

# Justin Trudeau's co-ordinated assault on Canadian energy

by Conrad Black



My reference [here](#) to the throne speech containing a declaration of war on the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan and on the petroleum industry of Canada (with a partial reprieve for eastern Canadian offshore oil) might have seemed an exaggeration. But it was a reasonable interpretation of what Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said on the subject in 2017: “You can’t make a choice between what’s good for the environment and what’s good for the economy. We can’t shut down the oilsands tomorrow. We need to phase them out.” He said the following day that he had “misspoke,” but did not retract or even alter that position; he only stated that he should have worded it more carefully, presumably to disguise its meaning. In the intervening period of nearly four years, his government has pursued the systematic destruction of the western petroleum industry, which the throne speech reaffirmed, although instead of specifically enunciating that

goal, the federal government is pursuing it through four parallel channels of public policy.

It has been an efficient and skilfully executed assault, and it has largely been conducted behind a facade of the familiar truckling to the broad concept of Indigenous rights, in a way that steadily approaches the implicit concession that the regime established by all those who came to this country after the Indigenous people is afflicted by compromised rights and legitimacy. The Trudeaus have come full circle: 50 years ago, Pierre Trudeau expressed his intention to consolidate what was called Indian Affairs into the welfare system, and his son is dealing "nation to nation" with all of the hundreds of tribes and bands of Indigenous peoples within this country. It may temporarily be an effective tactic for disguising the government's environmental ambitions, but it is empowering a Frankenstein monster of Native litigious aggression that will rampage through the country until the sovereignty of Canada is justly reasserted. We are approaching what Cardinal Richelieu called, in reference to the Huguenots, "a state within the state."

Some of the officials who were chiefly complicit in Ontario's colossal energy and environment fiasco produced by the McGuinty-Wynne regime (2003-2018), which accomplished the economic miracle of the relative self-improvement of one of the world's wealthiest jurisdictions, fled from Toronto to Ottawa and are now toiling like happy little elves producing similarly inspired policy for the whole country on four different fronts. They are convinced that the whole world is threatened by climate change generated by the activities of man, and which it is Canada's exalted destiny to combat with such vigour and ingenuity that it leads the world to salvation from the consequences of its base materialist ambitions. It would be noble if the premise was correct. There is grossly insufficient evidence to support the government's assumptions about climate change. But it must be admitted that in its

perverse preconceptions and ambitious objectives, there is a concept of national grandeur as well as strategic execution. I have urged the pursuit of a national policy that would raise Canada's prestige and influence in the world and must salute the ambition. Unfortunately, our knowledge of the climate is not remotely adequate to justify such a vast enterprise and the assault on the petroleum industry is not just a self-administered amputation of much of Canada's prosperity, it is an inadvertent attempt to commit national suicide.

The government's four avenues toward its goals are regulation and legislation, the incorporation into Canadian law of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), the imposition of what are called "clean fuel standards" and the expansion of protected and conserved areas, in concert with delivering control of much of this area entirely into the hands of Indigenous groups exercising quasi-autonomous control. This co-ordinated effort is being carried out principally by the ministries of environment and climate change, of natural resources and by the Prime Minister's Office. The presence of the relatively sensible (and very affable) Seamus O'Regan as natural resources minister may be taken as a reassuring gesture of moderation.

Regulation and legislation include the cancellation of the fully authorized Northern Gateway Pipeline, the indefinite delay of the expansion of the Trans Mountain Pipeline, the disbanding of the National Energy Board and its replacement by the Canadian Energy Regulator and the Impact Assessment Agency, which facilitates unlimited interventions even by disinterested parties and by foreigners acting on conceptual or philosophical motives. The enabling legislation for this was described by Alberta Premier Jason Kenney as the "no-pipelines bill." The federal government also banned oil tanker traffic off the West Coast (Bill C-48), an outright effort to landlock western Canadian oil, and by imposing absurd delays it forced TC Energy to relinquish its Energy East project.

Canada continues to be a large oil importer despite having an oil surplus – we are a national chump. UNDRIP, when adopted, will cause Canadian courts to require the “free, prior informed consent” of Indigenous peoples in many more aspects of energy transmission. Clean fuel standards will reduce carbon emissions in the activity of a producing carbon emissions and is a method of gradually strangling carbon use. The expansion of protected and conserved areas will take place in the framework of the federal government goal’s of having 17 per cent of Canada’s landmass and of its waters in such areas by the end of this year, as part of this government’s commitment to the United Nations convention on biodiversity. This program includes designated National Wildlife Areas on federal government land.

The flavour of the resulting administration may be grasped from the stipulations in Section 3 of the Wildlife Area Regulations that, “No person shall hunt or fish, be in possession of any firearm, slingshot, bow and arrow, or any instrument that could be used for the purpose of hunting, or lead fishing sinkers. No one shall damage or remove a plant, carry on any agricultural activity, allow any domestic animal to run at large, swim, picnic, camp or engage in other recreational activity or light a fire, operate a conveyance, remove, deface or damage any artifact, natural object, building, fence, poster, sign, or carry on any commercial or industrial activity, disturb or remove any soil, sand, gravel or other material, unless authorized by the minister.” (Breathing and speaking in a low voice are permissible.) Among these National Wildlife Areas are Indigenous protected and conserved areas, which are governed by Indigenous people committed to conservation and in which Indigenous rights and responsibilities are entrenched.

Each of these four policy areas is apparently independent and is presented as a distinctive approach toward a desirable objective. But they are in fact co-ordinated and intended to

exterminate the petroleum industry. Not only is the climate change goal a wild surmise, but this is an attempt to throttle Canada's greatest industry and its most reliable growth resource, and willfully crush the employers that millions of Canadians rely on. If this goes ahead as planned, the separatist movement in Alberta and Saskatchewan will grow, and could spread to all the western provinces. The purpose of the federal government is to preserve and strengthen the country; it is playing with dynamite with a carelessness for which there is no precedent in the history of Canada.

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