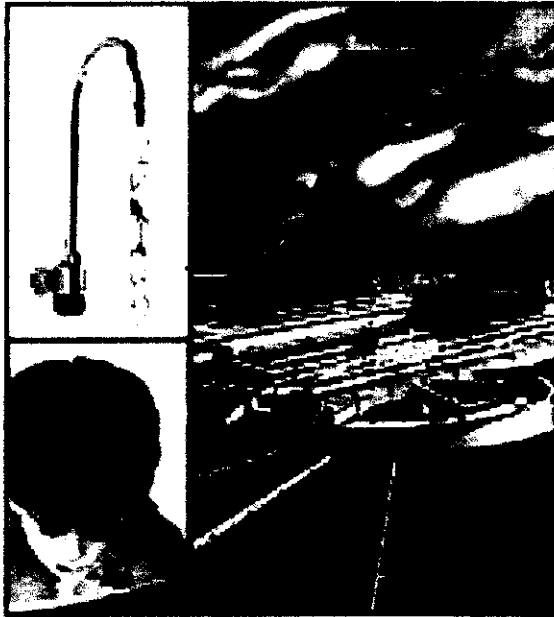


# **The Geopolitics of Water: Two Case Studies on the Brazil and Turkey Dam Projects**



**Suggested Level: Grades 9 through 12**

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## LESSON PLAN: THE GEOPOLITICS OF WATER

- Materials:**
- Maps (4)
  - List of Web sources (handout #9)
  - List of relevant vocabulary (handout#10)
  - Handout#1: Quiz from United Nations Website
  - Handout#2: "Dawn of a Thirsty Century"
  - Handout#3: What I already knew/what I learned/what I want to know
  - Handout#4: Fact sheet on Brazil
  - Handout#5: Articles on Brazilian dam projects
  - Handout#6: Questions about the Brazilian dam projects
  - Handout#7: The Turkish dam Controversy and the Kurds
  - Handout #8: Questions on the Turkish Dam Controversy and the Kurds
  - Teacher handouts (2)

**Time:** Three sessions of one hour each (or two sessions of two hours each if teaching in blocks) .

- Vocabulary:**
- Globalization
  - Privatization
  - Commodification
  - Water as a social good
  - Water as an economic good
  - Dams

### Standards

#### Social Studies Standards:

- *History:* 1SS-P1 (PO1,PO2), 1SS-P2 (PO1, PO3, PO4), 1SS-P3 (PO1, PO2, PO3), 1SS-P11 (PO1, PO2, PO3), 1SS-P12 (PO2), 1SS-P18 (PO1)
- *Geography:* 3SS-P1 (PO1, PO2), 3SS-P2 (PO1, PO2, PO3, PO4), 3SS-P3 (PO4),3SS-P4 (PO1, PO3, PO4, PO6), 3SS-P5 (PO2, PO3)
- *Economics:* 4SS-P1 (PO1), 4SS-P2 (PO3), 4SS-P4 (PO1, PO2, PO4), 4SS-P7 (PO7).

#### Writing and Literature Standards:

- *Reading:* R-P1 (PO1, PO2, PO3, PO4, PO5), R-P3 (PO1, PO2, PO3)
- *Writing:* W-P1 (PO1, PO2, PO3, PO4, PO5), W-P2 (PO1, PO2, PO3, PO4), W-P4 (PO1, PO2, PO3, PO4).
- *Listening and Speaking:* all apply
- *Viewing and Presenting:* all apply

**Objectives:**

1. Students understand the major problems related to water.
2. Students know specific trends shaping the politics of water, including privatization and globalization.
3. Students understand the political, environmental and humanitarian factors involved in the ownership and distribution of water and water sources.
4. Students transfer the previous objectives to the analysis of case studies where water politics are transforming access to and affordability of water, focusing on the dam projects in Brazil and Turkey.

**Goals:**

*Each student will:*

- Read and research the dam projects in Brazil (Latin America), then Turkey (Middle East).
- Write a letter to an ambassador in the United Nations expressing agreement or discontent to this projects.
- Student justifies each comment with relevant arguments and concrete examples.

*As a class/ in groups, students will:*

- Discuss both dam projects.
- Compare and contrast each project in terms of its causes, development and consequences.
- Create a list of pros and cons for each project
- Come up with their own criteria about whether or not these projects should continue. Students explain why or why not and support their reasoning with additional research.

### **Description of lesson plan:**

1. Students answer quiz on handout #1 from the United Nations Web Site. Discuss the answers and how they reveal that talking about water is very serious. What did they know already? Do they think people are aware of how valuable water is? Why or why not?
2. Students read Handout #2: Dawn of a Thirsty Century. As they read, ask them to fill in handout#3.
3. Share answers in class and discuss why water is a global problem and how things might be different in a pre-global society.
4. Students identify Brazil on a map (map#1). Explain the climate and regions of Brazil and ask students what problems Brazil might be facing in terms of water policies.
5. As a class, students go over the fact sheet (handout #4).
6. Teacher explains development, how it led to dependency, and the new neoliberal plan to open up markets to global trade.

### **DAMS**

7. Ask students if they know what a dam is, what it is for, and what it looks like. Do they know any dam projects? Why do they believe dams are important? What do they predict might be the negative and positive consequences of dams? What do they know about the Hoover dam in Arizona?
8. Students read handout # 5 (Articles on Brazilian dam projects) and in groups, they answer questions on handout #6 on Brazil, the Belo Monte Dam, and the Kayapo Indians.
9. Students read handout#7 (Articles on Turkish dam projects) and in groups, they answer questions on handout #8 on the Turkish Dam Controversy and the Kurds.
10. Students discuss the reading and questions in class. What makes these case studies truly global? Why couldn't they have happened, in their particular ways, 100 years ago? Whose rights should take precedence: developers', environmentalists', the

people living in the area? Which governmental entity should have the last word, the state's, the city's, or the countryside's? What are the similarities and differences between both projects. What are the issues at stake? (see teacher handout#1)

11. Divide students into five groups: Brazilian government, the Kayapos, Turkish government, Syrian government and the Kurds. They have twenty minutes to discuss reasons why their groups would be for or against the building of a dam (regardless of personal opinions). The students should report their answers to the class.
12. Students discuss as a whole the issues affecting the construction of large-scale developmental projects, resistance to them, and how globalization makes both scenarios possible.

### **Extensions**

- Students research the latest developments of these projects.
- What is the Puebla-Panama plan? What would it mean for the communities living in the South of Mexico? Students write a report on this plan and predict its possible outcomes.
- Students research the history of the Central Arizona Project, a massive federally funded project that brings water from the Colorado river to farmers in Arizona, so that growing urban communities like Phoenix and Tucson can use pure groundwater for drinking needs. Now Phoenix and Tucson both are relying upon CAP water (in Tucson it is currently a supplement and will eventually become a high proportion of CAP mixed with low proportion of groundwater). What happened to change the way CAP water is currently used from the ways in which the ways it was originally intended?
- Write a report on the achievements of the Arizona groundwater act of 1980. When it was adopted, it was hailed as groundbreaking legislation, and has subsequently been revised. How well has the Arizona Groundwater Act worked in terms of its original objectives? What major changes have come about as a result? Based on your research, do you think the AGA needs more modifications?
- Interview an official from Tucson Water to see how well water conservations

programs are working. Do we use less water overall now than we did ten years ago? What can you discern from your results?

- Imagine that you are living in Tucson in the year 2010, and the City declares a water emergency in the middle of July. The reservoirs where water is stored have reached dangerously low levels, and so the Major and Council decide to impose water rationing. Each household will have water only six hours a day. Write a report describing how you and your family would reorganize your lives to live with the water rationing. Be specific on every detail about how to use the water. This is a reality today. In the summer of 2000, Herrnosillo, suffered a heavy rationing of water.

### **Cross-discipline suggestions**

#### **Writing & Literature:**

- Students write an essay on the importance of water. Welcome poetry and poetic prose.
- Students analyze the language used in the conservation of water campaigns. Do they think language is effective? how and how not? Have them write their own phrases to influence people use of water.

#### **Science:**

- Students look at the environmental effects of water projects
- Students learn how climate interacts with human activity to influence the availability of water.
- Students look at alternative sources of water, like Antarctica and comets. How does science look at these possibilities? Do you think they will be viable some day? Justify your answer with actual research.

**Foreign language classroom:**

- Students dialogue with a UN representative or indigenous person of a Spanish speaking country about the dam, or water resources.
- Students research the path of water from raindrop to taking a drink. They write it in Spanish and represent it in class.
- Students write a song in Spanish about water, and the importance of caring for its correct use.

**Fine Arts:**

- Students design a mural or three dimensional artwork that represents the importance of water.
- Students research NGO's dedicated to water conservation and design their artwork so it represents the NGO's specific mission.

(The teacher will send the best projects to the NGO and hope they will be used as a logo in their ongoing campaigns).

## Handout #1: Quiz on Water

Indicate the right answer:

**Q1.** How much of the world's water is suitable for human use?

0.25%            2.5%            25%

**Q2.** Which human activity uses more water?

Personal hygiene            Cooking            Irrigation

**Q3.** How much water does one city-dweller use per day just by taking a shower, flushing the toilet, washing dishes and clothes, etc.?

2-5 liters            100-300 liters            1,000-1,500 liters

**Q4.** How many tanker trucks would be needed to bring and take away water sufficient for a town of about 10,000 inhabitants?

1 truck per person            2 trucks per person            3 kilometers worth of trucks per person

**Q5.** Imagine your tap is leaking drop after drop. How much water is lost from this leaking tap per day?

About 100 liters of water            About a glass of water            About the same as a toilet flushing

**Q6.** Which of the following products takes the **most** water to produce?

Wool            Beer            Paper

**Q7.** How many liters of water are needed to grow one kilogram of **chicken**?

3-5 liters            3, 500 liters            70,000 liters

**Q8.** How many liters of water are needed to grow one kilogram of **rice** and one kilogram of **beef**?

\_\_\_ 1 kg rice: 19 liters | 1 kg beef: 100 liters  
\_\_\_ 1 kg rice: 190 liters | 1 kg beef: 1,000 liters  
\_\_\_ 1 kg rice: 1900 liters | 1 kg beef: 100,000 liters

**Q9.** What is the estimated number of people globally without access to a safe water supply?

\_\_\_ 400 million w/o safe water supply  
\_\_\_ 1 billion w/o safe water supply  
\_\_\_ 4 billion w/o safe water supply



## Handout #1: Quiz on Water/ Teacher Version

Circle the right answer:

**Q1.** How much of the world's water is suitable for human use?

0.25%

2.5%

25%

**A1.** 0.25% of all fresh water. 90% is held in glaciers and polar icecaps or locked in deep aquifers.

**Q2.** Which human activity uses more water?

Personal hygiene

Cooking

Irrigation

**A2.** Irrigation. 70% of water is used for this purpose.

**Q3.** How much water does one city-dweller use per day just by taking a shower, flushing the toilet, washing dishes and clothes, etc.?

2-5 liters

100-300 liters

1,000-1,500 liters

**A3. At the lower end:** For example, the daily water consumption in the city of Hong Kong, China, is 112 liters per person.

**At the high end:** The average consumption in Bangkok is about 265 liters per person per day.

**Q4.** How many tanker trucks would be needed to bring and take away water sufficient for a town of about 10,000 inhabitants?

1 truck  
per person

2 trucks  
per person

3 kilometers worth of trucks  
per person

**A4. In our fictive example,** each day a convoy of 150 tanker trucks (a queue 3 km long) would be needed to bring the water to the 10,000 inhabitants.

**Q5.** Imagine your tap is leaking drop after drop. How much water is lost from this leaking tap per day?

About 100 liters  
of water

About a glass  
of water

About the same as  
a toilet flushing

**A5. Yes, a leaking tap** can lose up to 100 liters per day, which is the equivalent of about eight buckets of water.

**Fact:** If the tap keeps dripping over one year, about 35,000 liters of clean fresh water will be lost."

**Q6.** Which of the following products takes the **most** water to produce?

Wool

Beer

Paper

**A6.** 1 liter of **beer** requires **25** liters of water. 1 kg of **wool** takes **150** liters. 1 kg of **paper** demands **300** liters.

**Q7.** How many liters of water are needed to grow one kilogram of **chicken**?

3-5 liters

3, 500 liters

70,000 liters

**A7.** **3,500** liters = 1 kg of broiler chicken.

**Fact:** The bird drinks little of this water -most of it is used to grow its feed.

**Q8.** How **many** liters of water are needed to grow one kilogram of **rice** and one kilogram of **beef**?

\_\_\_ 1 kg rice: 19 liters | 1 kg beef: 100 liters

\_\_\_ 1 kg rice: 190 liters | 1 kg beef: 1,000 liters

\_\_\_ 1 kg rice: 1900 liters | 1 kg beef: 100,000 liters

**A8.** **Rice** needs about 1,900 liters. Rice is the most thirsty grain crop. One kilogram of **beef** needs a staggering 100,000 liters of water

**Fact:** The animals drinks little of this water - most of it is used to grow their

**Q9.** What is the estimated number of people globally without access to a safe water supply?

\_\_\_ 400 million w/o safe water supply

\_\_\_ 1 billion w/o safe water supply

\_\_\_ 4 billion w/o safe water supply

**A9. Yes, at the end of 1999,** about one billion people lacked access to a safe drinking water supply.

**2.4 billion** people did not enjoy access to modern sanitation facilities. This constitutes over one third of the world's population.

(Use for each of the readings)

Handout #3

What I already knew

What I have learned

What I want to know

## FACT SHEET FOR BRAZIL

- The history: Brazil was “discovered” by the explorer Pedro Álvares Cabral in 1500 and became a Portuguese colony. In 1822, Brazil changed from a colony to an empire ruled by the Portuguese king’s son. In 1889, Brazil became a federal republic.
- The land: covers 8,511,965 square kilometers, making it the world’s largest tropical country. It’s composed of beaches, mountains, rivers, hills, plains, the Amazon rainforest and the Amazon river and its tributaries. The rainforest is home to the most varied plant life on Earth, with 50,000 different species.
- The people: as of 1998, there were 166 million people living in Brazil. There were four million Native Americans before the Portuguese arrived; as of 1995, there were only 311,656 indigenous people living in the country. In 1538, the first slaves from Africa were brought over. By the time slavery was abolished in 1822, there were four million Africans living in Brazil. Even today, the majority of the population is black or mulatto.
- The religion: 75% of the population identify themselves as Roman Catholic. 20% claim to be Protestant. 5% follow African or syncretistic religions such as Candomble, Xango, Macumba, or Umbanda. However, many people follow more than one religion.
- The language: Portuguese is the official language, and as of 1995, 98.7% of the population spoke it. At the same time, there were 236 native languages, spoken by 1% of the population. Spanish, English and French are also spoken.
- The economy: Brazil’s economy has gone in cycles, based on the performance of a single export commodity. Brazilwood was exported in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, sugarcane in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, precious metals and gems in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, rubber and cocoa in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and coffee in the early 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Between 1968 and 1980, the economy was growing at 8.9% per year. After that, it began to falter, due to the rising price of crude oil, the increasing interest rate on Brazil’s foreign debts and the falling prices for raw materials on the international market. Currently, the Brazilian government is using investment in new large-scale projects (such as hydroelectricity) to increase exports, decrease imports, and pay off debts.
- The Belo Monte Dam: One of 47 other dams proposed to be built along the Xingu River in the state of Pará. The plans for it were released in 1987, angering the Kayapo and other indigenous groups who were not consulted. Because the World Bank withdrew their funding, along with the successful protest at Altamira, Brazil “shelved” the plan for this dam. However, as of April 2000, the government still wants to go through with the project. It will be offered for sale to the private sector in 2003 and they hope to have it completed by 2009.

# IRN's Latin America Campaigns

International Rivers Network

Last updated Wednesday, 27-Oct-1999 11:49:06 PDT

[Home](#) | [About IRN](#) | [About Rivers and Dams](#) | [Publications](#) | [How to get involved](#) | [Search](#)

## River Systems

- [Bio Bio](#) (Chile)
- [Paraná-Paraguay](#)  
(Brazil-Paraguay-Argentina)
- [Chixoy](#) (Guatemala)

## Other Items

- [Background](#) to the damming of Latin America
- [Submissions](#) to the WCD
- The [Ahuas Declaration](#)

- [River of Words](#) in [Spanish](#) and in [Portuguese](#)
- [World Rivers Review](#) in [Spanish](#) and in [Portuguese](#)
- [Email](#) the Latin American Campaigns

- [Versión en Español](#)

## The Damming of Latin America History Threatens to Repeat Itself as a New Generation of Boondoggles and Bad Deals Surfaces.

By Glenn Switkes

Dams for power... dams for irrigation... dams for development. Latin America's energy planners have tapped all possible sites and all possible reasons in their schemes to dam the region's rivers. There is even a nightmare of a blueprint by the US-based Hudson Institute to dam the Amazon and its tributaries, as part of a Cold War-era plan to create a series of "Great Lakes" on whose shores people from around the world would seek shelter in the event of nuclear war.

Huge dams became imposing monuments to the military despots who seized power in Latin America during the 1960s, '70s and '80s. Notorious dams such as Itaipú, Guri, Tucurui and Yacyretá became the center-pieces of ambitious plans to expand mining and industry. They also lit the bare light bulbs in the swelling shantytowns around Asunción and São Paulo where the victims of rural land wars took refuge.

Many of the rivers of the region were strangled by these projects, turned into staircases of dead lakes, but the military regimes were content as long as the dollars continued flowing freely into their coffers. Meanwhile, Latin America's debt to foreign banks was rising at a dizzying rate. As the World Bank looked the other way, hustlers trafficked millions of dollars in phantom steel and cement, rose to become senators and presidents, then borrowed even more money for the next round of boondoggles. Equipment suppliers and engineering consultants from Tokyo and Oslo peddled their services, passing unmarked envelopes to public officials as appreciation for their cooperation.

Yacyretá Dam went \$10 billion in debt, Itaipu \$20 billion. At least 40 percent of Brazil's massive foreign debt was run up for investments by the electric sector. The dictators must have known they wouldn't be around to see the bills become due. Millions of people were forcibly removed from their homes as their lands were flooded.

Deprived of their livelihoods, their food supplies depleted, their water polluted, these mostly rural people were pushed further into poverty by these so-called "engines of development." Shocking images form a grim scrapbook of the

region's dam-building hey-day: monkeys howling in the rising waters, millions of hectares of rainforests and other critical ecosystems drowning in stagnant black water, indigenous families being led away from age-old communities to shabby relocation camps, fish floating belly up, and hired gunmen to keep project opponents from taking to the streets in protest. Dissent was brutally crushed in a number of hushed-up incidents. In Guatemala, Chixoy Dam opponents were murdered. In Paraguay, the police bludgeoned squatters who built makeshift huts on the shore of Yacyretá reservoir. In Colombia, the oppression against dam opponents continues, with the brutal assassination of indigenous leaders.

As the era of free spending came to a close, society began to awaken to the problems posed by large dams, and to view them as symbols of the political repression the region had suffered – and to face the daunting fact that, in the end, they would be paying the bill. The budding of democracy in Latin America was vividly confirmed by television images of a Kayapó woman warrior running the blade of her machete across the cheek of a power company director in Altamira and by thousands of farmers in the south of Brazil daring to occupy dam sites and electric company offices.

Environmental regulations now make the process of planning and approving a dam more rigorous and therefore more costly. At required public hearings, communities mobilize to express their opposition to the appropriation of their water resources by multinational corporations and national economic groups. Now, the works of the dam pharaohs and their vast power transmission networks are up for sale. Private companies from around the world are interested in buying state electric companies, but only if the national governments help finance the takeovers. Some 38 percent of the cost of Brazil's electric sector "privatization" has been funded by loans from the country's National Development Bank.

As the last dams from the 1980s are now being completed, years behind schedule and billions over budget, the dam builders say they have learned from their mistakes – acknowledging studies that were never done, resettlement plans that are not complete, reservoirs that were poorly planned. Still, large dams remain the most visible manifestation of political and economic power in a region where politicians gain votes based on the scale of the engineering works "they" build. Large dams continue to be promoted, planned and built in the region, as the stories in this issue attest. According to industry analysts, the leaders in hydroelectric potential in Latin America are Brazil, Venezuela, and Argentina.

Even with negative economic growth, sector planners continue to present the spectre of an energy crisis and the risk of blackouts to justify a return to the large dam era. They have

earmarked untouched river systems thousands of kilometers from population centers as the next to be sacrificed for dam development.

Latin America continues to remain fertile ground for Northern dam builders who can no longer sell hydro technology in their own countries, where most major rivers are already dammed and rising environmental consciousness has caused large dams to fall out of favor. Nations like Bolivia, desperate for export revenues, are beginning to offer themselves as energy colonies to provide hydroelectric power to neighboring countries, much as Paraguay projected itself as the "Kuwait of South America" in the 1980s.

The raging international debate about the costs and benefits of large dams has not yet reached decisionmakers in Latin America. But the debate is widening, as the fishermen and indigenous people who resisted earlier dams are now being joined by city dwellers who have come to realize they also rely on clean and healthy rivers. Citizens' groups have begun to acquire the technical sophistication to be able to challenge the industry's contention that dams promote economic and social development.

Many of the dam fights ahead involve fragile ecosystems recognized for their global importance. They involve indigenous populations who have become aware of their constitutional and legal rights, and other traditional populations determined not to be moved from lands their ancestors have occupied for centuries. Many of these dam fights are still not on the radar screens of activists and journalists, but you will be hearing more about them in the future. Here, we try to outline some of the most critical upcoming dam controversies, with comments from the activists who will be on the front lines for the fights that lie ahead.

These dam fights will undoubtedly bring to light better alternatives to the contested projects – information that can perhaps form the foundation for a new energy future for Latin America. With another economic crisis slowing growth, the continent now has an opportunity to re-shape its planning, and move away from dependence on large dams for electricity generation. Vast networks of gas pipelines, being promoted by the multi-lateral lending institutions, can serve as a bridge to an era of renewable energy, but more needs to be done to hasten a truly renewable future.

Anti-dam forces will have their work cut out for them as they fight for alternatives to destructive river projects. Despite the continent's blistering tropical sun and robust winds that sweep across undeveloped coastal plains, energy experts in the region say new energy sources are still years away from being feasible alternatives. And the nations of Latin America are only

now beginning to try to manage demand for energy, particularly by gluttonous energy-intensive industries. There is a better way, and the time to pursue it is now. In the age of privatization, large dams are becoming even more difficult to fund without large public subsidies. By investing only a fraction of the resources currently poured into dam construction, the region's governments and international aid agencies can pave the way toward an energy path which spares the region's rivers, and its air.

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#### IRN's Other Campaigns

[Africa](#) | [China](#) | [Latin America](#) | [South Asia](#) | [South East Asia](#) | [International Finance](#)  
[World Commission on Dams](#) | [River of Words](#) | [River Revival](#)

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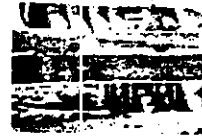
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## International Rivers Network

WebProducer



# brazil



*Introduction*

*Participants*

*Map of Brazil*

*Itinerary*

Introduction  
Rio de Janeiro  
Rorônia  
Roads to hell  
Deforestation  
Acre  
The working  
day of a Rubber  
Tapper in Acre  
The Chico  
Mendes Story  
Manaus  
Para  
Dam Busters  
The Gold Rush  
and bombing  
of air strips  
Brasilia D.F.  
Rio de Janeiro  
and the return

*Debates*

*Sponsors*

*Brazil Facts*

## *Dam Busters*

Large hydroelectric dam complexes are the target for much criticism from environmentalists. Organisations such as the International Rivers Network (IRN), the Sierra Club and the Environmental Defense Fund, all based in the US, are critics of such complexes. Recently, when the massive Three Gorges dam complex was formally unveiled in China, newspapers were full of reports of how this would cause irrevocable environmental damage. The International Rivers Network put an advert in the New York Times telling foreign companies and banks to withdraw their investments in the complex. In March 1997 the first international meeting of People Affected by Dams was held in the city of Curitiba in Brazil. Delegates demanded an immediate moratorium on the building of large dams. The majority of the delegates were from Brazil. Brazil presently has 600 large dams (defined as over 15 metres) with another 494 proposed. Under Brazil on the Move, Brazil plans to build ten new dams in the Amazon region. The meeting heard complaints from these people about problems, such as filthy water and an increase in mosquitoes and diseases when rivers are dammed and the forced relocation without compensation of tens of thousands of people who lived on dam sites.

The largest funder of dam complexes, the World Bank, is now listening to the environmental campaigners. In April 1997, at a conference on dams in Geneva, the World Bank agreed to set up 'guidelines for building and operating dams which will balance the competing demands of the economy and the surrounding environment'. In November 1997, the World Bank also launched the World Commission on Dams in Washington with the World Conservation Union and anti-dam campaigners. It will set up and enforce the first international standards for dam construction and management.

Environmental organisations such as the International Rivers Network also oppose the Serra da Mesa dam, located south of the Tucuruí dam on the Rio Tocantins. This is the last of the huge dams commissioned by the Brazilian military government during the 1970s. They argue that the 154 metre high Serra da Mesa will destroy flora and fauna, including some endangered species, destroy pre-historic archaeological sites and cover mineral reserves. They also add that the timber valued at

US\$15 million will be left to rot beneath the reservoir along with vegetation which could affect water quality in the future.

The Balbina Dam on the Rio Uatumã in the state of Amazonas, is now recognised even by government officials as a disaster. Balbina was another of the huge dam complexes developed by the Brazilian military government during the 1970s. Its flood gates closed in 1987. It flooded an area of 236,000 hectares of forest. This contained 58.5 million cubic metres of wood with a total value of US\$400 million. Environmentalists have a list of complaints: biodiversity loss, the creation of stagnant water and the increase in diseases, the death of the Rio Uatumã upstream, the displacement of peasants and the Waimiri Artoari Indians, with little or no compensation. Finally, they point out it will only produce 32 per cent of its proposed electricity generating capacity, just 80 megawatts of power (the average Brazilian dam produces 50-65 per cent of its proposed capacity).

The lengths to which environmentalists and anti-dam activists will go to stop the construction of dams is illustrated by the story of the Rio Altamira-Xingu Hydroelectric dam complex in Pará. In 1988 the Brazilian Government was in the final stages of negotiating a power sector loan with the World Bank to finance the complex of nine dams. The loan was halted. A major factor in the decision to halt the loan was the campaign led by US environmentalists and the Kayapó Indian tribe from the affected area. The dam complex would have covered 7.6 million hectares of land. The US\$10.6 billion project would have displaced the Kayapó and other Indian groups. The campaign which ensued centred on the argument that Indian environmental knowledge would have been lost if their communities were displaced. The wealth and importance of the 'folk-scientific systems' of the Indians was used as an argument to challenge the construction of the complex.

In January 1988, whilst attending an international symposium in Florida on the 'Wise Management of Tropical Forest', Kayapó Indian leaders were encouraged by environmentalists to protest to the main lender—the World Bank—against the dam complex. The National Wildlife Federation and the Environmental Defence Fund paid for their expenses and organised for them to visit Washington. In February 1988, at the same time as the Brazilian Government was negotiating with the World Bank, the Indians, accompanied by environmentalists and anthropologist Darrell Posey, lobbied the World Bank, the State Department, Treasury representatives, members of Congress and the Congressional Human Rights Caucus. The US director of the World Bank assured the Indian chiefs that he would continue to vote against the power sector loan. Other directors, although less

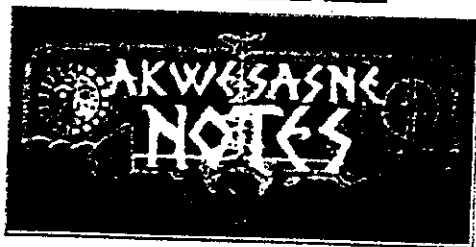
committal, declared that they would investigate infringements of Bank rules protecting Indians and the forest resources upon which they depended.

The Washington visit was followed up with an international campaign. On returning from the US, the Indian leaders were indicted by the Brazilian Government for, among other things, 'jeopardising Brazil's economic relations'. In their defence the Indians were supported by an array of groups: the Brazilian Bar Association (OAB) and its Human Rights Commission, the Brazilian Anthropology Association, the Brazilian Society for the Advancement of Science, the International Society of Ethnobiology, Cultural Survival, Survival International, Amnesty International and hundreds of other NGOs concerned with conservation, Indian rights and human rights. This campaign led to the creation of alliances between human and Indian rights groups, on the one hand and environmentalists on the other.

These alliances led to a meeting known as The First Encounter of Native Peoples of the Xingu which took place in February 1989 in Altamira, in Pará. At the meeting indigenous groups and environmentalists drew up A United Strategy for the Preservation of the Amazon and its Peoples. The world's media and an assorted array of personalities, such as the pop singer, Sting, co-founder of the Rainforest Foundation, attended. The five day meeting centred around demonstrations against the proposed dams on the Xingu River.

The environmental campaign also led to the launch of Nossa Natureza, Our Nature, the Brazilian Government's first environmental policy. As part of this policy the Brazilian Institute for the Environment and Renewable Resources was set up.

The environmentalists' campaigns may not have been the only reason for the halting of the loan. In the late 1980s the US was attempting to end Brazil's state protection of its industries. Brazil was cited for unfair trade practices under the US's Super 301 Trades Act. The US accused Brazil of high import duties in the protection of its computer industry and of failing to protect US pharmaceutical patents and trademarks. In addition the US opposed and was attempting to undermine Brazil's nuclear power accord with Germany. In this context it is possible to argue that the US had an ulterior motive for paralysing the loan. The campaign orchestrated by US environmentalists may have given the US justification for its actions.



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## Amazonian Indians Fight to Save Their Forest World

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Article

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An unprecedented attempt by Amazonian Indians to organize themselves to resist (by peaceful legal and political means) the destruction of their forest habitat and the expropriation of their traditional lands is now under way in the forests and native villages of Central Brazil. This attempt, conceived by the leadership of the Kayapo tribe and joined by some 28 other tribal peoples of the Central Amazonian region, focuses on the construction of a proposed hydroelectric dam complex which would flood more than 1600 sq. kilometers of forest land -- the largest man-made lake in the world. At the great council to be held upon the completion and occupation of the village, scheduled for Feb. 21-26, the Indians would form an enduring organization which would work with Brazilian and foreign supporters committed to saving the forest, its animals and native peoples. A Kayapo leader, Payakan, has just completed a seven-country tour of Europe and North America to generate support and raise money for this project. His last stop was Chicago, where from Dec. 1 -- 4 he lectured at several local institutions, including the University of Chicago, the Field Museum, Northwestern University, The Chicago Academy of Sciences, and the Brookfield Zoo.

Over the last several years, the great Amazonian forest (which includes the world's largest rainforest and one-third of the surviving forest area of the earth) has been under concerted attack. Vast areas of virgin forest habitat are being destroyed every year by settlers, miners, ranchers, and hydro-electric projects, actively encouraged or instituted by ecologically disastrous "development" policies undertaken by the Brazilian government. Ecological scientists from all over the globe have warned of the catastrophic consequences of the destruction of the world's remaining tropical forests. These consequences range from the global warming, or "greenhouse" effect, with its implications for agricultural disaster in the major temperate-zone food-raising areas of North America and Eurasia, through the depletion of oxygen levels in the atmosphere to the point where we shall all become short of breath, to the loss of roughly one-half of the zoological and botanical species of life on earth, many of which are as yet virtually unknown.

The Amazon is also the home of perhaps the greatest number of surviving primitive human societies (only Papua New Guinea comes close). The native societies are mostly small, with communities often numbering less than 100 people scattered over vast areas of forest. Most of them were ill-prepared to withstand the onslaught of the national societies and international development project that have penetrated the area in increasing force since the late '60's. Many observers since that time have predicted the rapid disappearance of these tribal communities, as an inevitable corollary of the destruction of their forest world by the inexorable advance of Western civilization. The idea that some of these primitive societies might become effective forces on their own behalf in the battle to save their lands and environment, let alone assume a leading role in organizing this struggle in the world at large,

would have seemed incredible only a few years ago. Yet this is precisely what has now begun to happen. Against all odds and expectations, the native peoples of Amazonia have begun to organize and project themselves, with great courage and outspokenness and with great political skill and effect, in the national and world arena as leading combatants in the struggle to save their forest habitat.

Despite the many gloomy prognostications of cultural and even physical extinction, there have been a number of instances of demographic, social, and political resurgence among native Amazonian peoples over the past twenty years. Native populations have on the whole ceased to decline and begun again to grow. Illegally expropriated lands have in several cases been reoccupied, and the government induced to grant legal title. Native leaders have won election to the national legislative assembly and gained high administrative office in the national Indian Agency (FUNAI). The effect of these events has been amplified by extensive coverages in local and international news media, often skillfully arranged by the Indians themselves. Tribal peoples have increasingly learned and taken over such civilized skills as para-medical care and mechanical maintenance, with the result that their general state of health, and their level of effective control over their own lives, has risen significantly.

Leading this dramatic resurgence of Amazonian native peoples has been the Kayapo tribe of Southern Para State, a nation of some 14 separate communities with a tradition of political organization and oratory that has stood them in good stead in the contemporary crisis. Within the past six years the Kayapo have organized successful demonstrations in Brasilia against the dumping of radioactive waste on their land, against government attempts to deny their rights of free speech, travel and assembly, and against clauses damaging to Indians in the new constitution. They have driven out illegal settlers from one major area of their ancestral territory and induced the government to grant them legal title to it; in another area, they have recaptured two gold mines illegally opened on their land by Brazilian miners. In the latter case, they forced the national bank of Brazil to pay them a percentage of the profits, and have taken over the administration of the mines themselves until such time as they choose to close them down. These successful Kayapo actions have demonstrated that Amazonian Indians are not helpless "victims of progress," but are capable of effective political action on their own behalf. The Altamira village has now become the focus for the conversion of its amazing series of local successes into a general, pan-tribal movement with a permanent organization.

Every one of the successful Kayapo actions was conceived and organized by a remarkable young leader named Payakan. Last February, Payakan and another Kayapo leader, Kuben'i, travelled abroad for the first time to appeal for world support for their struggle to save their environment, their communities and lands. Accompanied by an American anthropologist, Darrell Posey, the two Kayapo came to Washington to speak to officials of the World Bank, the U.S. State Department, and U.S. Congressmen about the disastrous consequences of two huge dams for which the Brazilians were seeking World Bank funding. The Bank subsequently deferred action on the loans, and the Brazilian government brought charges against the three under a law regulating political activity by foreigners(!) The case remains open (if found guilty, all three could be expelled from the country, and/or jailed for three years), but an international outcry, and effective demonstrations in support of Kuben'i and Payakan by the Kayapo themselves, have rendered it unlikely that it will ever be brought to trial.

These developments set the stage for the launching of the Altamira village project, publicly announced on Payakan's second tour of North America and Europe in November and December of this year. In spite of the Brazilian government's attempts to intimidate and punish the Kayapo leaders for criticizing its Amazonian development policies (and particularly the huge Altamira hydroelectric complex) in sensitive foreign capitals, Payakan undertook a much more extensive tour of seven European and North American capitals and other cities last month. His general purpose was to bring the crisis of the environment and native peoples of the Amazon to wider public attention, to lobby governmental and international development bank officials against supporting economic development projects that would irreversibly damage the environment and expropriate native lands, and more specifically to appeal for support of the daring and ambitious plan he and other Kayapo leaders have formed to enlist the native peoples of the region in the world-wide campaign to save their forest world: the construction of the Altamira village.

In his Chicago talks, Payakan repeatedly stressed the need for cooperation and unity of purpose among the different sorts of organizations engaged in fighting the destruction of rain forests, native cultures, and human rights in the Third World. In his words, "The forest is one big thing; it has people, animals, and plants. There is no point saving the forests if the people and animals who live in it are

killed or driven away. The groups trying to save the races of animals cannot win if the people trying to save the forest lose; the people trying to save the Indians cannot win if either of the others lose; the Indians cannot win without the support of these groups; but the groups cannot win without the help of the Indians, who know the forest and the animals and can tell what is happening to them. No one of us is strong enough to win alone; together, we can be strong enough to win." Both in Europe and North America, this message had a great impact. Many environmentalists, indigenous advocacy, and human rights groups, such as Friends of the Earth, World Wildlife Federation, Rain Forest Alliance, Survival International, and Cultural Survival, began to cooperate with one another in the organization and sponsorship of Payakan's tour. Many feel that the tour may have marked a historic turning point in the organizational perspective and tactics of the environmentalist, indigenous advocacy, and human rights communities, from mutual dissociation and distrust towards mutual cooperation.

The Indian leadership is fully aware that the relevance of this urgent message begins at home, where the many small native nations of Amazonia have thus far failed to put up an effective united front to oppose the destruction of their common habitat. The Altamira plan bears the hallmarks of the global political awareness of the new indigenous leaders such as Payakan. They have realized that they must come together themselves into some sort of effective organization if they expect people from the outside world to come together in support of them. At the same time, they realize that they must plan their own efforts to defend their world and their right to live in it in interdependence with support from outside if they are to have any hope of success (hence their "global vision"). They have conceived the Altamira village both as their major bid for external attention and support and as their great occasion for coming together for the first time into a working alliance.

In specific terms, the plan calls for a huge, joint encampment of 28 different indigenous nations at a site near Altamira, on the Xingu River near its confluence with the Amazon, which would be inundated by the huge hydro-electric project which the Brazilians are hoping to build at Altamira (for criticizing which in Washington last February Payakan was arrested and charged by the Brazilian authorities). All of these people would come together, some by land but mostly by river, for five days in late February (Feb. 21-26), to construct a complete native village of 3,000 people, with families and children. A small permanent population will remain at the site to oppose any dam construction.

The village is to be the Indians' own "Altamira Project" -- a living community to counter the drowned forest, dead animals and homeless people that would be created by the Brazilians' Altamira Hydroelectric Project. There, the assembled tribespeople have invited a series of spokespersons for Brazilian governmental agencies, the World Bank, and the President of Brazil, to explain to them their reasons for building the dams, and for not consulting them their reason for building the dams, and for not consulting the Indians themselves in their planning. They will also present to these spokespersons their arguments against the dams and other development policies now being put into effect in the region. At the same time, they will jointly celebrate the Kayapo New Corn Ceremony. The building of the common village and the common ritual celebration are intended as the first concerted political and social actions of a new alliance of indigenous nations of Central Amazonia: the charter events, as it were, for future united action in defense of their imperilled world. The creativity and boldness of this project are breath-taking; nothing like such a concerted action by unrelated Indian societies (let alone 28 such societies) has ever taken place in the Amazon.

This great inter-tribal village would symbolically oppose the native way of life, with its emphasis on organic coexistence of society with nature, to the modern Western way of destroying nature and local society to generate energy and profit in distant regions. The common celebration of the Kayapo New Corn Ceremony, which symbolically renews native society's productive interdependence with its natural environment, is meant to dramatize this theme. The symbolic construction of the inter-tribal meeting as a total social community with families and collective agricultural ritual is meant to signal the Indians' vision of the integral nature of the Amazonian crisis, which calls in their eyes for a coming together of environmentalist, human rights, and indigenous support organizations in a common effort. The Altamira village, in sum, is self-consciously conceived as a statement in the Indians' own terms of the essential differences between their way of life and that represented by Western economic development. It is their manifesto of all that is at stake for them and the world, culturally, politically, and environmentally, in the outcome of the present struggle.

It is virtually important that this message be heard, and heeded, in the outside world. The Altamira project is a unique and profoundly hopeful development, with an original and creative contribution to

make to one of the most urgent problems now facing the world: the preservation of the tropical forests, above all that of the Amazon. The Kayapo people and their leaders are taking great risks to create the Altamira village as a rallying point for the indigenous nations of Amazonia and support groups from all over the world. Not only the Indians, but Brazil and the world at large, have a great deal at stake in its success.

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**Questions on Brazil, the Belo Monte Dam, and the Kayapo Indians**

1) What three groups have typically financed large dams? \_\_\_\_\_  
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2) What have been three negative effects of large dams? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3) Name two groups within Brazil that are fighting large dams or supporting protest against them. \_\_\_\_\_

4) Name three non-Brazilian groups the Kayapo leaders Payakan and Kuben'i turned to for support. \_\_\_\_\_

5) What was the Altamira Project aka the First Encounter of Native Peoples of the Xingu? \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Questions on Brazil, the Belo Monte Dam, and the Kayapo Indians**

- 1) What three groups have typically financed large dams? (The World Bank, the Brazilian government, and private companies)
- 2) What have been three negative effects of large dams? (Forced relocation of people, loss of sacred spots, depletion of food supplies, polluted water, loss of fragile ecosystems—including plants, animals and land, brutality to opposition, increase of mosquitoes and disease)
- 3) Name two groups within Brazil that are fighting large dams or supporting protest against them. (Indigenous groups, fishers, city dwellers, the Brazilian Bar Association and its Human Rights Commission, the Brazilian Society for the Advancement of Science, the Brazilian Anthropology Association)
- 4) Name three non-Brazilian groups the Kayapo leaders Payakan and Kuben'i turned to for support. (University of Chicago, the Field Museum, Northwestern University, The Chicago Academy of Sciences, the Brookfield Zoo, the World Bank, the U.S. State Department, Congress and its Human Rights Caucus, Friends of the Earth, World Wildlife Federation, Rain Forest Alliance, Survival International, Cultural Survival, environmentalists, indigenous advocacy, human rights)
- 5) What was the Altamira Project aka the First Encounter of Native Peoples of the Xingu? (A plan by the Kayapo Indians, supported by 28 other tribes to protest the Belo Monte Dam. It called for forming an encampment or village at Altamira, a proposed site for a dam. Spokespeople for the World Bank and the Brazilian government were invited to explain why they felt the dam was necessary, and why the Indians had not been consulted. The Kayapo also explained their reasons for opposing the project. The Kayapo New Corn Ceremony was celebrated, symbolizing the unity of indigenous groups as a political force. It was accompanied by a meeting of indigenous groups and environmentalists where they drew up a United Strategy for the Preservation of the Amazon and its Peoples)

## BBC News World Water Crisis

[http://news6.thdo.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/static/in\\_depth/<sup>world/2000/</sup>world\\_water\\_crisis/default.stm](http://news6.thdo.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/static/in_depth/world_water_crisis/default.stm)

### Relevant Articles:

- "Turkish Dam Controversy," Jan. 22, 2000
- "Dawn of a Thirsty Century," June 2, 2000
- "Blair Under Fire Over Turkish Dam," Dec. 23, 1999
- "UK in Court Over Dam 'Secrecy'," June 26, 1999
- "Turkey Losing Patience with Syria," Oct. 4, 1998
- "British Protest Against Turkish Dam," July 2, 1999
- "A People Divided by Borders," Nov. 21, 2000
- "Turkey Warns Syria over Kurds," Oct. 1, 1998

## Turkish Dam Controversy

Britain's involvement in the construction of a controversial dam in Turkey is once more under scrutiny. BBC World Affairs Correspondent David Shukman travelled to the region in January. The arguments are bitter, the issues complex but at heart the question is simple: should Turkey build a vast new dam to generate electricity?

The Turkish Government says its plan for the so-called Ilisu Dam, in the mountainous southeast of the country, will be a vital catalyst for development in a neglected region. A huge international consortium of engineering companies is lined up to start construction. A British engineering company, Balfour Beatty, is one of several international firms involved in the construction plans. The contractors and the Turkish authorities say this project will be a model of environmental and social care. They promise that as the dam is built across the valley of the River Tigris, and a deep reservoir builds up behind it, the 15,000-20,000 people who will be forced to move home will be carefully resettled. Compensation will be offered. The historical monuments and ruins of earlier ages will be documented or even rescued. And, as for fears that the dam will become an international flashpoint - with the countries downstream, Syria and Iraq - receiving less water, officials pledge that the design of the dam will make it impossible to hold water back, and anyway Turkey would never want to.

### Local opinion

With those points in mind, I set out for the region itself to find out how local people are reacting to this plan. It was, after all, a promise of the British Government's that those affected by the dam must be consulted first. The answers I got from them were very clear. My first destination was Hasankeyf, a small but ancient town perched on the banks of the Tigris. No one knows how long Hasankeyf has been settled. Some say there is evidence of habitation stretching back 11,000 years. What no one disputes is that the town has seen waves of humanity - the Romans, the Byzantines, the Persians, the Seljuk Turks, the Mongols. And in the 14th century came the forerunners of the modern-day Kurds. No wonder Kurdish people object to the planned dam so forcefully, calling it yet another attack on their culture. The town contains some remarkably beautiful relics. Town mayor Abdul Kusen led me along the rocky paths that connect the site of an abandoned mosque with a ruined castle. Around us were intricately-carved stone doorways and panels bearing ornate Arabic inscriptions. Across the river was a small tower, delicately-decorated with turquoise tiles, which turned out to be a mausoleum to a mediaeval Muslim king. The mayor explained that the new reservoir would flood the entire town. Only the highest parts of the ruined castle and the very top of the main minaret would remain above the water level. "Please," he said, "tell Tony Blair not to go ahead with this, to lose this special place." I wandered around Hasankeyf seeking out local opinion. An old weaver said his family had been settled for years and he did not want to move. Two young waiters, who spend the summers working in the tourist resorts of the Turkish coast, said the dam would be a big "mistake". "Why not develop Hasankeyf as a tourist destination? That would be more help than the dam," they said. No one was as openly

critical in public as they were in private. This is not a part of the world where free speech is encouraged.

### **Decision time**

Our movements were constantly monitored by a pair of plain-clothes security men. When an armoured Landrover rumbled past, we were asked to stop filming. Yet it is in this atmosphere, more intimidating for those who live here than for us, that the authorities are supposed to test local opinion. Campaigners against the dam say there can never be a real assessment of public opinion. The British Government says it is "minded" to provide a financial guarantee to allow the project to go ahead. Critics say that would sound the death knell for Labour's ethical foreign policy. Soon, British ministers must decide.

## Blair Under Fire Over Turkish Dam

Dec. 23, 1999

Ministers have been defending the government's announcement that it is "minded" to help fund a controversial dam project in Turkey. The planned barrage has been widely criticised by environmentalists and opposition parties, and is also understood to have caused a split in the cabinet with Prime Minister Tony Blair over-ruling opposition to the project from the deputy prime minister, the foreign secretary, and the trade and industry secretary. By flooding a wide area of south-east Turkey the Ilisu Dam would cause upheaval for the local Kurdish population, leaving tens of thousands homeless. And by giving Turkey control of the flow of the river Tigris, on which Iraq and Syria depend for fresh drinking water, the project could also destabilise the Middle East peace process. In addition the dam, if built, could destroy what is widely accepted as a priceless archaeological wonder, the ancient city of Hasankeyf. Trade and Industry Minister Dick Caborn insisted that careful environmental assessment had been carried out before the government announced it was "minded" to support the project through the export credit guarantee scheme. He added that a dam was preferable to building nuclear power stations in a country like Turkey, which is prone to earthquakes. The announcement followed construction firm Balfour Beatty's request for a government-approved export credit guarantee of up to £200m, to cover the UK company's role in the consortium building the dam. Mr Caborn rejected widespread reports that the issue had caused a split between Mr Blair in favour of the dam, and Foreign Secretary Robin Cook, Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott, and Trade and Industry Secretary Stephen Byers against it.

### Ethical foreign policy?

Opposition parties say the decision to back the project leaves the government's ethical foreign policy in tatters. Liberal Democrat foreign affairs spokesman Menzies Campbell told the BBC: "We know that the World Bank refused to touch this project, we know that Robin Cook, John Prescott and Stephen Byers were apparently opposed to it and we know that not only is Syria opposed, so is the Arab League and Jordan and Iraq. "We may well be handling Saddam Hussein a very substantial propaganda opportunity if we start diverting the Tigris." Menzies Campbell. "I cannot understand why the government is persisting in this project in the light of this well-founded opposition." Mr Campbell continued: "We are talking about the Middle East, where water is at a premium. [Former UN Secretary General] Boutros Boutros Ghali said in 1992 after the Gulf war that the next war in the Middle East would be fought over water, not politics." Estimates suggest the Ilisu scheme would flood 15 Kurdish towns and 52 villages, leaving 16,000 people homeless and affecting the lives of a further 20,000.

### Dam 'not needed'

Tony Juniper of Friends of the Earth said the dam was unnecessary, and there were other ways of solving Turkey's power shortage.

"The money could be invested, for example, in reducing the inefficiencies of Turkey's electricity grid," he said.

"There could be huge gains to Turkey's electricity economy, but without the impact of this dam." The government has insisted that Britain carried out a full environmental assessment before joining a consortium, including Germany, Switzerland and the USA, backing the scheme.

Saturday, June 26, 1999 Published at 20:43 GMT 21:43 UK

### UK in court over dam 'secrecy'

A UK Government minister is to appear in the High Court over his decision not to release information on a controversial dam. Trade Minister Brian Wilson faces the court next week to answer claims that he is breaching environmental information regulations by refusing to release details about the impact the Ilisu dam in Turkey will have. Mr Wilson's department has been asked by British civil engineering company Balfour Beatty, one of the leading contractors for the project, to underwrite the scheme.

### Flawed' impact study

But critics of the project, which will take water from the River Tigris, cutting off part of the flow to Syria and Iraq, say it will flood the lands of local Kurds and damage water supplies. Some experts have even suggested it could spark a war between Turkey and its two neighbours, Syria and Iraq, which both object strongly to the scheme. Friends of the Earth allege that the environmental impact assessment - upon which the scheme is based - was not done properly and want to obtain access to it. The group will argue in court that under 1992 environmental information regulations, Mr Wilson is obliged to publish details of the report.

### Freedom of information

He has so far refused, saying the documents are not the government's to release. However FoE have also warned that under Home Secretary Jack Straw's Freedom of Information Bill - which is supposed to give greater public access to official information - there would be no public entitlement at all to see such material. "Mr Wilson seems to regard freedom of information as a question of news management rather than a fundamental right," said FoE policy and campaigns director Tony Juniper. "If Jack Straw has his way even the modest powers that exist now, and which will be exercised in court next week, will be removed leaving us at the mercy of ministers who are more concerned to avoid personal embarrassment than engage in public debate leading to good decisions."

Monday, March 1, 1999 Published at 10:48 GMT

### Turkish dam gets UK support

The UK Government has said it will underwrite a controversial dam project in the Kurdish area of Turkey. The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) is backing the UK company Balfour Beatty with £200m in a bid to build the Ilisu Dam on the River Tigris. The project has been criticised by environmentalists, the World Bank and Turkey's neighbours. The dam's reservoir will drown dozens of Kurdish towns along the Tigris valley, including the historic town of Hasankeyf. Work is underway or complete on 22 dams on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Turkey says the dams will enable hundreds of thousands of hectares of land to be irrigated, and generate electricity for the underdeveloped and arid southeast of the country. The World Bank refused to participate in the project because of fears it would increase the danger of cross-border conflict with Turkey's neighbours to the south.

### Turning on tension

Turkey controls the Tigris and Euphrates headwaters which Iraq and Syria depend on for fresh water. Both Baghdad and Damascus have complained about the amount of water they have been getting since the completion of the first Turkish dams at the beginning of the 1990s. They fear Turkey's ability to shut off their water supply in any possible future conflict. Critics of British support of the Ilisu Dam say it contravenes the UK Government's rules on ethical foreign policy and its recently announced environmental guidelines. Tony Juniper of the UK-based environmentalist group Friends of the Earth said: "We have to stop this project before the British Government is party to fermenting war in the Middle East." In the late 1980s, Balfour Beatty was involved in the controversial Pergau Dam project in Malaysia. The dam was criticised as unsuitable on environmental grounds and because the UK aid package to build it was tied to Malaysia continuing to buy arms from UK weapons manufacturers.

Sunday, October 4, 1998 Published at 17:39 GMT 18:39 UK

### Turkey losing patience with Syria

The Turkish President, Suleiman Demirel, has repeated his warning that time is running out for Syria to stop supporting the Kurdish rebel movement, the PKK. The Turkish government is awaiting the arrival of President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, who has already visited Damascus in an effort to mediate between Turkey and Syria. Turkish officials say they welcome President Mubarak's mediation efforts because they want international attention focused on Syrian support for the PKK. They also want a diplomatic solution to the problem. Turkey presented a series of proposals for a new start with Syria three months ago, but officials say they have not received a reply from Damascus. The BBC's Ankara correspondent, Chris Morris, says the Syrians have their own complaints about Turkish behaviour, but it is the government in Ankara which has decided to raise the stakes in a relationship which has never been easy. The Turkish military is particularly frustrated by Syrian support for the PKK. Every time the military says the rebel movement is on the verge of defeat, the war drags on. Our correspondent says the generals want someone to blame and Syria is as good a candidate as any. If Syrian policy

does not change, some elements in the Turkish military may well believe the only solution is to stage operations against the PKK inside Syrian territory, using air strikes or even ground troops, like they do on a regular basis in Kurdish-controlled Northern Iraq. A decision to do that would shake the entire region, which is why the Turkish foreign ministry appears more cautious - but politicians from all parties have made it clear that Turkey's patience is wearing extremely thin. Relations between Turkey and Syria deteriorated dramatically on Thursday, when the Turkish President, Suleiman Demirel, warned Damascus that patience was running out over alleged Syrian support for Kurdish separatists. Syria, for its part, is critical of Turkey's military ties with Israel, and has accused Turkey of taking more than its share of water from the Euphrates River. There have been fears the tension between the two countries, who share a 877km (550 mile) border, could lead to military confrontation. The head of the Turkish armed forces, General Huseyin Kivrikoglu, has described the situation as an undeclared war, but both sides insist they want a diplomatic solution. "I am ready to do everything possible in Damascus and Ankara [to reduce the tension]," Mr Mubarak told reporters on Saturday, after a visit to Saudi Arabia, where he discussed the crisis with King Fahd.

#### Israel moves to calm situation

Israel says its strategic ties with Turkey are not directed at Syria or any other country. A statement by the Defence Minister, Yitzhak Mordechai, said Israel was not looking for a conflict with Damascus. Mr Mordechai has ordered the army to adopt a low profile on the Syrian border. On Sunday, the Turkish Deputy Prime Minister, Bulent Ecevit, said his country wanted a peaceful resolution to the crisis. "Turkey ... is working to solve all its problem with Syria through peaceful means and diplomatic channels," Mr Ecevit was quoted as saying. "But Turkey cannot not make even the smallest concession on its rights and security," he said. On Friday, Turkey sent some 10,000 soldiers into Iraq to attack Kurdish rebels there, and there have been reports that Turkey is considering a similar incursion into Syria.

#### Growing tension

The growing tension between the two countries has provoked acute concern in the Arab world. The BBC middle east correspondent says President Mubarak is well-placed to mediate because he has maintained good relations with both countries. While he has been forthright in his criticism of Turkey's military ties with Israel, he has kept on good terms with Ankara. Mr Mubarak has also managed to cultivate warm relations with Syria despite Egypt's own truce with Israel. Egypt is particularly concerned about the dispute because it feels a strong responsibility towards the Middle East peace process. Mr Mubarak has already conferred with President Assad of Syria over the tension with Turkey, and Damascus has issued a statement stressing its concern for good, neighbourly relations with Ankara, and its readiness to settle differences by diplomatic means. Turkey too, while adopting an increasingly threatening tone, has said it wants a diplomatic solution. But a diplomatic solution will be difficult because the differences between Turkey and Syria have defied resolution for many years.



Friday, July 2, 1999 Published at 12:49 GMT 13:49 UK

### British protest against Turkish dam

Their homes will be flooded if the dam project goes ahead

The environmental group Friends of the Earth has held a protest on Friday in London outside a government department that is considering British involvement in a controversial dam project in south-eastern Turkey. The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) is backing the UK company Balfour Beatty with £200m in a bid to build the Ilisu Dam on the River Tigris. The group says the proposed Ilisu dam would have a devastating environmental impact, flooding more than 60 towns and villages, and forcing hundreds of thousands of people out of their homes. Friends of the Earth say, the project contravenes the UK Government's rules on ethical foreign policy and its recently announced environmental guidelines. FoE spokesman Tony Juniper: "We urge the DTI to have a look at its own guidelines. While the UK Government urges the World Bank to uphold strict environmental standards, it is ignoring them here for the benefit of one company."

### A solution to the Kurdish problem?

The dam is part of the massive development programme, known as Gap, which Turkey hopes will create three million jobs in its mainly Kurdish south-east and help end the Kurdish insurgency. The World Bank has refused to fund the Gap project for environmental reasons and because of fears it would increase the danger of cross-border conflict with Turkey's neighbours to the south. Neighbouring Syria and Iraq are concerned that it will deprive them of water from the Rivers Tigris and Euphrates. The dam's reservoir will drown dozens of Kurdish towns along the Tigris valley, including the historic town of Hasankeyf.

### Water war of words

Turkey controls the Tigris and Euphrates headwaters which Iraq and Syria depend on for fresh water. Both Baghdad and Damascus have complained about the amount of water they have been getting since the completion of the first Turkish dams at the beginning of the 1990s. They fear Turkey's ability to shut off their water supply in any possible future conflict.

# A People Divided By Borders

By Regional Analyst Pam O'Toole

The appeal against the death penalty of Kurdish guerrilla leader Abdullah Ocalan has focused international attention on the Kurdish question. Mr Ocalan, former leader of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), is widely held responsible in Turkey for the killings of more than 30,000 people during 16 years of armed conflict. But since his arrest, he has urged his supporters to give up armed conflict and has abandoned calls for self-rule for Turkey's 12 million Kurds. Independence of some kind had always been the aim of the armed struggle. Although Abdullah Ocalan was regarded as a terrorist by Turkey and many European countries, he was the only man regarded as powerful enough to take on the might of the Turkish state on behalf of the Kurds. As head of the PKK, he called at first for independence and then later for some kind of autonomy for his people. Later, he campaigned for political asylum, hoping he could transform the armed struggle into a political one and place the Kurdish issue firmly on the European political agenda. Turkey's Kurds hoped European pressure would force Ankara to review policies which deny basic cultural rights such as education and broadcasts in the Kurdish language.

Concentrated in the mountainous area where Iran, Iraq and Turkey meet, the Kurds are used to being used as pawns in regional and international power games, given promises and then abandoned by their erstwhile allies when it suited them. They will recall only too clearly how, after World War I and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the victorious Western allies promised them an independent Kurdish state in the Treaty of Sevres. Such hopes were quickly dashed when the treaty was renegotiated. Since then any move by the region's Kurds to state up an independent state has been brutally quashed.

The PKK is not the only Kurdish group to have used its neighbour's territory to mount hit and run attacks against its own country. Some have, at times, allied themselves with regional states. But they have had to be prepared for often brutal retaliation from their home governments. Baghdad's poison gas attack on the Kurdish town of Halabja in 1988 was prompted by suspicions that the residents had collaborated with Iranian forces who had just captured the area. Five thousand Kurds died in the attack.

## Divided people

The Kurds of Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria often argue that they form a distinctive community through race, culture and language, even though they have no standard dialect. Nationalist Kurds speak of their homeland as "Kurdistan", even though it is divided by international borders. But in fact they are notoriously divided, often by completely different political agendas. Kurdish political parties can be Marxist, Islamic, or distinctly tribal in outlook. Rather than uniting against a common enemy, the Kurds have often fought each other. One of the two main Kurdish parties in northern Iraq has allied itself with Turkey to drive the PKK from its territory.

So while Mr Ocalan's fate may be the source of anguish to Turkey's Kurds, other Kurds may view it with either indifference or jubilation. The region's Kurdish groups are unlikely to unite behind him and may well remain as bitterly divided as ever. Meanwhile the governments of the region remain solidly united in their determination to prevent the emergence of an independent Kurdish state.

## Turkey Warns Syria over Kurds

**By Ankara Correspondent Chris Morris.**

The Turkish President, Suleyman Demirel, has reiterated a warning to Syria that it should stop providing assistance to the Kurdish rebel movement, the PKK. Mr Demirel told parliament that Turkey wants peace in the region and its patience with its southern neighbour was about to run out. Officials in Ankara have denied local media reports that there has been a Turkish military build-up close to the Syrian border. The defence minister, Ismet Sezgin, said any military movements which have been seen in the area are part of routine troop rotations.

### **Turkey threatens retaliation**

Mr Sezgin said he still believes diplomacy can work, but, if it does not, Turkey should not be held responsible for the consequences. There has been a steady drumbeat of warnings aimed at Syria from both political and military leaders in the last few weeks. There seems to be a concerted campaign to alert public opinion that the government is not prepared to let the status quo continue. Turkey's national security council discussed Syria on Wednesday and reviewed a variety of options, including unspecified sanctions.

The leader of the PKK, Abdullah Ocalan, is known to have a base in the Syrian capital, Damascus. Turkey believes the rebel movement also has a number of camps on Syrian territory close to its border. For its part, Syria complains that Turkey is limiting the amount of water it receives from the Euphrates River. The Syrian Government has also never given up its territorial claim to the Turkish province of Hatay, which is still shown as part of Syria on Syrian maps. Finally, Damascus has been a fierce critic of Ankara's developing military relationship with Israel. It all leads to a tense relationship and the Turkish Government has now raised the rhetorical stakes considerably with a deliberate series of warnings.

Questions on the Turkish Dam Controversy  
(BBC News Water Crisis Website)

1. Name 2 reasons Turkey is building dams on the Tigris and Euphrates. (hydroelectricity, irrigation farming, develop the southeastern part of the country where the troublesome Kurds live)
2. Name the groups/nations who will be affected by Turkey's massive dam project. (Kurds, Syria, Iraq)
3. Who are the Kurds and why are they opposed to the Ilisu Dam? (Non-Arab, Kurdish speaking (similar to Persian language) people inhabiting parts of Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria. The goal of the Kurds is to establish their own nation, a movement that is being suppressed by the Turkish govt. The dam will force the relocation of tens of thousands of Kurds.)
4. What is the significance of the town Hasankeyf in Turkey? (Important historical and archaeological site which will be flooded by the dam)
5. Who is helping finance Turkey's newest project, the Ilisu Dam? (an international consortium of engineering companies) Extra credit: Which international organization has decided not to fund the dam? (The World Bank)

## Kurds: Key Facts

Q: Who are they?

About 20m in number, non-Arab, mainly Sunni Muslim, speak language related to Persian

Q: Where do they live?

Border areas of Armenia, Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey; also hundreds of thousands in Europe

Q: What do they want?

Their own state: Iran, Iraq and Turkey have all resisted this; Western powers have seen no reason to help

Q: What is their quarrel with Turkey?

Before 1991, Turkey did not recognize Kurds as a separate people. Education, publication, broadcasting in Kurdish are still banned

## Handout #9

### List of Websites on Water

[www.un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus/](http://www.un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus/)

Project ideas, lesson plans, discussion areas and list of related links.

[www.globaled.org/curriculum1.html](http://www.globaled.org/curriculum1.html)

Teaching materials, lesson plans and activities related to the instruction and learning on globalization.

[www.wateryear2003.org](http://www.wateryear2003.org)

Educational material by age group. Excellent source of ideas for a crosscurricular approach to the topic of water. Suggested activities on the topic for all subjects and levels. Highly recommended.

### List of Websites on Brazilian and Turkey Dams:

#### Brazil

<http://www.earthisland.org/journal/w95-18a.html>

<http://www.nextcity.com>

<http://www.eln.gov.br/balbina-ingles00.html>

#### Turkey

<http://www.ilisu.org.uk/>

<http://www.rivernet.org/turquie/ilisu.htm>

<http://dialspace.dial.pipex.com>

<http://www.foe.co.uk/pubsinfo/briefings/html/19991008172758.html>

## Handout #10

### Terms and Definitions:

*Globalization:* Intensification of trading across national boundaries and the transnational character of large corporations, creating interdependencies among the national economies of each region and the world. Also refers to the influence of international, multilateral financial institutions such as the World Bank that help structure water programs in developing countries. The process of integrating and opening water markets across national borders is one of the key issues relating to water today.

*Privatization:* Privatization of water resources can occur in various ways. The most common way is the transferring of some or all of the assets or operations of public water systems into private hands (Gleick et al:3). Such transfers can involve the transfer of responsibility to operate a water delivery or treatment system, a complete transfer of ownership and operation of a whole system, or the sale of public water rights to the private sector (op.cit.). Temporary transfers, such as rentals of water rights or water allocations, are also forms of privatization of water. Moreover, since water rights are frequently held with the land, land transfers (sales or rentals) also are often a form of privatizing water resources.

*Commodification:* Converting a good subject to “non-market social rules” into a good governed primarily by market rules (i.e., turning a social good into an economic commodity).

*Water as a social good:* Water is a critical social good that has many kinds of values for society: economic, cultural and religious, and life and health. Due to the multiple cultural significances of water, it has often been provided at subsidized prices or for free, making water available, at least theoretically, to the poorest sectors of society (Gleick et al:ii).

*Water as an economic good:* Managing water as an economic good means that water will be allocated across competing uses in a way that maximizes the net benefit from that amount of water. Allocation of water can take place through markets, through other processes (e.g., democratic or bureaucratic allocations) or combinations of market and non-market mechanisms.

*Definitions based on P. Gleick, ed. 2002. The New Economy of Water: The Risks and Benefits of Globalization and the Privatization of Fresh Water. Oakland: Pacific Institute; and M. Wilder, 2002. In Name Only: Water, the State and Ejidatario Producers in Northern Mexico. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Arizona.*

## ISSUES TO BRING OUT IN CLASS DISCUSSION

### SIMILARITIES

- The World Bank ended up refusing to finance the projects because of controversy
- The government was forced to finance, at least partially, these projects once the World Bank withdrew funding
- The projects were partially privatized
- Thousands of people displaced from their homes because of the dams
- Development chosen over environment, as governments plan to go ahead with projects in spite of resistance
- A group of people want sovereignty over their land
- Part of the protests over the projects are international in nature
- The dams are/would have been inefficient

### DIFFERENCES

- The Turkish dam is supposed to supply irrigation water and electricity to the country, while Brazil's dam was solely for hydroelectricity.
- The Turkey scenario involves three countries and a minority group, while the Brazil scenario involves one country and one minority group.

### ISSUES

- Development vs. Environment
- Urban vs. Rural
- Water rights: Downstream vs. Midstream vs. Upstream

### WHAT MAKES THESE CASES TRULY GLOBAL? (WHY COULDN'T THEY HAVE HAPPENED, IN THEIR PARTICULAR WAYS, 100 YEARS AGO?)

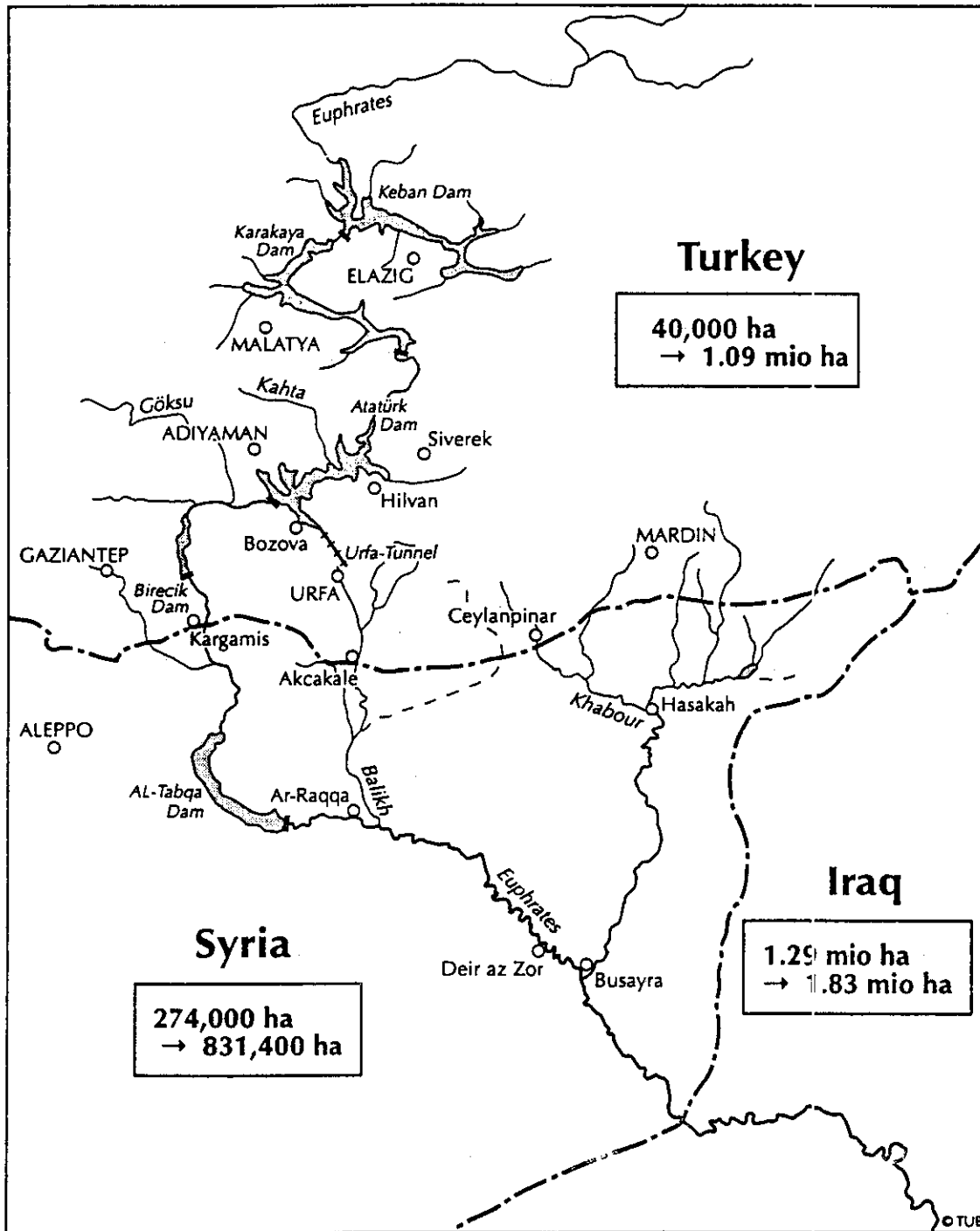
- International organizations' involvement, namely, the World Bank
- International protest
- Global economies
- Development has precedence over all other factors
- Tendencies to modernize & homogenize
- Use of technology and global communications to elicit support for protest
- Privatization of national industries to foreign companies



**Map #1: Brazil**



## Map #2: Turkey



Planned and presently irrigated land in the Euphrates Basin



Map #4: Euphrates Basin

