

ENVIRONMENT IN JEOPARDY

Fidel Castro Ruz

Can capitalist society avoid it? News about the issue is not encouraging. In Poznan, they are discussing the project to be presented in December of next year in Copenhagen, where the agreement that will replace the Kyoto Protocol will be discussed and voted on.

The commission overseeing the drafting of this agreement is headed by Al Gore, the former US presidential candidate fraudulently defeated by Bush in the 2001 elections. Those drafting it are placing all their hopes in Barack Obama, as if he could change the course of history.

An illustrative example comes from Canada.

A BBC World article titled "Canada's Black Gold Oil Rush" says: "The total area currently being mined is 420 sq km," but the overall area the Alberta government has ceded to oil companies is 65,000 sq km. The area of exploitable reserves is 140, 200 sq km, about the size of Florida.

"From the air, the strip mines have transformed the forest into a moonscape of craters and lakes, with smoke, stacks pumping out billowing clouds... All this in a remote part of northern Alberta..."

Another part of the article states, "There are three major players at the moment—Suncor, Syncrude and a consortium led by Shell - but more foreign investors and consortiums have piled in."

"...A lack of government action means not enough is being done about the cumulative effects on the environment."

"...An investigation by the Alberta Cancer Board is due to be published soon. Earlier this year, 500 ducks died after landing on a tailings pond run by Syncrude... A government investigation is ongoing. Whatever the results, it seems the pace of opposition to the oil sands is quickening."

The Spanish daily *El Pais* says : "estimates from the agency under the OCDE (Organization of Cooperation and Economic Development) are basing themselves on the IMF's predictions, which indicate a gradual recovery of the global economy after the second semester of 2009, when world oil production will reach 86.3 million barrels daily."

The same Spanish newspaper notes: "The director of China's Department of Climate Change wants to make it clear that Beijing will only limit its emissions in exchange for heavy investment and clean technology patents. Its signature is essential for the 187 countries meeting in the Polish city to make progress on the protocol that will replace the 1997 one. Obama is setting back the battle against climate change by 20 years."

Another report from the Notimex agency, datelined December 13, says that "...The colossal Wall Street fraud perpetrated by Bernard L Madoff, former chair of the Nasdaq stock market, is causing multi million dollar losses in Spain," according to today's edition of *Expansion*, which specializes in economic affairs.

"...This Friday, one of the worst scandals on Wall Street" - the article continues - "was discovered after the arrest of the former chair of the Nasdaq, Bernard L Madoff, for participating in an investment fund fraud that could total \$50 billion."

"...Madoff, former founding chair of the Nasdaq stock market, was arrested Thursday night after his own son went to federal authorities to report that his father was engaging in what he called a giant pyramid selling scheme."

"...Under this scheme, only top investors would obtain dividends from their investments, leaving everyone else with losses that could reach that figure, according to the US Attorney's Office in New York."

Another report from the Reuters agency on the same date says "Obama aides, who were considering a half-trillion dollar package two weeks ago, now consider \$600 billion over two years 'a very low-end estimate,' the newspaper said.

"The final size of the stimulus was expected to be...\$1 trillion over that period, it said, given the deteriorating state of the US economy.

"Officials with Obama's camp have declined to comment on media reports about the size of the boost his administration might seek to give the economy..." after he is inaugurated as US president on January 20.

The situation looks even worse with news coming in from the wire agencies reporting all kinds of problems, from the bankruptcy of the auto industry derived from the financial crisis to natural disasters, and involving the rising cost of foodstuffs, hunger, war and many other events.

The problem is that there is no longer any inhabitable space on the planet earth to share out. The last one was Australia, which the United Kingdom seized on January 19, 1788. The environment has been in jeopardy for some time now. Can the species overcome that barrier?

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[Source : Granma International]