

Readings on Liberia's recent history ¶ Carole Ferrari on damming rivers on James Bay ¶ Sylvia Nickerson and Erin Brubacher on summer Shakespeare ¶ Emmanuel Todd predicts the collapse of the US Empire >>>

The Dominion

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Coke Sued for Paramilitary Killings in Columbia

A US trade union is suing the Coca-Cola Corporation on behalf of Sinaltrainal, a Colombian union. The lawsuit accuses Coca-Cola of being "indirectly responsible" for the killing of the leader of a union representing workers at bottling plants responsible for distributing Coca-Cola products in the region.

The bottling plants are run by Panamerican Beverages, a Colombian company; Coca Cola representatives claim that Panamerican is a business partner, and that Coke does not own or operate the plants. A complaint filed by Sinaltrainal accused Panamerican Beverages of conducting a "campaign of terror, using paramilitaries to kill, torture and kidnap union leaders in Colombia." According to the report released by Sinaltrainal, over 1,500 labour leaders have been killed in the last ten years; 128 were killed last year.

"Coca-Cola denies any connection to any human-rights violation of this type," said company spokesman Rafael Fernandez Quiros. Last April, a US District Court Judge ruled that similar lawsuits could go ahead against bottlers, but dismissed the case against Coca Cola itself. Terry Collingsworth, Executive Director of the International Labor Rights Fund said, "we are absolutely convinced as a factual matter that one word from Coca-Cola would stop the campaign of terror against trade union leaders in the Coca-Cola bottling plants in Colombia. We are entitled to gather evidence on this point and prove it at trial".



A protester in Manhattan. Activists are attempting to hold Coca Cola responsible for the murder of a union leader in Colombia.

photo: NYC Indymedia

A legal counsel of US Steelworkers, the union filing the suit on behalf of Sinaltrainal, said that "wholly apart from legal liability, Coca-Cola remains the sole entity that can change the practices of its bottlers."

Coca-Cola has also been under fire in India, where dozens of local groups have formed to oppose the companies bottling operations, claiming that they illegally overuse and pollute commonly-held water supplies. Sales of Coca-Cola products in some areas of India have reportedly decreased significantly. Earlier this year, Coca-Cola was fined \$300,000 for polluting the Matasnillo River in Panama. A factory had spilled 400 gallons of red dye into the river, turning half of the Bay of Panama a pinkish colour. Coca-Cola recently announced a 20% growth in profits, though CEO Douglas Daft commented, "we are still not satisfied that we are reaching our full potential in some key markets". (BBC, CorpWatch, Associated Press) -DOJ

Music Piracy Supports Terrorism: Interpol Head

Ronald K. Noble, secretary general of the international police agency Interpol, called for a global crackdown on music and software piracy, saying that "it is becoming the preferred method of funding for a number of terrorist groups". He is slated to present evidence of the connection to the House of Representatives' Committee on International Relations in Washington.

Meanwhile, a proposed US bill would provide harsh penalties for the misuse of anti-piracy technology in electronic devices, including up to five years in prison and up to \$25,000 in fines. Senator Joseph Biden said, "Copyrights mean nothing if government authorities fail to enforce the protections they provide intellectual property

dominion, *n.* 1. Control or the exercise of control. 2. A territory or sphere of influence; a realm. 3. One of the self-governing nations within the British Commonwealth.

owners. The criminal code has not kept up with the counterfeiting operations of today's high-tech pirates, and it's time to make sure that it does." In an ironic twist, the same Joseph Biden famously forfeited his 1987 candidacy for the Democratic Presidential nomination when it was discovered that he had used several passages from a British politician's speech without attribution. (News24 South Africa, Washington Post, ZDNet) -DOJ

British Planned Nuclear Landmines in Germany

Recently declassified documents have revealed that the British Army planned to bury 10 massive nuclear "landmines" in Germany for use in case of a Soviet invasion in the 1950s, according to a recent report in *New Scientist* magazine. The project, codenamed "Blue Peacock" was determined to be "politically flawed", and was cancelled in 1958. -DOJ

Human Rights Group Urges Intervention in Liberia

Human Rights Watch urged West African countries to deploy peacekeeping forces to Liberia, with the United States providing logistical support and troops on the ground. According to Reuters, over 1,000 people have been killed as a result of recent fighting in Monrovia, the country's capital. Aid agencies fear an outbreak of cholera due to a shortage of potable water, caused by attacks on a water pumping station. (BBC) -DOJ

International News

Manley Pulls Up Short

When he made the announcement he would seek the Liberal leadership, John Manley, an avid marathoner, claimed that he was in this race to finish. This week when he announced he was withdrawing his candidacy for the leadership there were not sporting analogies, but an appropriate one might have been "No Mas," (no more) the words of boxer Roberto Duran upon recognizing that he was clearly out-matched by Sugar Ray Leonard.

Many pundits say it's not that Manley withdrew that's surprising, but that he stayed in so long in the face of the overwhelming evidence that the Liberal Party wants Paul Martin. Martin enjoys huge support in the party with Manley polling in second place in the teens throughout most of the race, and third candidate Sheila Copps struggling to crack double digits. Martin is also the most supported politician in the nation to become the next Prime Minister with polls indicating a huge difference between his support and all of the other federal leadership candidates.

Manley's withdrawal leaves Copps as the only pretender to Martin's throne and the Prime Ministership. The two could not be viewed more differently as Copps has always represented the Liberal left-flank. Martin was a fiscally conservative Finance Minister and is connected to the business interests that support the Liberal Party. Copps is a long serving member, one of the few who survived the lean Mulroney years. In the leadership race she has never been seen as a true contender, something Manley pointed out early on, and certainly should she remain in the race to the end is unlikely to pose a serious threat to Martin at the leadership convention.

That Martin isn't seriously challenged is representative of his long held ambitions to be Prime Minister. Martin ran for the leadership against Chrétien in 1990 and has been preparing



Palestinians protesting deportations in Montreal: unable to return home, many Palestinians have spent their lives in refugee camps.

photo: Montreal Muslim News

to assume the leadership since. Martin has spent years stacking riding associations, the federal party executive, and campus youth wings, among others. He chased off Alan Rock and Brian Tobin, the two most serious challengers only 18 months ago, without much of fight. Despite the Prime Minister's wish to prevent Martin from assuming his role there's little he can do about it, but attempt to sabotage his first election by staying in office until the bitter end. —NB

Pride in the Name of Love (and Marriage)

Summertime brings with it innumerable events not otherwise possible in Canada during the long dark winters. Among the festivals, outdoor concerts, and summer water sports, parades to celebrate Gay Pride are common across urban centers in Canada. Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Ottawa, Winnipeg and Moncton all host their own Gay Pride Parades. This year's celebrations are marked with a new excitement following the announcement that Canada will become the fourth country to amend the legal definition of marriage to allow same-sex marriages.

Estimates of the numbers in attendance at this summer's Pride Parades have been impressive. Estimates in stodgy Ottawa were at more than 5,000 in

attendance to watch and support the local gay, lesbian, transgendered community celebrate their lifestyle and the new found freedom to wed. Several couples in the parade wore signs saying, "Just Married" which drew loud cheers from the crowd.

A recent Ontario court ruling has ruled that the narrow definition of marriage as being constituted between a man and woman only contravenes the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The governing federal Liberal Party has announced they will not appeal the ruling to the Supreme Court and will draft new legislation on the subject shortly. The Commons Justice Committee was in support of the Liberal direction, with the exception of the Canadian Alliance members of the committee. —NB

Deportations and WTO in Montreal

The Coalition Against the Deportation of Palestinian Refugees, a Montreal activist group, has accused the federal government of "systematically" denying Palestinian refugee applications, while deporting hundreds of refugees already living in Canada. Many Palestinians in Canada have come from refugee camps in Lebanon, where the living situation is dismal. Palestinians in Lebanon are restricted from working in 78 professions. Palestinians are treated as second

class citizens in many middle eastern countries, and are unable to return to Palestine proper, as it is not recognized as a state. Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has consistently stated that the Palestinian right of return must be forfeited as a condition of peace negotiations. Around 300 people attended a July 19 protest against deportations in Montreal.

Meanwhile, a large coalition of activist groups has been preparing for a World Trade Organization ministerial to be held in Montreal in preparation for meetings in Cancun, Mexico later this summer. Many groups are using the meeting as an occasion to discuss a broad range of issues, from intellectual property rights to indigenous sovereignty. Teach ins and workshops will be held for the duration of the meetings. Other groups plan to disrupt the meetings directly. —DOJ

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The Game of Imperial Power

[We] Americans are sufficiently blind that when a Middle Eastern leader emerges whom our leaders like – the shah of Iran or Anwar Sadat – it is assumed that he is a visionary who does things our way not because he understands the game of imperial power (which is to survive by humoring the regnant authority) but because he is moved by principles that we share.

Almost a quarter of a century after his assassination, Sadat is a forgotten and unpopular man in his own country because most Egyptians regard him as having served the U.S. first, not Egypt. The same is true of the shah in Iran. That Sadat and the shah were followed in power by rulers who are less palatable to the US indicates not that Arabs are fanatics, but that the distortions of imperialism produce further distortions, inducing extreme forms of resistance and political self-assertion.

—**Edward Said**, “Rule by the Blind: Imperial Arrogance and the Vile Stereotyping of Arabs”. *Counterpunch.org*

US Policy in Liberia

When the balloting took place, Doe declared himself the winner by 50.9 percent of the vote, despite ample evidence that he had been defeated. Nevertheless, the Reagan administration accepted the results. “This performance established a beginning, however imperfect,” Assistant Secretary of State Chester Crocker told Congress two months later, a “benchmark” by which the country can judge itself and be judged in the future.

Liberians were “baffled” by Washington’s reaction and the “reluctance to concede the grimness of Doe’s human rights record,” Enoanyi says. The situation grew increasingly bad, particularly after a failed coup attempt by Doe’s exiled former second-in-command Thomas

Quiwonkpa, which was followed by stepped-up attacks on the opposition.

[...]

“Unless television images come into American living rooms of little starving babies,” former President Jimmy Carter said in a 1993 interview with the author, “the U.S. government just looks the other way and pays very little attention to what’s going on in Africa.” In the case of Liberia, there was almost no TV coverage.

Several members of Congress did press the administration to seek additional avenues for actions. One of those urging higher-level U.S. diplomatic activity in Liberia was Republican Senator Nancy Kassebaum, now chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa Affairs of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. “We have a responsibility to help fix some of the problems we helped create,” she said in a 1992 interview.

One idea mentioned more and more frequently as fighting grew heavier towards the middle of 1990 was the “Marcos option” -- a U.S.-managed departure for Doe like the one arranged by the Reagan administration for Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos. But the NSC Deputies Committee refused to let the State Department make such an offer to Doe, fearing further entanglement. As an alternative to American leadership, the administration gave encouragement to West African mediation and peacekeeping, initiated by the 16-nation Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas), with Nigeria playing a leading role.

“Ecowas said ‘this is our responsibility’ and they have been doing their best to handle what is a terrible situation,” Scowcroft said in the previously cited interview. “If it can be handled by states in the area then that is how it should be done.” West African governments, however, expected and wanted a more active American role. “We could not understand how the U.S. government with its long-standing relationship with Libe-

ria could remain so aloof,” said Ambassador Joseph Iroha, a career Nigerian diplomat who represented Ecowas in Monrovia for several years during the war. West African states sent in troops to stop the fratricidal killing,” he said, because “we couldn’t allow this sort of thing to continue.”

—**Reed Kramer**, “Liberia: A Casualty of the Cold War’s End”. *AllAfrica.com*

Doe, the Friendly Dictator

Samuel Doe, a pro-American anti-communist, received \$500 million in U.S. aid between 1980 and 1985. When Congress threatened to cut off funds because of Liberia’s human rights abuses. Doe requested American “financial advice, as a show of good will. The U.S. sent 17 accountants, bank examiners, and economists to help Doe balance his budget, but they realized a difficult task lay ahead when they learned that Doe had purchased over sixty \$60,000 Mercedes Benz cars for his government ministers and had given the Liberian soccer team \$1 million for winning a match against rival Ghana. Ultimately Doe refused to allow access to records concerning 40% of Liberia’s funds, for this “second budget,” revenues from gasoline and lodging taxes, [went] directly into the President’s bank account.

—from a series of “**Friendly Dictator Trading Cards**” published in the late 1980s.

Taylor’s Ascent

Taylor returned to Liberia on Christmas Eve in 1989, at the head of a guerilla force of 100 to 500 men called the National Patriotic Front of Liberia [NPFL]. The NPFL settled in Gbarnga, some 100 miles northeast of Monrovia. Taylor said he had returned to topple the government, reportedly declaring, “The best Doe is a dead Doe.” During the next seven months, Taylor’s forces gained ground

and recruits, battling back an increasingly weakened government.

NPFL forces entered Monrovia in July of 1990. During the battle for Monrovia, the NPFL split into two factions, one led by Taylor, and the other by Prince Johnson. By September, both divisions of the NPFL declared victory over Doe’s regime, but the Johnson-led group had secured and occupied the city of Monrovia. Doe was captured and executed by Johnson forces as he attempted to leave the country.

A civil war between Taylor and Johnson forces followed. In 1995, a peace agreement was signed, eventually leading to the election of Taylor as president in July of 1997. Taylor garnered 75.3 percent of the vote, while his nearest competitor, Ellen Johnson of the Unity Party, received just 9.6 percent.

During his presidency, Taylor continued to battle insurgents who opposed his rule. He also reportedly began selling arms and other supplies to rebels in neighboring Sierra Leone. Taylor reportedly traded the weapons for diamonds. The rebels Taylor purportedly aided continued their war against the Sierra Leone government, conducting brutal sweeps through civilian areas, chopping off the arms, legs and noses of thousands of suspected government supporters, including women and children. On June 4, 2003, Taylor was indicted for war crimes by a United Nation’s tribunal in Sierra Leone.

Faced with growing international pressure to resign, Taylor has repeatedly said he will leave and accept an offer from Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo for temporary asylum. Taylor gave no indication of when he would relinquish control, but said he will resign “only after a peacekeeping force is deployed to prevent chaos and anarchy.”

—**Terence Burlij**, “A Profile of Charles Taylor”. *PBS Online*

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The Conceited Empire

A historian credited with predicting the downfall of the Soviet Union in the 1970s now says that the US has been on its way out for the last decade

The following interview originally appeared in *Neue Züricher Zeitung* (The New Zurich Newspaper, Sunday edition).

by **Martin A. Senn and Felix Lautenschlager**
translated from German by **Andreas Artz**

The power and influence of the United States is being overestimated, claims French historian and demographer Emmanuel Todd. There will be no American Empire. The world is too large and dynamic to be controlled by one power. According to Todd, whose 1976 book predicted the fall of the Soviet Union, there is no question: the decline of America the Superpower has already begun.

NZZ: Mr. Todd, you write that America is economically, militarily, and ideologically too weak to actually control the world. This would gladden many anti-Americans. But how is this anything but the wishful thinking of an intellectual who is the product of the French US critical tradition?

ET: This is neither wishful thinking nor anti-Americanism. Why would I have been so prominently criticised by the left? The French career anti-American paper "Le Monde diplomatique", was the only major paper that remained conspicuously silent on my book. The over-estimation of America is fundamental to these people. It is on this topic that they agree with the American ultra-conservatives: the former to demonize, the latter to aggrandize.

You on the other hand can be accused of underestimating the United States.

On the contrary, the US is still the most powerful nation in the world today, but there are many indicators that they are about to relinquish their position as solitary superpower. In my 1976 book, "La chute finale" (Before

the Fall: The End of Soviet Domination), I based my prediction of the fall of the Soviet Union on the relevant indicators of the time. An analysis of current demographic, cultural, military, economic, and ideological factors leads me to conclude that the remaining pole of the former bipolar world order will not remain alone in its position. The world has become too large and complex to accept the predominance of one power. There will not be an American Empire.

Nevertheless, if others are to be believed, this empire has already been long in existence. "Get Used to It" was a recent headline in the New York Times Weekend Magazine.

That is very interesting. Now that the concept no longer corresponds to reality, it becomes commonplace. While there actually was a basis in reality, there was scarcely a mention of the concept.

Then you are of the opinion that there was an American empire at one point?

The American hegemony from the end of WW II into the late 1980s in military, economic, and ideological terms definitely had imperial qualities. In 1945 fully half the manufactured goods

in the world originated in the US. And although there was a communist bloc in Eurasia, East Germany, and North Korea, the strong American military, the navy and air force, exercised strategic control over the rest of the globe, with the support and understanding of many allies, whose common goal was the fight against communism. Although communism had some dispersed support among intellectuals, workers, and peasant groups, the power and influence of the US was by and large with the agreement of a majority throughout the world. It was a benevolent empire. The Marshall Plan was an exemplary political and economic strategy. America was, for decades, a 'good' superpower.

And now it is a bad one?

It has, above all, become a weak one. The US no longer has the might to control the large strategic players, primarily Germany and Japan. Their industrial capacity is clearly smaller than that of Europe and approximately equal to that of Japan. With twice the population, this is no great accomplishment. Their trade deficit meanwhile, is in the order of \$500 billion per year. Their military potential is nevertheless still the largest by far, but is declining and consistently over estimated. The use of military bases is dependant on the good will of their allies, many of which are not as willing as before. The theatrical military activism against inconsequential rogue states that we are currently witnessing plays out against this backdrop. It is a sign of weakness, not of strength. But weakness makes for unre-



Emmanuel Todd says that US economic power is being undermined by the decline of its industrial base.

dictability. The US is about to become a problem for the world, where we have previously been accustomed to seeing a solution in them.

Assuming you are right: how did this budding empire slide so quickly into decline?

A rift has been developing, slowly at first and then more quickly, between the US and their various geo-political areas of interest. During the early 1970s a deficit in the balance of trade began to open. The US assumed the role of consumer and the rest of the world took on the role of producer, in this increasingly unbalanced global process. The balance of trade went from a deficit of \$100 billion in 1990 to \$500 billion annually at present. This deficit has been financed through capital flowing into the US. Eventually the same effect experienced by the Spanish in 16th and 17th centuries will come to bear. As gold from the New World flooded in, the Spanish succumbed to decreasing produc-

tivity. They consumed and dissipated, lived high and beyond their means and fell into economic and technological arrears.

But America is still the leading example of economic and technological competence.

When I speak of the economy, then I mean the industrial core and the associated technological cutting edge, not the anemic New Economy. It is in the core industrial sphere that the US is falling dramatically behind. European investors lost billions in the US during the nineties, but the US economy lost an entire decade. As recently as 1990 the US was still exporting \$35 billion more in advanced technology than it was importing. Now the balance of trade is negative even in this field. The US is far behind in mobile communications technology. The Finnish Nokia is four times the size of Motorola. More than half the communications satellites are being launched with European Ariane rockets. Airbus is about to surpass Boeing -- the most important transportation medium for personnel traffic in the modern global economy is about to be manufactured primarily in Europe. These are the things that are ultimately important. These are by far more vital and decisive factors than a war against Iraq.

Are you saying they are waging the wrong war in the wrong place?

The US leadership doesn't know anymore where to turn. They know that they are monetarily dependant on the rest of the world, and they are afraid of becoming inconsequential. There are no more Nazis and Communists. While a demographic, democratic, and politically stabilizing world recognizes that it is increasingly less dependant on the US, America is discovering that it is increasingly dependant on the rest of the world. That is the reason

for the rush into military action and adventures. It is classic.

Classic?

The only remaining superiority is military. This is classic for a crumbling system. The final glory is militarism. The fall of the Soviet Union took place in an identical context. Their economy was in decline, and their leadership grew fearful. Their military apparatus gained in

“The final glory is militarism. The fall of the Soviet Union took place in an identical context. Their economy was in decline, and their leadership grew fearful.”

size and stature and the Russians embarked on adventures to forget their economic shortcomings. The parallels in the US are obvious. The process has significantly accelerated in the past few months.

Where do you see the indicators of these developments?

In European politics and in the weakness of the dollar. In my book I postulated an increasing commonality between France and Germany. In the meantime the positions adopted by the German Chancellor Schroeder and the French President Chirac in opposition to Bush have substantiated my “Historian’s Theory”. The unexpected, immediate, and strong response from US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld took aim at “old Europe”. It is, in fact, the new Europe that instills fear in him.

In the meantime, however, eight European states have come out in support of the US.

The significant occurrence was in Germany. The US can only maintain its position as sole superpower so long as it can maintain control over Germany and Japan, both of which are huge creditors of the USA. Therefore the historical significance cannot be over estimated, that a German chancellor could win an election on a “no to the war in Iraq”—in effect a no to the United States.

What about the weak dollar?

As a historian, the dollar represents a “mentality indicator” to me. It reflects the awareness of international trade and business leaders of the realities of the American economy. The weakness of the dollar is indicative of their assessment that the situation is much worse than is openly acknowledged. The fact is that troops destined for the war in Iraq, which has been represented as a simple mission, are still not totally prepared. After a year of back and forth, the diplomatic heavyweights of France and Germany are trying to prevent this war, and the balance of the allies are participating mostly verbally, not financially. There is an immense risk in engaging in a war on the opposite side of the globe while fettered by a \$500 billion trade deficit, a weak dollar and supported only by friends who are unwilling to share the costs.

You write that in the future there will be three, perhaps four strong polarities, of which the most influential will be Europe. Are you counting on an emerging European Superpower?

One of the working propositions of my book, *After the Empire* is that the concept of military control of the globe no longer makes any sense. In relation to the military, there will be a balance of power in the future. There is still a nuclear balance of power between the US and Russia. The notion that sections of the globe can be con-

trolled through military might is passé, because it is unrealistic. You can destroy regimes and bomb their infrastructure, as the Americans have done in Afghanistan, but the populations -- including those in the developing world -- have become educated and literate enough to eliminate any possibility of re-colonization. The only power that ultimately counts today is economic power.

“The over-estimation of America is fundamental to [French anti-Americans]. It is on this topic that they agree with the American ultra-conservatives: the former to demonize, the latter to aggrandize.”

Do you believe that Europe has the “right stuff” economically for superpower status?

Why not? It is often said that the Europeans are somewhat naïve and passive. They are accused of having neglected their military. But when you understand that military might is no longer the true power, and when you see that presently the Americans no longer possess the economic means to maintain their military apparatus, then you must conclude that the Europeans have done the right thing. They have placed their reliance on their economy. They have introduced the Euro. Their industrial policies are coherent and substantial. Airbus is only one example. Europe is well armed.

For what is Europe “armed”?

For the conflict that is just beginning between the Ameri-

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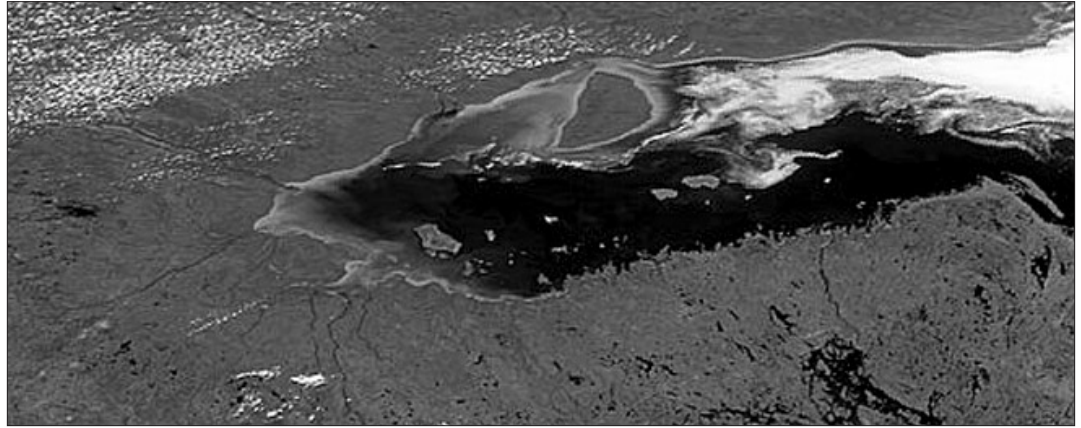
HydroQuebec plans diversion of multiple rivers near James Bay

by Carole Ferrari

As part of continuing hydroelectric development on James Bay, HydroQuebec has begun the paper work, table talk, and preparatory construction to dam and divert the Rupert River. During a consultation meeting in the Cree community of Chisasibi on June 11th, community members spoke out against a plan and process that they feel fails to respect the environment and traditional knowledge of the community.

The Rupert is one of the major rivers that run into the east side of the James Bay. It flows by the Cree communities of Nemiska and Waskaganish, 730 km across the breadth of northern Quebec into the southern end of the Bay.

The James Bay Project continues as part of HydroQuebec's Strategic Plan for 2002-2006, "...to develop competitive hydroelectric projects, [which] reflect both the economic benefits of hydroelectric projects and the environmental advantages of hydropower." The project, officially called the "Eastmain-1-A Powerhouse and Rupert Diversion," involves diverting the waters from the Rupert into the Eastmain River which has already been dammed, building another powerhouse on the Eastmain 1 reservoir, and making modifications to the control structure on the Opinaca reservoir to increase power generating capacity at the site. The project also entails the diversion of two other rivers, the Lemare and the Nemiscau. This will require four more dams, another spillway, approximately fifty dykes, two diversion bays with a total surface area of about square 400 kilometres, control structures between the forebay and tailbay of the Rupert, and a network of approximately 12,000 metres of canals to direct the water's flow. 230 square kilometres of land will be flooded.



James Bay. Cree communities appealed to HydroQuebec representatives: "There are different kinds of listening: with a pen, ears, mind, heart... Sit by the river, experience it—please do that. It's not the same as flying over it." *photo: NASA*

In effect, the Eastmain-1-A Powerhouse and Rupert Diversion will change the Rupert's direction. Instead of flowing west into James Bay, the Rupert will be redirected north into reservoirs on the La Grande River, 363 kilometres off course.

The project comes in the wake of HydroQuebec's other damming projects in the region. The La Grande Phase 1 flooded 11,500 square kilometres of traditional Cree territory. It created the world's largest underground powerhouse, a spillway on the La Grande River three times the height of Niagara Falls, and five mega-reservoirs. Phase 2, by which the Eastmain, Laforge and Caniapiscau Rivers were diverted into the La Grande, will soon be completed after being suspended due to fierce protests from the Cree and environmentalists.

The project has recently concluded its public consultations for the directives of the environmental impact assessment. The directives instruct the project's proponents (HydroQuebec and its subsidiary, La Société d'énergie de la Baie James), on how to conduct its impact assessment. The public had a consultation period of sixty days to comment on the directives. Official consultation meetings were held in Montreal

and the Cree communities of Mistissini, Waskaganish, Nemeska and Chisasibi. These communities are either directly affected by the project and/or have been impacted by previous HydroQuebec projects.

The community of Chisasibi has twenty-five years experience with HydroQuebec. Relocated in 1980 from Fort George Island to make way for the first set of dams, Chisasibi has been fundamentally impacted by the damming projects.

Chisasibi community members spoke out against the current project at their consultation meeting, held on June 11th in Chisasibi. They objected to the 6 month timeline of study period for the assessment, calling it too short. They argued that the native lifestyle and mindset are not the same as that of mainstream North American society, and that full understanding of impacts will take more time. "We will miss a lot of things and in the future we will realize the negative impacts... this happens all the time". It was felt that more time is needed to share the process with the elders, and to translate proceedings into the two dialects of Cree spoken in the region. "Biodiversity"; how do you explain that in Cree? We need time to fully participate in the process."

The beginning of another project so soon after the completion of the previous project also raised concerns, "There are physical impacts, but also mental and spiritual... we haven't finished grieving yet [from the previous project]. And now another process - a civil process, but with very uncivilized impacts - the destruction of a river."

Community members also raised the issue of changes in water purity. Previous damming projects increased mercury levels in the waters of the La Grande and contaminated fish, a staple of the Cree diet. "We want good water, all the time, for everything that drinks the water." Concerns for winter travel on the river because of potential ice level changes, for the loss of medicinal plants, spawning grounds and the effects on migrating goose were also expressed.

The Crees wondered how traditional knowledge, a mandatory element of the impact assessment, could be attained with the process proposed by HydroQuebec. Some questioned how well HydroQuebec can honour and respect traditional knowledge without understanding what it is. "How can I expect

continued on page 8 »

Caution: Extreme Shakespeare in Halifax

by Sylvia Nickerson

Generally I am not a person who plans elaborate activities of merriment on calendar holidays. But, once and a while, an opportunity to celebrate gives me that tingling feeling and I am compelled to go out and join the party. It was that kind of crazed motivation that got me out of bed at 3:15 a.m. on July 1 to watch *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on the wharf of Casino Nova Scotia in Halifax.

How romantic, I thought, and what a great way to begin Canada Day. Other folks must have agreed, for tickets had been long sold out. A fair-sized crowd of couples, families and theatre fans of all ages gathered in the early hour clutching travel mugs full of coffee, that great stuff Canadians couldn't live without. If June had made them so giddy as to forget that Halifax is under snow six months of the year, being ocean-side at night was a brisk reminder. A place to bare skin by day, the casino's "Seawalk Stage" was covered in a blanket of cold, clammy fog. Seated in lawn chairs on the concrete, audience members huddled together under coats and wool blankets. As a backdrop to the event, the harbour lights of Dartmouth were dimly visible, and large ships loomed in the indefinite moonlight. Under the influence of this stunning scene, I felt more like I was in Reykjavik, Iceland, than Nova Scotia.

The play began well, as the actors exuded the energy befitting the first performance of a season. Their antics and melodrama were appreciated with enthusiastic smiles and laughs from the audience. Occasionally, the faint clinking of slot machines (from inside the casino) could be heard over the lines delivered on stage. The players freely adjusted their lines, as well as their costumes and props, for humorous effect.

After a wholly entertaining first act, the length and difficulty of the play began to show, as

the actors increasingly needed assistance to remember their lines (it was a one time "unrehearsed" performance). Former New Democratic Party leader Alexa McDonough held the script and assumed the role of prompter. As the play drew to a close, the timing and energy lagged. The humour culminated in a slap-sticky ending which involved the exposure of much nubile young skin, some radical cross dressing, and men impersonating squeaky female character-types. The play *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is itself an absurd story of hopelessly frustrated lovers, the vehicle for much biting satire and sexual innuendo. The performance was long -- about three hours long, actually. But, at 7 a.m. on Canada-Day morning, no one had anywhere else to go anyway. The giddiness brought on by the early hour seemed to allow for this long and mischievous ending.

So why did a sold out crowd come to a casino at 4 a.m. on a cold July night to watch actors proclaim sixteenth-century English? It is truly baffling behaviour. In the spirit of recent television entertainment, I would have to qualify this particular experience as "extreme" Shakespeare. The perilous trials observed by all involved in order to organize this event constitute another testament to the enduring appeal of the bard. In the morning, at night, before dinner, in the fog: any time is a good time for Shakespeare. Even when performed ad-hoc to a sleep-deprived crowd, the wisdom, humour and irrepressible spirit of what it is to be human reliably shines through. No one can capture the ironies, foibles and superficialities of love and loss like this play-right. •••

What Makes Magic in the Park?

by Erin Brubacher

It's not Shakespeare's view of the world, it's something which actually resembles reality. A sign of this is that any single word, line, character or event has not only a large number of interpretations, but an unlimited number. Which is the characteristic of reality.

—Peter Brook, *The Shifting Point*, 1987

Every year, Toronto's High Park hosts the Canadian Stage's *Dream in High Park*. This year, they presented *Twelfth Night* or *What You Will*. This is one of

played Olivia was a favourite of mine as she knew exactly what she was communicating and in her role cleared up much confusion in the plot for audience members new to the play. Still, it seemed like she was over-compensating for something; perhaps a lack of passion in the production.

In spite of all this, there is something about Shakespeare and something about performance without walls; in combination, they make magic. So while I am often disappointed by *Dream in High Park*, I go back every year. The ambience never fails and even if I don't learn something about the play,



A sellout crowd braved the Halifax harbourfront at 4 am to see a Canada Day performance of *Midsummer Night's Dream*. photo: Sylvia Nickerson

my favourite plays (Shakespeare or other), so it was with extra enthusiasm that I joined all of the glowing friends, lovers and families this Canada Day before dusk. But while the actors spoke their speeches 'trippingly on the tongue', and while the production was both colourful and visually captivating, I did not gain one new 'interpretation', as Brook puts it, of any character or relationship, or of the play as a whole. In fact, I didn't believe that some of the actors always knew what they were saying.

I tried hard to like the actress playing Viola, as she spoke in an eloquent, pleasing way and was stunningly beautiful in that androgynous fashion perfect for the character. Unfortunately, she didn't make me feel anything. The woman who

I always learn something about audience.

A friend recently suggested to me that what makes a strong show is open-heartedness: when a cast is truly excited about the text and the characters and demonstrates having struggled with their interpretation. A cast of any Shakespeare in the Park has, thanks to that marvellous ambience, the luxury of letting it all hang out. Certain polished production elements become profoundly secondary. The magic doesn't come from flawless deliveries or invisible wires, but from honest humanity and a shared love for a script and its characters. I watch in continual hope for that open-heartedness, which will make another play my favourite or another character my kindred spirit. •••



“Conceited Empire,” continued from page 5 »

cans who want a war in Iraq, and the Europeans who in effect don't want a war. Iraq, being close to Europe, is a supplier of oil to Europe as well as Japan. Nevertheless, they can afford to buy their oil with the money they earn from their industrial exports. They are economically strong enough to not have to control Iraq with military intervention. The US on the other hand, as a consequence of their massive trade deficit, barely has the means to pay for their oil consumption. That is why it is vital to exercise military control over this region on the other side of the globe. On the surface this appears to be a question of "war or no war", but in fact it is most likely a question of whose sphere of influence will Iraq fall under, Europe or America?

Who will win this battle of the spheres of influence?

Most apparent is how clumsy the US has been to date, and

how far they have moved away from any notion of universality. They don't see the world as it really is anymore. They are failing in any balanced and fair approach to their allies. All of this reminds me of Germany under Wilhelm II. The US is losing allies steadily. One gets the impression that an office somewhere in Washington has been tasked with the duty to daily prepare a scheme to develop new enemies for the US.

Is it conceivable that Europe will one day attain the position America has enjoyed?

There will never be another single super power. In addition to the US, Europe, and Japan, Russia will rise again to prominence. China, despite their presently weak technology, will soon join the fray. Nevertheless, the traditional superpowers are all stagnating. But the develop-

ing world is fast gaining. And that is cause for some hope. •

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His newest publication predicts the fall of the United States as the sole superpower: *Après l'Empire: Essai sur la décomposition du système Américain* (available in English from Columbia University Press in February 2004). Todd attracted attention with a similar work in 1976, when he predicted the fall of the Soviet Union based on indicators such as increasing infant mortality rates: *La chute finale: Essai sur la décomposition de la sphère Soviétique*.

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“James Bay,” from page 6 »

to fully assess the impact on a culture without understanding it, especially if I'm expecting to profit?" "We are asked, 'What do you know? Give me your knowledge,' that must be respected... but the white man has the last say and usually what he says, goes."

The community appealed to panel members responsible for formulating the directives to take a personal approach to their task and conduct their work with honour. "There are different kinds of listening: with a pen, ears, mind, heart. It's not just words in speaking, it's spirit too. Sharing is a sacred process we don't understand fully. Sit by the river, experience it - please do that. It's not the same as flying over it. I'm sure it's not written in your mandate, but please do it ... Water is sacred. Because it is sacred we cannot take what we do lightly. Don't let this process be a rubber stamping process. Please do this in honour." ...