasters caused by military campaigns launched since 2000 alone demonstrate there is no alternative but to work towards political resolutions.

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"Taken" tells the stories of missing and murdered indigenous women

"loved", a theme in all of the episodes in the series. For Meeches, this series is "a reflection of the sickness that still exists out there."

Colfer is a proponent of balanced mental health care for indigenous patients in the province. Colfer admitted she "couldn't stay and watch the film." In fact, she had watched it at home for the first time before preparing to go to a powwow earlier this year. Colfer said she "put the food away" and went to bed because she was very affected by the film that day. The next day she went to the powwow and "took a mental break" from the situation.

Colfer says that one of the first things she did was dance with Imelda Perley and lead women in ceremony. Perley commented on the courage of Colfer's attendance of the screening. Perley mentioned the fundamental and foundational trauma present in the community and informed the crowd that she had brought an altar for smudgings for those who "had a heavy heart" after seeing the film.

Project origin

Prestigious journalist and filmmaker Lisa Meeches was pregnant with a girl when she had the impulse to start the series. She heard a report that indigenous women had a very low life expectancy and she decided to "save her [daughter's] life before she was born." Within three weeks of this initial idea, Meeches found the resources to shoot a pilot ($100,000), and did so a week after her daughter's birth. In fact, Meeches' "camera has become [her] pipe and then becomes an altar" to the missing and murdered indigenous women. Meeches declares that her work is a calling from her creator.

APTN and CBC supported the "Taken" series created by Meeches in collaboration with Kyle Irving and Rebecca Gibson. CBC ordered 13 episodes to "resolve this tragic reality" which is now in its second season. Thirty families were on stand-by to share their stories. Each episode focuses on a family and on a particular woman or on a place like Vancouver's downtown eastside or the Highway of Tears.

The research team contacted families; some decided not to participate and new families came forward. Meeches says it depends on where the families are with their healing. One thing that the series has underlined is that most women were from what Meeches deems "good cultural families," with values. Many of the women were powwow dancers.

A previous project that emerged from Meeches' private experience of having two young boys was "Tipi Tales," started in 2002. The series is based on the seven sacred laws and features a Canadian First Nations family that lives peacefully in a forest cottage. This children's series is now sold in syndication all over the world.

Future prospects

The "Taken" series looks for clues to solve the cases, asks for people to contribute and invites witnesses to visit the website for the series to provide information. Meeches says that the way in which police departments collaborate with the series varies, but most turn back to statements issued at the time of disappearance or the recovery of the remains. In the film, Musgrave asked the members of the viewing public to "think of your own family (...) of how they would feel if you were to go missing" and urged anyone with information to come forward. From the depths of her own sadness about her sister's death, Colfer added: "somebody knows something (...) this is a small place."

For Colfer, "each and every one of [the people] in the room have a pipe, it's called a windpipe." She invited everyone to "be part of the solution and make the world a better place." Colfer explained that society needs to question documents "that treated [Indigenous peoples] as inferior peoples." For Indigenous peoples, Colfer says "we need to look at ourselves now and to know what's going on." She remains optimistic that "things are going to get better for our people." As an Indigenous educator, Colfer developed health and wellness curriculum for the Indigenous schools so that young children will learn early what they need to do so they don't end up like her sister.

The producers of the series created an app that launched last week "Taken Knowledge Keeper App" which aims to allow "Indigenous communities, audience members, and families to track, manage, and help solve missing person cases." It also includes "teachings on how to take care of your spiritual self," according to Meeches. They are also putting out a book for young women of all nations who are dealing with mental health issues and are developing a series for a male version of "Taken" tentatively called "Stolen Brothers."

With the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls ongoing, the producers of the "Taken" series "find strength in the families that participate" who, according to Meeches, "are stronger than the commission itself."

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