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Nurses demand Obama vouch for safety of XL pipeline

By Special to Peoplesworld.org



The nation's largest union of nurses today called on Secretary of State John Kerry and the Obama administration to issue a finding that the Keystone XL "will not adversely impact the health and safety of the American people" prior to any final decision on the controversial project.

Leaders of National Nurses United sent the formal request today to Secretary of State Kerry, and issued the public letter at a Washington press conference convened by U.S. Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., who chairs the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works. The NNU letter endorses a similar request made by Sen. Boxer herself.

In its letter, NNU said it concurs with Boxer the State Department has done an inadequate review of what appears to be serious risks for public health posed by the pipeline and the dirty tar sands oil it would carry. Noting that the State Department must make a national interest determination on whether to approve the pipeline, NNU said that it believes that "a project that places the health and safety of Americans at substantial risk cannot possibly be in our national interest." NNU is inviting others to join them in petitioning the State Department to conduct a health impact study prior to acting on the pipeline. The nurses

also released a new short video titled "Don't Pipeline My Patients." Both the petition and video are available on the NNU website, at www.nationalnursesunited.org.

NNU announced its opposition to Keystone in early 2013, citing harmful health hazards then emerging with tar sands oil, tar sands pipeline spills, and tar sands refining, as well as for the long term contribution tar sands and Keystone add to the climate crisis.

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"In the year since we first declared our opposition, more reports have surfaced that should raise serious alarm about the health impacts of Keystone," said NNU Co-President Karen Higgins, RN today.

Tar sands mining pollutants, for example,

Tar sands refining has been linked to serious ailments of the nervous and respiratory systems.

have been linked to cancer, leukemia, genetic damage, and birth defects. Tar sands pipeline spills in Michigan and Arkansas have beset local residents with cardiovascular, gastrointestinal, neurological, and respiratory impacts, as well as persistent coughs, headaches, nausea, eye and skin problems, said Higgins.

Tar sands refining has been linked to serious ailments of the nervous and respiratory systems. NNU is also concerned about toxic dust storms that have threatened neighborhoods and accumulated in homes and areas where children play in Chicago and Detroit, Higgins added.

NNU is also concerned about the long term contribution that tar sands oil and the Keystone pipeline will make to the global rise on greenhouse gas emissions and the climate crisis - and the growing adverse health issues inflamed by climate change.

Higher air temperatures can increase bacteria-related food poisoning, such as salmonella, and animal-borne diseases such as West Nile virus. Ground level ozone contaminants can damage lung tissue, reduce lung function, and increase

respiratory ailments. Pediatricians have said they are already witnessing a rise in vector-borne diseases including diarrhea, cholera, gastroenteritis, typhoid, and hepatitis due to environmental factors and the effects of climate change.

For several years NNU has been dispatching teams of RN volunteers to provide disaster relief in response to weather disasters, such as Hurricanes Sandy and Katrina, and most recently Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, all of which many experts believe are fueled by climate change. "Our members have provided care for thousands of patients who have suffered serious injuries as well as the loss of family members, their homes, and their livelihoods," Higgins noted.

"Nurses and our families are also affected by environmental pollution, and have much at stake if Keystone XL is given the green light," Higgins concluded. "It is for our patients, our members, our families, and our communities that we speak out, and call on the Administration to order an immediate health impact study and not authorize a pipeline that will harm our planet and our health."

Feinstein blows the whistle on CIA torture

By PW Editorial Board

California Senior Senator Dianne Feinstein, a longtime member of the Senate Intelligence Committee and a staunch past public defender of the CIA, exposed repeated CIA lies to the Intelligence Committee about the so-called "enhanced interrogation" program against suspected terrorists. She charges that documents provided by former director Leon Panetta proved this program to have included "harsh" torture, contrary to statements of the CIA leaders under oath before the Committee.

Further, she accuses the CIA of destroying or removing previously provided electronic records of interrogations where numerous torture methods - not only waterboarding - were used. Senator Feinstein went public to counter CIA cover-up lies by current director John Brennan alleging the Committees' own staff was responsible for "hacking" the information.

It does not take too much speculation to see the outlines of the unfolding scandal. Vice Presi-

dent Cheney for sure, and probably President Bush, and possibly even President Obama instructed the CIA to use any means necessary to extract information from suspects. CIA officers clearly engaged in torture and did so under either direct or indirect orders from the highest level, and are now clearly attempting to organize a cover-up in the face of several investigations of criminal actions in the torture program. We welcome Senator Feinstein's courage. No one should be naive about the lengths to which torturers will go to avoid the reckoning they surely deserve. It remains to be seen if Congress can make even a dent in the arrogance of the CIA, and, since we are living in the post-Snowden and Wikileaks world, the entire national security establishment. If they do not, one trembles to think of the costs that will ultimately be paid if the people have to fix this corruption themselves. A full investigation is needed immediately!

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Deportees, families tell heart-rending stories

By Chelsea Wier

Last year, environmental peril seemed imminent as legislation was passed greenlighting fracking in California. On Feb. 20 this year, state senators Holly Mitchell, D.-Los Angeles, and Mark Leno, D.-San Francisco, took the first step toward undoing some of that damage. They introduced the bill SB 1132, which if passed would impose a moratorium on the natural gas drilling practice in LA.

Since 2008, the Obama administration has deported almost 2 million people, more than during any other presidency. Every March for the past four years, the undocumented community and their allies in Chicago and around the country have gathered to say “Not one more.” This year, the March 8 demonstration began with a performance by Elephant Rebellion, followed by speakers from the undocumented community, including Anibal Fuentes, a father who, with the support of the Immigrant Youth Justice League, has been fighting deportation. Anibal recently won a six-month stay of deportation, but still fears being torn from his wife and infant son when that stay expires. “I never thought it was immigration. Their vests said ‘Police,’” Fuentes said of the raid on his apartment building that resulted in his detention. The same building has been raided four times by federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents. Anibal has no criminal record, and fears returning to Guatemala, where his father was kidnapped four times before he died.

Another speaker, Marcela Espinoza, an undocumented queer activist, recently returned to Chicago as a part of the the National Immigrant Youth Alliance’s Bring Them Home Campaign after a decade apart from her family, who came to Chicago when she was only six. After spending most of her life here and completing high school, Marcela returned to Mexico to care for her ailing grandmother, unsure if she would ever be able to return home to the rest of her family because of her lack of immigration papers. She described



ness she felt having to leave them at the airport when they returned home to Chicago. She said she didn’t know how to deal with her situation.

Sara Briseño, an undocumented student activist, talked about suicidal tendencies brought on by the incredible stress these out-of-control deportation practices put on families. Maria Paz described her husband’s arrest and the deplorable conditions of his 30-day imprisonment: moldy food and the constant fear of solitary confinement. She was given only two minutes, with absolutely no physical contact, to say goodbye to her husband before he was forced to leave the country.

Maria Sanchez spoke of her son Octavio’s seven-month detention before he was deported last November. Maria Paz scolded President Obama for his broken promises on immigration reform. Despite vows to only focus on deporting people with criminal records, people like Anibal Fuentes are being torn from their families every day. More and more people are coming out of the shadows of fear to bring attention to the unprecedented number of deportations, inexcusable detention conditions, and most importantly, the countless families being being torn apart because of these practices.

The Obama administration has deported almost 2 million people.

Students rally to support Temple U. professor

By Ben Sears

Dr. Anthony Monteiro, prominent scholar and popular professor among his students, has been told that his contract will not be renewed at the end of this academic year. As it happens, Temple University may have over reached in this attempt to terminate such a faculty member.

Professor Monteiro, a long-time faculty member and one of the most instrumental in founding Temple's African American Studies Department, has many students and former students on his side. He has a reputation as a prominent authority in African American history and philosophy. The author of numerous articles, he is in particular an authority on the life and work of W.E.B. DuBois. As he persuasively argues, in order to understand the African American experience, one cannot ignore or shy away from its tradition of radical, humanist thought. These are among the points that were made at a recent campus rally calling for Monteiro's reinstatement with tenure. The view is widely held that Monteiro's termination is part of the university's attempt to join a national trend by sticking to a more narrow and conservative approach to the liberal arts.

Among the speakers were students, community members and labor leaders who came to voice their support. A leaflet distributed at the rally urged supporters to call People Utilizing Real Power (PURP) at 484 679-6322 for more information and to get involved.

El camino de la democracia en Venezuela

Blanca Eekhout

Vamos a lograr mantener el camino de la paz, de la democracia, de la independencia y de la soberanía en Venezuela. Derrotaremos a los actores del terrorismo internacional", sostuvo la coordinadora nacional del Gran Polo Patriótico (GPP), Blanca Eekhout.

En la marcha que realizada en el Paseo Los Próceres, Caracas, en apoyo a la Fuerza Armada Nacional Bolivariana, la dirigente socialista señaló que ante las pretensiones de Estados Unidos de "sembrar violencia, quebrar la unidad de nuestro pueblo, hoy más que nunca se expresa la unidad cívico-militar, que es la unidad del pueblo uniformado y del pueblo en la calle, del pueblo campesino, obrero, trabajador y los estudiantes".

Recordó que el ejército libertador surgió justamente del pueblo, que se hizo soldado para lograr la independencia. "Eso se ha materializado hoy como legado del Comandante Hugo Chávez", resaltó.

Subrayó que el valiente y pacífico pueblo venezolano tendrá "alegría, vida y futuro para nuestros hijos".

Al pueblo consciente, patriota y humanista le hizo un llamado a no caer en provocaciones de los grupos violentos, al tiempo que lo exhortó a mantenerse alerta, movilizado y ocupando espacios que se mantienen en paz. Asimismo, pidió "exigir justicia a aquellas autoridades que fueron escogidas para hacer un gobierno local y que hoy utilizan las alcaldías para destruir los bienes públicos, para

destruir el patrimonio público, el ambiente y para además violar los derechos de los ciudadanos y ciudadanas".

Eekhout fue enfática al subrayar que "la única vía en este país es la de la paz; la violencia no le conviene a nadie, sino a aquellos que pretenden a través de la guerra venir a saquear los recursos petroleros de nuestro territorio y dividir la República".

Eekhout, afirmó este viernes que la violencia fascista será derrotada democráticamente por la Revolución Bolivariana.

"Los grupos que pretenden seguir con la violencia quieren echar por tierra la democracia revolucionaria, contenida en la Constitución de la República, en el poder del pueblo y en las instituciones del Estado; pero nosotros los derrotaremos en el marco de la Constitución", expresó durante el foro Mujeres en revolución: una mirada feminista al socialismo bolivariano, realizado en Caracas.

"Nuestros hombres y mujeres están haciendo de la política un instrumento de lucha para la vida, para la solidaridad, para el encuentro de todos", agregó la dirigente nacional.

Asimismo reiteró que Venezuela está siendo víctima de una "guerra brutal de la dictadura mediática internacional y de la oligarquía fascista de nuestro país".

La violencia protagonizada por grupos de la ultraderecha ha dejado, desde el pasado 12 de febrero, 28 venezolanos fallecidos y 365 heridos en el territorio nacional.

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