

Canada & the 21st Century

Introduction

In the first decade of the 21st century, Canada was forced to look outside of its borders and confront a series of problems and challenges. The problem of climate change continues to be at front and center for many people world-wide as weather patterns continue to change in unexpected ways and storms grow in intensity. In the late 1980s, Canada was one of the leaders trying to protect the environment; however, by 2009 Canada's reputation when it came to the environment took a beating at the United Nations Conference on Climate change in Copenhagen (2009).

The events of 9-11 also significantly influenced both Canada's domestic and foreign policy. In terms of internal or domestic policy, the federal government passed *Bill C-42* in to law giving police special powers of search and seizure, e.g. the police can hold a person indefinitely in jail if they are thought to be involved in terrorism, etc. The attacks on the World Trade Center also led to events culminating in Canada's participating in the War in Afghanistan as part of NATO.

In 2008 events in the United States led to the collapse of the global economy. Although the world-wide recession was the worst seen since the Great Depression, Canada did comparatively quite well throughout the crisis. Canada's conservative banking practices and regulations saved the country from having an economic melt-down like what happened in the United States.

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| <p><i>On September 11, 2001, members belonging to the so-called terrorist organization called Al Qaeda flew passenger airliners into the World Trade Center in New York, the Pentagon, and another plane went down in a farmer's field in Pennsylvania. The terrorist attacks led to the eventual invasion of both Iraq and Afghanistan by the United States and NATO respectively.</i></p> | <p>Canada & 9/11</p> <p>1). The WTC attacks of 9/11 led to a closure of airports around the world. Americans (and citizens of other countries) were stranded in Canadian air ports. The Canadian Government saw to it that these stranded peoples were looked after until the airways were re-opened.</p> <p>2). George W. Bush, president of the United States at the time, publicly thanked America's allies for their assistance and support; however, he did not make any mention of Canada.</p> <p>3). Following the WTC attacks Osama bin Laden claimed responsibility. He was believed to be residing in Afghanistan as a guest of the Taliban. The Americans demanded the Taliban give bin Laden up but the Afghans refused. On October 7, 2001, NATO invaded Afghanistan.</p> <p>4). To fulfil it's NATO commitments Canada participated in the occupation of Afghanistan; however, we were not involved in the initial invasion.</p> <p>5). Canada's main presence was in the turbulent Kandahar Province. As of January 5, 2010, a total of 137 Canadians had been killed in action.</p> | <p>Al Qaeda: a term not used in reference to a single organization but a network of like-minded individuals and groups who share a common hatred of Western civilization and a belief in radical Islamic principles. The term itself is an invention of the American intelligence agencies and has been propagated by the media.</p> <p>George W. Bush: a Republican president who was extremely unpopular outside of the United States.</p> <p>Osama bin Laden: nominal leader of the so-called "Al Qaeda movement"; an American educated Muslim from Yemen.</p> <p>Taliban: a Muslim fundamentalist group that established the basis of a new government following the Afghan Civil War (1992-96).</p> |
| <p><i>President George W. Bush claimed that an "Axis of Evil" (Nor Korea, Iran, Iraq) needed to be dealt with. The Americans (without evidence) argued that Iraq had directly supported the WTC attacks and were a threat to American national security.</i></p> | <p>Canada & the War in Iraq: Diplomacy</p> <p>1). President Bush went to the United Nations asking that a multi-national force invade Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power.</p> <p>2). Canada, Germany, France, and a host of other nations opposed the plan to invade Iraq arguing that it would violate international law.</p> <p>3). Bush argued that the United Nations risked becoming irrelevant if it did not act against Iraq.</p> | <p>Axis of Evil: a phrase used by Bush which reflected his black and white view of the international community.</p> <p>Saddam Hussein: former ally and friend of the United States. He was the dictator of Iraq for several decades before being removed by a coalition of forces that invaded Iraq under American leadership.</p> |

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| <p><i>President Bush argued that the United States would not wait for a "mushroom cloud" over one of its cities to prevent an enemy from using "weapons of mass destruction" against America. The Americans, he argued, would fight a new type of war called pre-emptive war.</i></p> | <p>The War in Iraq</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). On March 20, 2003, against the wishes of the United Nations General Assembly the United States, Great Britain and Spain invaded Iraq. 2). America argued that Hussein had failed to comply with Resolution 687 and therefore the invasion of Iraq was legal. 3). Shortly after the invasion Iraq's forces were defeated, Hussein was captured, and an investigation was launched to find Iraq's so-called WMDs. 4). Hussein was eventually executed but no WMDs were ever found. The justification for the War in Iraq was based on either a deliberate lie or a failure of the intelligence community to get the information they needed. 5). Although it is publicly stated that the United States will eventually leave Iraq, it is unlikely they will ever leave entirely based on the creation of military bases throughout the country along with a massive embassy complex. | <p>Pre-emptive War: a type of defensive war, in that, although you are not actually attacked you <i>perceive</i> (see) a threat and therefore attack your enemy before he can attack you.</p> <p>Resolution 687: Iraq was forced to surrender following the Persian Gulf War. For peace Iraq had to do the following: 1). Destroy all of its chemical and biological weapons; 2). Agree never to develop nuclear weapons; and 3). Submit to on-site inspections of military facilities by UN weapon inspectors.</p> <p>WMDs: (weapons of mass destruction), e.g. nuclear weapons, biological, chemical weapons, etc.</p> |
| <p><i>In 2008 Lehman Brothers filed for bankruptcy protection. This event sparked an immediate drop in consumer confidence and was the first step towards a full-blown recession that had world-wide implications.</i></p> | <p>Canada & the Recession</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). In the United States, banks and mortgage companies are not subject to the same regulations as Canadian firms. 2). Americans tend to carry a heavier debt load than any other industrialized nation so as to live the so-called "American Dream". 3). The problem with the American Dream is it is unrealistic because at some point you actually have to have money (not just loans) to pay for your stuff. 4). The financial crisis which turned in to a full-blown global recession was in large part caused by tens of thousands of Americans defaulting on their mortgage payments (and other loans). 5). When creditors call in their debts and you cannot pay you become insolvent or bankrupt. <p><i>Continued on next page...</i></p> | <p>Lehman Brothers: a major trading and investment company in the United States.</p> <p>Regulations: in Canada a person cannot receive a \$300,000 loan if they are unemployed or cannot actually afford the loan; however, in America loan and mortgage officers receive commissions on every loan—bad or good—they gave out. There was not enough concern about whether or not the loan could be paid back.</p> <p>American Dream: everyone is capable of becoming massively rich, powerful, and get what they want. Historically, this belief used to be backed-up with the notion that through hard work you would earn success.</p> |

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| <p><i>The Glass Steagall Act was repealed in 1999. Some critics of that repeal argue it permitted Wall Street investment banking firms to gamble with their depositors' money that was held in affiliated commercial banks.</i></p> | <p>6). Banks were largely to blame because they were significantly "over leveraged".</p> <p>7). During the financial crisis, banks refused to loan money or extend credit to new businesses.</p> <p>8). Without access to credit new companies could not get started and people could not afford to purchase homes—the economy ground to a halt.</p> <p>9). In Canada, America and Europe, governments "bailed out" the banks that were in trouble by giving the banks money to use as credit.</p> <p>10). The Canadian Government injected around 100 billion dollars into the economy while the American Government injected about 11 trillion.</p> <p>11). Canada was the least hard hit in the global recession because of its conservative banking practices; and Saskatchewan in particular was one of the only places on the planet to register positive economic growth in 2008 and</p> | <p>Over Leveraged: the Stock Market Crashed (1929) because banks became over-leveraged; that is, they lent considerably more money to people than what the banks actually had in their vaults.</p> <p>The Glass-Steagall Act: (1933) prevented banks from being allowed to risk the savings of people or loaning more than 10% of the total amount of savings in their vaults, e.g. if there was 100k of investments than 10k would be available to be loaned. In the case of 2008, banks risked everyone's money <i>and</i> lent out about 300% more money than they actually possessed.</p> |
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| <p><i>In 2001, al-Qaeda destroyed the World Trade Center. American intelligence agencies tracked the leader of al-Qaeda to Afghanistan. The Americans asked the Taliban to give up Osama bin Laden. The Taliban refused. A few short weeks later America led a NATO invasion of Afghanistan.</i></p> | <p>Canada in Afghanistan</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). An American led NATO task force invaded Afghanistan on October 7, 2001. Canada secretly sent 100 soldiers during the opening stages. 2). The main body of Canadian troops did not arrive in the country until January 2002. The Canadian government believed our role would largely be that of a "peace keeper"; however, that role changed. <p><i>Canada's Purpose: The operation was aimed at identifying and neutralizing al-Qaeda and toppling the Taliban regime (which was accused of supporting international terrorism).</i></p> | |
| <p><i>The Canadian commitment was only supposed to last until 2003. Canada worked alongside America and other NATO countries to wipe out Taliban resistance and establish a democratic style of government in Afghanistan.</i></p> | <p>Operation Apollo</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). Canada deployed its troops to the province of Kandahar. Art Eggleton, Canada's Minister of Defence, under the advice of senior military advisers volunteered Canada to work primarily in Kandahar. 2). Canadian troops helped with humanitarian relief efforts. Other tasks Canada was involved in was airfield security and direct combat against Taliban forces. 3). The fighting in the opening stages intensified so Canada was forced to send additional troops. | <p>Kandahar: this province was a Taliban stronghold. Some members of the NDP criticized the Liberals (party in power at the outset of the War in Afghanistan) for allowing our troops to be stationed in this region. Arguably, Kandahar was the most dangerous of all the provinces in Afghanistan (and the Canadian military wasn't necessarily the best equipped).</p> |
| <p><i>What started as a peacekeeping mission turned into a combat mission. Canadian troops were given additional training so they could do both. The War in Afghanistan was the first time since the Korean War that Canadian troops had relieved American troops in a combat situation. There was public outrage to the killing of Canadian combat troops by an American pilot during a training mission.</i></p> | <p>Afghanistan: 2001-2002</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). Canadian special forces were deployed to Afghanistan as part of the American military (without prime minister Jean Chretien's approval). 2). Our special forces were given US Navy Presidential Unit Citations for their success and courage. 3). Operation Anaconda: a large, multinational battle fought to remove the Taliban and al-Qaeda from the Shahi-Kot Valley and Arma Mountains. 4). Corporal Rob Furlong set the record for the longest confirmed sniper kill in combat at 2,430 meters. This record was broken in 2009 by a British sniper. 5). Tarnak Farm Incident: the first Canadian fatalities of the war were due to a "friendly fire" incident involving an American F-16 jet. | <p>Operation Anaconda: an attempt to wrest control of a strategically important area from Taliban forces. The Americans claimed to have killed at least 500 enemies but only 23 bodies were ever found.</p> <p>Rob Furlong: a police officer in Calgary who served as a sniper for Canada.</p> <p>Tarnak Farm Incident: an F-16 dropped a bomb on a group of Canadian soldiers training on a designated live-fire range. The American pilot mistook the Canadians for Taliban insurgents. Four Canadians were killed and eight wounded.</p> |

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| <p><i>In August 2003, the Canadian Forces moved to the northern city of Kabul where it became the commanding nation of the newly formed "International Security Assistance Force".</i></p> | <p>Afghanistan: 2003-2005 Operation Athena</p> <p>1). A two phase military operation, i.e. during phase one Canadians safeguarded (Kabul) the capital city of Afghanistan so that the newly established government of Afghanistan could develop its constitution and hold its first elections.</p> <p>2). Hamid Karzai was declared the winner of the first democratic election in Afghanistan's history on December 9, 2004.</p> <p>3). During phase two Canada assumed overall control of Kandahar province from the United States Army.</p> <p>4). Operation Athena successfully ended in December (2005) having accomplished the "building of the democratic process" in Afghanistan.</p> | <p>International Security Assistance Force: (also called the Coalition Forces) was established by the UN Security Council.</p> <p>Operation Athena: the main purpose of this mission was to train Afghan National Security Forces and assist in the rebuilding of key government institutions; but it also engaged in combat missions with insurgent groups which continued in to 2012.</p> <p>Hamid Karzai: first democratically elected president of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.</p> |
| <p><i>After the success of Operation Athena, Canadian forces were redeployed to Kandahar. Meanwhile the Taliban was massing for an attack in Kandahar (and the Canadians found themselves caught in the middle of a two pronged attack by a sizable force of Taliban).</i></p> | <p>Events: 2006-2009 Operation Archer</p> <p>1). Canada took on a larger military role as part of the Task Force Afghanistan battle group of 2,300 soldiers. The Canadian government extended the army's commitments to Afghanistan by two years (replacing the earlier commitment to withdraw soldiers by 2006).</p> <p>Note: Stephen Harper's New Conservative Party was the governing party of Canada at this time.</p> <p>2). Canadian soldiers were redeployed to Kandahar Province (previously being stationed in Kabul). The Taliban began a major offensive and the Canadians were caught in the middle.</p> <p>3). The Taliban in Kandahar and Helmand provinces were massing. Six Canadian soldiers were killed during fire-fights.</p> | <p>Operation Archer: the purpose of this operation was to reconstruct Afghanistan through the establishment of infrastructure, providing security, and assisting in training the Afghan National Army.</p> <p>Fire-fights: a term used to refer to hand to hand and small arms military engagements or battles.</p> |

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| <p><i>During the Battle of Panjwaii the Canadians found themselves fighting the Taliban in complex mud-walled compounds which made fighting in the Panjwaii District take an almost urban style of fighting in some places. Daily fire-fights, artillery bombardments, and allied airstrikes turned the tides of the battle in favor of the Canadians.</i></p> | <p>Operation Mountain Thrust</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). The Battle of Panjwaii was fought between July and October 2006. 2). Nichola Goddard died during this battle. 3). Canadian and Afghan forces cleared the Panjwaii District of its Taliban strongholds. The Taliban were forced to withdraw. 4). Thinking Panjwaii secure the Canadians left to assist the Americans and British in the Helmand District. Four Canadians were killed during this period. 5). Once the Canadians left the Taliban re-entered Panjwaii. These Taliban were surrounded and pounded with air strikes and artillery. 6). Small detachments of Canadians went in to challenge the Taliban directly. Four soldiers were killed. 7). The Taliban were forced to resist Canadians through suicide bombings and IEDs. <p>Note: an American A-10 jet killed another four Canadians through friendly fire.</p> | <p>Operation Mountain Thrust: a combined NATO-Afghan operation whose primary objective was to quell the ongoing Taliban insurgency in the south of the country.</p> <p>Nichola Goddard: the first female to be killed during combat.</p> <p>IEDs (or Improvised Explosive Devices): a series of devices like garbage cans, rocks, etc. which were detonated remotely when NATO or Coalition Forces passed by.</p> |
| <p><i>The task of removing the Taliban was more difficult than previously thought. Many political theorists were convinced the Taliban was simply "waiting out" NATO, i.e. once NATO left they would go active again. With that said, from 2006-2009 the Taliban increased their presence and activity.</i></p> | <p>Canadian Government Commits</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). On March 13, 2008, Harper's Conservative government passed a motion extending the military mission past February 2009 in to 2011. 2). The Liberals supported extending the military mission because significant Taliban resistance still existed; however, both the NDP and Bloc Quebecois opposed any extension of the mission. | |
| <p><i>To address the problem of increased Taliban activity the Americans sent an additional 30,000 troops to Afghanistan in something called a "surge".</i></p> | <p>Afghanistan & the Surge: 2010</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). Canada's troops remained mostly active in the Panjwaii and Kandahar districts where they were located at the end of 2009. 2). Canadians took part in the Marja Offensive. 3). During the Marja Offensive, Coalition Forces pushed into the town of Marja. Fighting was intense and many allied troops were killed due to Taliban sniper-fire and IEDs. 4). The offensive successfully wrested Marja from Taliban control. | <p>Surge: a term used to refer to a dramatic and immediate increase in the number of troops present in Afghanistan.</p> <p>Marja Offensive: involved 15,000 Afghan, Canadian, French, American, and British troops. This was the largest joint operation of the war up to this point.</p> |

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| <p><i>Canada withdrew the bulk of its troops from Afghanistan in 2011. Stephen Harper stated a "decade of war is enough".</i></p> | <p>Afghanistan: 2011</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). Combat operations ended in July 11. 2). Canadian troops were given the job of training the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police. 3). Literacy problems with both the Afghan police and army hampered the ability to train Afghani's in modern policing and military techniques. | |
| <p><i>Canada played an important part in building democracy, dealing with insurgents and establishing better healthcare and education for Afghan women and children.</i></p> | <p>Afghanistan: Canada's Signature Projects</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). Canada helped rebuild the Dahla Dam and irrigation system. 2). Canada pledged 12 million dollars over three years into improving the education system across Kandahar. 3). Canada pledged 60 million dollars to help immunize an estimated seven million children of diseases like polio. 4). Canadian forces helped decommission tanks, artillery, rocket launchers, etc. used in decades of war in Afghanistan. 5). Canada likewise helped remove 10-15 million mines in Afghanistan. | <p>Dahla Dam: the largest dam in Kandahar Province originally constructed in the 1950s. The dam was being upgraded with the help of the Canadian military.</p> <p>Education System: prior to the NATO invasion women were largely left out of the school system; however, tens of thousands of women received an education while Canada was in Afghanistan. Malala Yousafzai, an outspoken advocate for female rights, was shot in the head and left for dead in 2013. She survived and has become a powerful symbol for democratic rights in the country.</p> |
| <p><i>Countries around the world continued to struggle with the 2008 recession. Canada remained relatively well-off; however, as of 2012 Canadians are carrying an ever greater personal debt load which could lead to some potential problems for Canada.</i></p> | <p>Canada & the Recession: 2011-2012</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). The "Occupy Movement" set up various protests around Canada, e.g. Calgary, Toronto, Montreal, etc. 2). Countries like Greece, Portugal and Italy all continued to struggle with the economic meltdown. 3). While Canada emerged from the economic crisis relatively unscathed, Jim Flaherty warned in 2012 that Canadians continued to spend money they didn't have, e.g. Canadian individuals and households were carrying more debt than they'd ever carried before. 4). One of the main reasons Canada did so while despite the crash was China went on a spending spree building malls, office towers, cities, condos, etc. which boosted Canada's commodities. | <p>Occupy Movement: a protest movement in response to the perceived inequality between the 1% and the 99%.</p> <p>Greece: the Greek government was forced to slash spending on public programs, etc. to qualify for a loan from Germany. The result was months of strikes, protests, and rioting.</p> <p>Jim Flaherty: minister of finance for the Harper government in 2012.</p> <p>Commodities: raw resources like potash, wheat, oil, etc. which are in turn used in finished products.</p> |

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| <p><i>On May 2, 2011, Stephen Harper's Conservative Party was given a majority in the House of Commons. This radically changed the face of Canada's politics.</i></p> | <p>Harper's New Conservatives Win Majority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). The Conservatives won 167 of 309 ridings. 2). The NDP won 102 seats making it the official opposition for the first time in its history. 3). The Liberal Party were reduced to the lowest seat count in its history, e.g. 34. 4). The Bloc Quebecois were reduced to only four seats (making them all but cease to exist). 5). Harper's majority government was indicative of a change in the views of Canadians—moving from the center or left to center-right. | <p>Center/Left/Center-Right: this designation helps pinpoint roughly whether a political party is liberal or conservative (or <i>how</i> liberal or conservative they are). The NDP are described as "leftist" because of their stated aim of redistributing the country's wealth and putting it in to social programs. The Conservatives are considered on the "right" because they stress individuals, and not government, should be taking care or making decisions for themselves.</p> |
| <p><i>On June 14, 2012 Harper used his parliamentary majority to push through a controversial act which contained dozens of new laws and policy changes for Canadians. The opposition parties criticized the omnibus bill as patently "undemocratic" because no consensus building was involved. Harper indicated the bill was necessary to ensure Canada's long term national and economic interests.</i></p> | <p>Harper Uses His Majority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). Over a 24 hour session of Parliament, Harper's Conservative government successfully pushed through a series of new laws. 2). Harper indicated the omnibus bill was necessary to make sure Canada could "whether the coming economic storm". He passed a second omnibus bill in October called the Jobs, Growth and Long-Term Prosperity Act which had little or nothing to do with economics. 3). For example according to this act, the United States coast guard was given the right to arrest and detain people in Canadian waters. Also, the right to protest while wearing a mask was made illegal. Also, certain limitations were removed from developing environmentally sensitive lands for economic purposes. | <p>Omnibus Bill: is a proposed law covering a number of difference or unrelated topics. Omnibus is derived from Latin and means "for everything".</p> <p>Jobs, Growth, Long-Term Prosperity Act: the bill contained changes to dozens of statutes ranging from employment insurance and public pensions to environmental assessments, border security and spy agency oversight.</p> <p>Statutes: a law passed by a governing body like a Parliament.</p> |
| <p>In response to a second Omnibus Bill (called Bill C-45) a movement calling itself Idle-No-More emerged to challenge Harper's and his proposed policy changes.</p> | <p>Idle No More</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). In late October, four women in Saskatchewan began exchanging emails about Bill C-45. They were concerned indigenous rights were being eroded by Bill C-45. 2). The movement said it wanted to "stop the Harper government from passing more laws and legislation that will further erode treaty and indigenous rights and the rights of all Canadians." | <p>Bill C-45: better known as the second omnibus budget bill. The changes that most concern the Idle No More movement are those related to the Indian Act, Navigation Protection Act, Environmental Assessment Act. In addition to the changes, those involved in the movement were angered by what they call a lack of consultation with indigenous peoples. The movement has also expressed concern about other acts and bills from the Harper government.</p> |

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| <p><i>Several senators were accused of fraudulently claiming travel and housing expenses. The scandal has reopened the debate about whether the Senate should be abolished altogether.</i></p> | <p>Senate Expenses Scandal</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). The four senators investigated for fraud were Mike Duffy, Mac Harb, Pamella Wallin and Patrick Brazeau. 2). All four senators were required to pay back tens of thousands of dollars in fraudulently claimed expenses. 3). Mike Duffy caused the most controversy because the New Conservative Party actually paid his expenses for him. This action on the part of the PMO embarrassed Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Harper did not actually have anything to do with paying off Duffy's expenses. | <p>Mike Duffy: former journalist with the CBC.</p> <p>PMO: this acronym stands for "prime minister's office".</p> <p>Nigel Wright was Chief of Staff and responsible for using a Conservative Party "slush fund" to pay Duffy's expenses. Wright resigned following the controversy created by his paying off Duffy's expenses.</p> |
| <p><i>The amount of carbon in the atmosphere has been measured since 1958. Prior to the Industrial Revolution carbon ranged around the 250 ppm. The concern is of course that when atmospheric CO2 concentrations increase, more outgoing radiation is absorbed, leading to warming of the Earth's surface. In May, 2013, we passed this Carbon milestone. Although the story garnered some initial attention people just sort of went back to normal.</i></p> | <p>Carbon in Atmosphere Reaches 400 PPM</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). CO2 concentrations haven't been this high in millions of years. Even more alarming is the rate of increase in the last five decades and the fact that CO2 stays in the atmosphere for hundreds or thousands of years. This milestone is a wake up call that our actions in response to climate change need to match the persistent rise in CO2. Climate change is a threat to life on Earth and we can no longer afford to be spectators. 2). We are projected to hit the 450 ppm mark in 20 years and 500 ppm around mid-century (assuming the current trend continues). 3). Canada is doing nothing about carbon or greenhouse gas emissions. The Alberta tar sands are contributing significantly to a global problem. 4). There are still some who continue to deny climate change is occurring or that we are responsible. Thus, in 2013 to help put a stop to the squabbling, two dozen scientists from three continents analyzed the abstracts of 12,000 peer-reviewed scientific papers on climate change published between 1991 and 2011. They also surveyed the authors of those papers, to find out how well the analysis agreed with the authors' own views on how their papers presented the cause of climate change. 5). The survey discovered among actual climate scientists there was a 97% consensus climate change was anthropogenic. | <p>Tar Sands: Alberta has roughly 11% of Canada's population but generates 40% of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions. The province's tar sands deposit is the largest source of oil outside of Saudi Arabia (and one of the dirtiest). An area the size of Florida is slated to be developed; and if the sands were completely developed more man-made CO2 would be emitted than <i>in the entire history of humankind</i>. Carbon dioxide in the atmosphere eventually would reach levels higher than in the Pliocene era, more than 2.5 million years ago, when the sea level was at least 50 feet higher than it is now. That level of heat-trapping gases would assure that the disintegration of the ice sheets would accelerate out of control. Sea levels would rise and destroy coastal cities. Global temperatures would become intolerable. Twenty to 50 percent of the planet's species would be driven to extinction. Civilization would be at risk. We would leave our children a climate that they could not control.</p> <p>Anthropogenic: a result of humankind's industrial activity.</p> |

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| <p><i>The Canadian Government wants to establish a pipeline to send its oil from the Alberta tar sands to the United States. Not all Americans support the idea of a pipeline. Canada has said it would develop this resource and sell to China if the Americans weren't interested.</i></p> | <p>Keystone XL Pipeline</p> <p>1). The proposed pipeline is controversial for several reasons: firstly, the amount of CO2 being emitted from this region is concerning to scientists; secondly, indigenous peoples want to be consulted but have largely been left out of the discussions; thirdly, the pipeline was going to pass through several aquifers (drinking water locations) in the United States.</p> <p>2). As of January, 2014, the pipeline was still being debated.</p> | <p>Keystone Pipeline: a pipeline beginning in Hardisty, Alta., and extending south to Steele City, Neb. This pipeline is a critical infrastructure project for the energy security of the United States and for strengthening the American economy.</p> |
| <p><i>On July 5, 2013, a train derailed in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, killing 42 people, flattening 30 buildings and devastating a square kilometer.</i></p> | <p>Lac-Mégantic Rail Disaster</p> <p>1). The train was owned by the United States based Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway. The train was left unattended on the night of July 5; it sped down the track de-railing in the downtown of Lac-Mégantic.</p> <p>2). The train was hauling Bakken formation crude oil. Some analysts believe the explosion was particularly large because of an admixture of hydraulic fracturing chemicals and the oil.</p> | <p>Bakken Formation: this formation is located in Montana, North Dakota, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The oil contained in this formation is accessible using new hydraulic fracturing.</p> <p>Hydraulic Fracturing: a process of digging wells and then fracturing ("fracking") rock using a combination of water and chemicals thereby releasing natural gas, oil, etc.</p> <p>Note: according to the <i>Energy Policy Act</i> (2005) hydraulic fracturing companies do not have to reveal what chemicals they use. For more information please see the documentaries <i>Gasland</i> and <i>Gasland II</i>.</p> |
| <p><i>In 2012 Edward Snowden, a former CIA operative, released to the world hundreds of documents proving the American Government had been collecting information on both its people and the citizens of other countries.</i></p> | <p>Canada Spy Scandal</p> <p>1). The American Government was embarrassed when documents were released to the media proving the Americans were spying on leaders from other countries, e.g. Andrea Merkel (Germany), etc.</p> <p>2). Canada was brought in to this controversy when Snowden released documents demonstrating our government had allowed the NSA to tap the phones of leaders attending a G20 summit in 2010.</p> | <p>NSA (National Security Agency): is tasked with the global monitoring, collection, decoding, translation and analysis of information and data for foreign intelligence and counterintelligence purposes. As part of the growing practice of mass surveillance in the United States, the NSA collects and stores all phone records of all American citizens.</p> |